



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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Wednesday, 19 March 1997

Legislative Assembly

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THE SPEAKER (Mr Strickland) took the Chair at 11.00 am, and read prayers.

STATEMENT - MINISTER FOR YOUTH

Youth Ministerial Advisory Council

MR BOARD (Murdoch - Minister for Youth) [11.05 am]: I would like to inform the House of a new, exciting development in the Youth portfolio. Today I have announced the establishment of the Youth Minister's Advisory Council, a 17-member body brought together to help the Government more effectively identify and address the key issues affecting our young people in Western Australia. It will be chaired by prominent Perth businessman Ray Della-Polina and has broad community representation, ranging from government agencies and special interest groups to leading youth advocates.

The aim of the council is to assist the Government to identify issues and trends relevant to youth in Western Australia and to provide advice to the Minister for Youth on matters relevant to young people. There are more than 350 000 young people aged between 12 and 25 in Western Australia. This represents 22 per cent of our State's total population - that is almost one-quarter of our entire population.

Our youth play a key role in our current development and are vital contributors to our future development. We must support our young people and recognise their many achievements and potential. Our young people present us with much to praise, encourage and develop, and the Government, through me and the Office of Youth, will do all we can in this direction. I urge all members of the House to promote our youth actively in a positive light.

The idea of a youth advisory council was raised some time ago and it was later suggested that two separate groups be established, one comprising only young people and the other comprising key people associated with youth-related issues. As the new Minister for Youth, I have put in place one council to consult young people and those who work with and care for them. It represents the interests of both young people and those associated with youth-related issues. The Government has set as its three key priority issues: Employment, youth suicide and road safety.

The council also will be asked to provide advice to the Government on the recently completed draft of the youth strategy discussion paper, ways to improve consultation with youth and identifying ways of promoting the image of youth.

I take this opportunity to make it clear that the Youth Minister's Advisory Council in no way usurps the role of the Youth Advisory Council of Western Australia; in fact, YACWA is represented on the new council.

The establishment of a Youth Minister's Advisory Council is a major step forward for young people in Western Australia. Our young people must be given a voice and the Youth Minister's Advisory Council will provide a ready and easily accessible vehicle for that. I now table the membership of the inaugural Youth Minister's Advisory Council.

[See paper No 295.]

LABOUR RELATIONS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Barnett (Leader of the House), and read a first time.

IRON AND STEEL (MID WEST) AGREEMENT BILL

Second Reading

MR BARNETT (Cottesloe - Minister for Resources Development) [11.13 am] First, I welcome to Western Australia and to the Gallery Madam Woo, who is the Chairperson of An Feng Steel of Taiwan, and her delegation, and also Mr Ken Court, who is the Chairman of Kingstream Resources.

[Applause.]

I move -

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this Bill is to ratify the Iron and Steel (Mid West) Agreement, dated 12 March 1997, between the State of Western Australia, An Feng (Australia) Pty Ltd and Kingstream Resources NL. An Feng (Australia) Pty Ltd

is a wholly owned subsidiary of the second largest steel company in Taiwan, An Feng Steel Ltd. Kingstream Resources NL is a Western Australian public company that has been involved in the development of this project since 1992. An Feng and Kingstream Resources have notified the Australian Stock Exchange and the Securities Commission that it is their intention to merge. This merger will create the An Feng Kingstream Steel Co, which will be an Australian listed company. Due diligence is currently being undertaken on the merger proposal and it is envisaged that the merger will be completed by the middle of 1997. As this agreement has been executed by both of these companies, the merger will not diminish the proponent's obligations under the agreement. This agreement has been negotiated to facilitate the establishment of iron ore mines in the mid-west region and a 1.4 million tonne per annum iron and steel plant which will be situated near Geraldton. The iron ore mines and the iron and steel plant will cost up to \$1.4b. The supporting infrastructure that will be built by the proponents or by companies supporting the project will increase the level of expenditure by up to a further \$1b. The major infrastructure that could be built includes a new, dedicated gas fired power station, an air separation plant and, possibly, a new gas transmission pipeline.

Members will be well aware that it has been the desire of successive State Governments to see some of our vast iron ore resources processed into steel. In 1991, this desire led the Government to invite industry to tender for three exploration licences covering known iron ore deposits in the mid-west region. The Government received tenders from two companies for the exploration licences and it was decided that the licences should be awarded to Kingstream Resources NL. The exploration licences covered the iron ore deposits known as Tallering Peak, Koolanooka and Blue Hills, which are situated between 150 and 200 kilometres to the east of the city of Geraldton. The State Government issued the exploration licences to Kingstream Resources only on the condition that the company investigate the opportunity to process the iron ore. The Government's opinion was then, and still remains, that these deposits are either not large enough or the grade of the iron ore is too low to enable them to be developed as export iron ore mines. They will only be developed, therefore, if significant value can be added to the resource. Following the issuing of the exploration licences, Kingstream Resources undertook studies to assess the feasibility of developing both an open cut iron ore mine at Tallering Peak, and a 700 000 tonne per annum iron and steel plant. The pre-feasibility study was completed in 1992 and the proposed site for the iron and steel plant was to be Mullewa. It was Kingstream's intention to use the higher grade iron ore from Tallering Peak to make direct reduced iron before converting it to steel.

In 1994, Kingstream Resources commenced a detailed feasibility study for the project. The findings of the feasibility study were, among other things, that the output from the iron and steel plant should be increased to 1 million tonnes per annum and that the iron and steel plant should be moved to the Narngulu industrial estate, which is located some 6 km south east of Geraldton. Narngulu was selected because of its proximity to both the city of Geraldton and the port. During 1995 and the first half of 1996, Kingstream Resources sought government support and approval for the iron and steel plant at Narngulu. The Government worked with the company and assisted it with the release, in July 1995, of a public environment review for the 1 million tonne per annum project. The PER was subsequently approved by the Minister for the Environment. The Government also worked with the proponents to identify the infrastructure required for the project and how those requirements could be met.

In May 1996, the project changed dramatically. The Taiwanese company, An Feng Steel Company, announced that it would be joining Kingstream Resources in a joint venture. Not only would An Feng be joining Kingstream, but, with its own demand for steel slab, An Feng brought to the project a ready market. Indeed, in order to meet An Feng's steel requirements, the output from the project had to be significantly increased from the proposed 1 million tonnes to 2.4 million tonnes per year of steel slab. The involvement of An Feng with Kingstream Resources gave the project considerable impetus and a new urgency. Following the announcement of the joint venture, the now joint venture proponents formally sought a state agreement for the project and in June 1996 Cabinet gave its approval for an agreement to be negotiated.

Following the announcement on the increase in size of the project, the State Government sought advice from the proponents and gave careful consideration to such issues as the impact of the project on the city of Geraldton and its environs, the social implications of the project and the impact of the project on Geraldton's transport network. Importantly, the Government also had to take into account the potential for the project to be expanded by the proponents at some future date. For their part, the proponents sought environmental approval from the Minister for the Environment for the expanded 2.4 million tonne iron and steel plant in the Narngulu industrial estate.

By October 1996, both the Government and relevant departments had had the opportunity to consider the project's impact on the region. With the completion of the state agreement negotiations and the subsequent request to Cabinet for its approval, information was brought before Cabinet on the project's impact. Based on the information before it, Cabinet's view was that the Narngulu industrial estate was not the most appropriate site for a project of this size, and it was decided that every endeavour should be used to find a more appropriate site for the project.

In Narngulu's case, the issues that were seen as a problem included:

From an environmental perspective, the iron and steel plant would fill the available airshed in Narngulu and the plant would also come very close to exceeding the noise limits for the site. Furthermore, as the iron and steel plant would be located to the south east of Geraldton, it would be directly in line of the prevailing southerly winds.

The location of the proposed site for the iron and steel plant would be very close to the future highway into Geraldton. As a consequence, the plant would be the city of Geraldton's entry statement and would have a major landscaping impact.

The plant site would also be close to existing and future residential developments and would, no doubt, have an impact on the local communities if only from the perspective of visual amenity and landscape.

The project would need to use the port of Geraldton for both the export of steel and the import of materials such as steel scrap. The total volume of trade through the port directly related to this project would be of the order of 3 million tonnes per year, which is a doubling of the current trade handled by the port. As a result, there would be a significant increase in road traffic, particularly in the number and frequency of heavy vehicles travelling between the port and the iron and steel plant.

Allowing the iron and steel plant to locate in Narngulu would also limit the number of plants that could locate alongside the iron and steel plant. The plant would take up much of the available land and, consequently, the Narngulu industrial estate would have to be expanded.

Finally, if the iron and steel plant were to be located at Narngulu, the character of Geraldton would change from a regional service centre to a heavy industry town. This outcome would surely not suit the aspirations of many of the residents of Geraldton.

The decision by Cabinet to seek an alternative site was a bold move. It committed the Government to finding an alternative site and to assisting the proponents to relocate the project if a new site proved to be suitable. In November 1996, Cabinet decided that there should be a thorough investigation of the proposed Oakajee industrial estate as the preferred option for the project. Oakajee is located 25 km north of Geraldton and it will clearly not have the same impact as Narngulu on the city of Geraldton. Also, it has the advantage of being close to the ocean and, therefore, has the potential to be developed with its own port. The Oakajee option was discussed with the proponents and Government was advised that both Kingstream Resources and An Feng agreed with the Government that Oakajee could be a viable option and offered to work with the Government in its assessment of Oakajee. In deciding to investigate the Oakajee option, Cabinet had also given consideration to the future of the region. If the Oakajee industrial estate is developed, with suitable infrastructure, it will serve the region's needs for a heavy industry site well into the next century.

It has also been apparent for many years that if the mid-west wants to be a participant in the State's expanding mining and minerals processing industry, there must be a deep water port. It is the Government's opinion that a new port at Oakajee should, if possible, be developed by the private sector. To this end, the Government has commissioned studies for a port at Oakajee and will, if the studies prove positive and the project proceeds, be seeking the involvement of the private sector in the port's development. However, for there to be a port, there must be sufficient demand for its services. The Government fully understands that, initially, sufficient demand will not be created by this one project alone to underwrite the development of a new port. Consequently, the port will need to be financially supported by government for a period.

The Government is prepared, however, to commit to supporting the development of this important infrastructure if it proves to be the best option for the region's future. The potential long term benefit to the State and the region of the port development should not be overlooked by members.

If the Oakajee industrial estate and port proceeds, the Government will also actively promote development in the mid-west region in order to increase the port's usage. Furthermore, the Government is already aware of another iron ore processing project that has expressed an interest in the proposed industrial estate and port.

This agreement, therefore, makes provision for the iron and steel plant to be located in the proposed Oakajee industrial estate. If it is subsequently found that the Oakajee proposal is not feasible, the proponents can elect to establish the project on another site.

I now provide some background information on the project proposed for the Oakajee industrial estate. It is the intention of the proponents to initially mine the Tallering Peak iron ore deposit, which is situated 60 kilometres north of Mullewa and approximately 150 km north east of Geraldton. The mine will produce more than 3 million tonnes of iron ore per year. The ore will be railed from Tallering Peak to the iron and steel plant. Once mining of Tallering

Peak has been completed, in possibly eight to 10 years, the Government has been advised by the proponents that the project will turn its attention to the Koolanooka deposit, which is situated near Morawa.

The iron and steel plant at Oakajee will include a mill to produce iron pellets, two direct reduction plants and electric arc furnaces for the production of steel. The steel will be cast into slabs which will weigh approximately 20 tonnes. When in full operation, the steel mill will produce steel slabs worth approximately \$700m per annum. By converting the iron ore to steel, the project could be adding better than five times the value to the iron ore. This is a very significant increase in value. To put this figure into perspective, in 1996 Western Australia exported more than 133 million tonnes of iron ore worth close to \$3b. If this project proceeds, it could increase iron ore production by only 3 per cent but could increase the value of iron related exports by almost 25 per cent. It is the proponent's intention to export all of the steel slabs to Taiwan where they will be hot rolled and further processed in An Feng's existing rolling mills.

The State will benefit directly from this project through such taxes as payroll tax and royalties. When the project is in full production, the annual revenue, based on today's dollars, from these two sources alone could be of the order of \$5m.

There will also be significant benefits through the additional employment the project will create. During construction, up to 2 000 workers will be required to build the iron and steel plant, while the operational workforce at the iron ore mine and the iron and steel plant will be in the vicinity of 1 000 workers. The project will also have a significant flow-on effect on a diverse range of industries both in the mid-west region and in the State as a whole, that will benefit from supporting the project during construction and operation.

Subject to the approval of the boards of both companies and the raising of finance for the project, the Government has been advised that construction could commence as early as the second half of 1997. If construction commences in 1997, the first steel slabs could be exported to Taiwan by the turn of the century.

I now turn my attention to the specific provisions of the agreement scheduled to the Bill before the House. Clause 1 of the schedule defines the terms used throughout the agreement and clause 2 provides the legal interpretation of how the agreement is to be generally read. Clause 3 requires the State to introduce and ratify the agreement prior to 30 June 1997 or such later date as may be agreed with me, and provides that the main part of the agreement comes into effect only upon ratification of the agreement. Clause 4 deals with the initial obligations of the proponents to undertake engineering, environmental, heritage, marketing and financial studies for the purposes of the project. The proponents are required to keep me informed on their progress.

Clause 5 relates to the proponents' submitting detailed proposals to me for approval. These proposals must be submitted prior to 31 December 1998. Clause 6 relates to the procedures that must be followed in my consideration of the proposals. Upon receipt of proposals, I may, subject to the Environmental Protection Act and laws relating to native title, approve the proposals wholly or in part; or defer a decision until such time as the proponents submit further proposals; or impose a condition before giving approval.

The proponents are to be notified of my decision in respect of the proposals within two months of their submission. This is provided there has been compliance with the requirements of the Environmental Protection Act and laws relating to native title. If I do not approve the proposals, there is a procedure by which the agreement can ultimately be terminated. Once proposals have been approved, the proponents must implement them.

Clause 7 enables the proponents, at some future date, to submit additional proposals if they wish to significantly alter or expand their activities under proposals that have already been approved. Under clause 8, the State will grant to the proponents, at their request, mining leases over land at Koolanooka and Blue Hills currently covered by existing exploration licences. The mining leases will be subject to the Mining Act as modified by this agreement and will be for a period of 21 years with a right to an automatic extension for two further periods of 21 years.

In the case of the Blue Hills exploration licence, the proponents are required to explore this land within 10 years of this agreement being ratified, and in accordance with an approved program. The proponents must provide the results of this exploration to the Department of Minerals and Energy.

It should be noted by members that the Tallering Peak deposit, which is likely to be the first deposit mined by the proponents, is already the subject of a mining lease issued under the Mining Act. This Mining Act lease will continue for the purposes of the project. I also emphasise that this agreement requires that all of the iron ore mined from the mining tenements must be processed in the iron and steel plant in accordance with the approved proposals.

Clause 9 relates to royalties. The proponents shall pay to the State royalties on the iron ore mined for the purposes of the project as prescribed in the regulations to the Mining Act. The royalty rates applicable to the project will be modified to take into account the level of processing undertaken in the project. The discounting of the royalty rates

will be in accordance with the regime previously approved by Cabinet and is applicable to all processors of iron ore. The discount on the base royalty rates applies to all types of ore and is 0.5 per cent for iron pellets, 1 per cent for direct reduced iron and 2 per cent for steel.

As the iron ore used in the iron and steel plant is not sold but is processed into steel, imputed values will be used for the purposes of calculating the royalty. The basis for the imputed values will be an average of the prices applicable to a range of fines and lump ores currently exported from the Pilbara. This imputed value will be discounted by 15 per cent to take into account the obvious disadvantage that will be experienced by an iron ore producer in the mid-west region seeking to compete on the international market with the existing producers in the Pilbara.

The agreement specifies that the royalty rates, currently applicable, will be fixed for a period of 14 years from the commencement date of the agreement. At the conclusion of the 14 year period, the royalties will be calculated at the rates prescribed under the Mining Act as amended from time to time. The purpose of fixing the royalty rate is to give certainty to the proponents during the early years of the iron and steel plant's operation

Clause 10 relates to accommodation, housing and details of the temporary accommodation at the mine sites. The proponents are to confer with me with a view to assisting in the provision of any additional amenities required in existing towns used to house the proponent's mining workforce. The proponents will be restricted to a maximum of 20 employees that can be resident on a mine site. The purpose of this restriction is to ensure that the mine workforce and the proponents themselves become a part of the local community and do not remain remote, providing little or no benefit to the local community. I emphasise to members that there will be no fly in, fly out associated with this project.

Clause 11 explains the process by which decisions will be made on the Oakajee industrial estate and the adjacent port. As this clause is fundamental to the agreement, I will provide a synopsis of each of the 11 subclauses. Subclause (1) defines the terms "feasible" and "feasibility" in relation to this clause. Subclause (2) acknowledges that, if feasible, the State wishes to establish an industrial estate, a port and associated facilities at Oakajee while the proponents, if feasible, also wish to establish their iron and steel plant at Oakajee and use the port. Subclause (3) requires both the State and the proponents to promptly undertake their respective studies and obtain environmental and other approvals for the Oakajee industrial estate, the port and the iron and steel plant at Oakajee.

Subclause (4) requires the parties to keep each other informed, in writing and on a monthly basis, as to progress regarding matters under subclause (3). Subclause (5) allows the proponents access to crown land for the purposes of subclause (3). Subclause (6) acknowledges that any industrial site and port at Oakajee would be designed to cater for this particular project and for the future needs of other projects in the mid-west region.

Subclause (7) provides for consultation after 30 April 1997, and if either party's proposal is considered not to be economically or financially feasible, by both parties, neither will be obliged to give further consideration to Oakajee. If either party considers that the assessment of the Oakajee proposal should continue, then the feasibility studies and the consultation between both parties must continue. If the decision after 30 April is to proceed further, subclause (8) provides that the parties shall consult again after 30 June 1997 on the feasibility of both proposals under this clause.

Subclause (9) requires, if both parties agree that the proposals under this clause are feasible, that the location and size of the Oakajee plant site for the iron and steel plant be finalised by 31 July 1997. If the Oakajee option is considered by both parties to be feasible, subclause (10) requires that the proponents submit proposals, under clause 5 of this agreement, based on the iron and steel plant and power station being established at Oakajee.

Subclause (11) is the final subclause and it applies if the Oakajee plant site is not feasible and requires the proponents to submit proposals under clause 5, based on the iron and steel plant and power station being located elsewhere and allowing for it to be at the original site in Narngulu.

Clause 12 of the agreement requires that the State grant to the proponents, in accordance with the proposals that I have approved, leases, licences and other titles that provide appropriate tenure to the proponents for matters such as access roads, construction camps and other facilities. Subclause (5) of clause 12 provides that the term of any tenure granted under this clause be 63 years from the commencement date of this agreement, with a right of renewal for a further 10 years if need be. These leases, licences and other titles will terminate, however, if the proponents cease to operate the iron and steel plant for a period of 12 months.

Clause 13 enables the State to resume land which is necessary for the project, but any resumption will be at the expense of the proponent.

Clause 14 refers to the protection and management of the environment. This is a standard clause used in all modern state agreements to ensure that the project is subject to all of the necessary requirements of the Environmental Protection Act.

Clause 15 deals with issues related to the use of local labour, professional services and materials. The proponents must submit reports to me on a monthly basis, concerning the implementation of the local content requirements. I intend to ensure that, wherever feasible, local labour and services are used.

Clause 16 details the State's and the proponents' rights and obligations with respect to the construction, maintenance and upgrading of both private and public roads. Clause 17 requires that the State grant to the proponents a mining lease to obtain stone, sand, clay and gravel for the construction of works under approved proposals.

Clause 18 is the water clause. This is a major clause in the agreement and I will comment briefly on the major subclauses. Subclauses (1) and (2) require that the parties agree on the project's water requirements and that the project's water requirements are met in accordance with existing laws, unless otherwise provided under this clause. Subclause (3) provides that the proponents can draw their water requirements from an existing water scheme, from a new scheme developed by the proponents or a third party, or a combination of these. Subclause (4) gives the proponents the right to explore for water, at their own cost, and to develop a viable source. Subclause (5) requires the State to grant to the proponents licences to develop and draw water requirements from suitable sources. The subclause also requires the State to licence the proponents to discharge waste water in an environmentally responsible manner. Subclauses (6) to (8) deal with the issues of licences and the fact that a royalty will not be payable on water consumed by the project. Subclause (9) provides that where the water source is beneath land, other than Crown land, the proponents need to make appropriate arrangements with the owner of the land for access to the water source. Subclause (10) requires the proponents to construct and operate the mine and plant to ensure the efficient use of water to the extent that it is economic and practical.

Clause 19 of the agreement is the electricity clause, and it allows the proponents to establish and operate a gas fired power station located either within or adjacent to the iron and steel plant. The project will also have access to existing and future electricity transmission facilities in order to supply electricity to other consumers in the industrial estate in which the power station is located. The proponents will also be able, where it is technically and economically feasible, to use the Western Power grid to transmit electricity to their own operations located elsewhere in the mid- west region.

Clause 20 is the natural gas transmission clause. It is also a key clause in this agreement. Subclause (2) states that the proponents are required to submit to me gas transmission proposals which may provide for gas transmission services by means of a pipeline from the north west of the State to the iron and steel plant and the power station.

Subclause (3) requires the proponents to demonstrate to my satisfaction that the information they have provided to the State's Gas Corporation, AlintaGas, is the same information that was provided to other parties from whom they expected to receive submissions for the provision of gas transmission services. The proponents must demonstrate to me that they allowed the Gas Corporation at least one month to make submissions for the provision of gas transmission services; that they considered the submissions made by the Gas Corporation; and that all reasonable endeavours were made to enter into an agreement with the corporation.

If the proponents are not able to reach agreement with the Gas Corporation, subclause (4) requires that, if a new pipeline forms part of the gas transmission proposals, the proponents provide me with the information that would normally be required under the Petroleum Pipelines Act. Subclause (5) provides that the gas transmission proposals may include gas storage and recovery arrangements for the operation of the iron and steel plant and power station. Subclause (6) provides that the gas transmission pipeline may include capacity for the requirements of third party industries which are reasonably expected to be located in the industrial estate in which the iron and steel plant is situated or elsewhere north of latitude 29 south. Subclause (7) provides that if the proponents have not complied with subclause (3), the subclause dealing with AlintaGas, I may refuse to consider or make a decision on their gas transmission proposals.

Subclause (8) amends the provisions of the Petroleum Pipelines Act and the Energy Corporation (Powers) Act for the purposes of this agreement. The agreement also enables me to issue a pipeline licence under the Iron and Steel (Mid West) Agreement.

If the proponents decide to transport gas through a new pipeline, subclause (9) requires the State to issue a pipeline licence to the proponents, on their application. This is provided that the proponents have commenced construction on the site of the iron and steel plant and have provided me with evidence, to my satisfaction, that they have spent or committed to spend at least \$100m on the site. The licence will be subject to reasonable terms and conditions and will also be subject to all of the provisions of the Petroleum Pipelines Act, except where amended by this agreement.

The term of any licence will be for 21 years, with two automatic extensions, each for a period of 21 years. On determination or expiration of the agreement, the pipeline licence can continue for the unexpired period of the then current term, subject to the requirements of the Petroleum Pipelines Act.

Clause 21 of the agreement deals with the provision of rail services for the project. The major provisions of this clause are: Subclause (1) allows the proponents to use rail or road transport, whichever is preferred by the proponents, for transport between the minesites, plant site and the port. Subclause (2) requires that the proponents use reasonable endeavours to develop equitable arrangements with Westrail for the project's rail transport requirements. If agreement cannot be reached with Westrail, under subclause (4) the proponents can submit proposals to me for their own railway.

Subclause (3) provides for agreements with regard to the possible upgrading of Westrail's existing railway between Geraldton and Morawa; the extension of the railway to the possible mines at Talling Peak, Koolanooka and Blue Hills; the possible carriage by Westrail of the proponents' ore and finished product using its existing or new infrastructure; and the possible carriage of the ore required in the iron and steel plant on a railway owned and operated by the proponents or a third party. Subclauses (5) to (9) of clause 21 set out the conditions under which I will permit a private railway to operate and ensures that there is third party access to the railway.

Clause 22 refers to arrangements that will be put in place if the Geraldton port's existing facilities are used by the project. This clause will, therefore, come into full effect only if the iron and steel plant is built at Narngulu. The clause defines the berth and storage area that will be used by the project and the conditions that will be applied if the designated berth is used. The intention of the Geraldton Port Authority and the proponents is to enter into an agreement that will give the proponents priority usage of berth 6. If the proponents desire to obtain exclusive use of berth 6, the agreement allows this to occur, provided that the proponents pay for the construction of a new berth in the Port of Geraldton similar to the berth which will be provided on an exclusive basis.

Clause 23 is the Oakajee infrastructure clause. This clause addresses the fact that if it is agreed by both parties that the iron and steel plant will be located in Oakajee, it will be on a site that is currently lacking the necessary infrastructure, and it therefore deals with the provision of that infrastructure.

Subclause (1) states that this clause applies only where the parties reach agreement on the location of the Oakajee plant site under the process described in clause 11.

Subclause (2) requires the State to lease to the proponents the Oakajee plant site for a period of up to five years at an annual rental of 10 per cent of the value of the land. The proponents may purchase the site for an amount equal to the value of the land only when the proponents are able to demonstrate to me, as the Minister, that construction of the iron and steel plant has commenced and they have spent or committed to spend at least \$100m on construction. Under subclause (2) the State is also required to set aside an additional 100 hectares of land in the Oakajee industrial estate for a period of up to 15 years from the commencement date. To be able to buy the land, the proponent must demonstrate the need for the land by increasing production or further processing the steel.

Subclause (3) requires the State to construct or upgrade public roads between the Oakajee plant site and the Geraldton Port which are necessary for the operation of the plant, power station and ancillary facilities. The cost of any road upgrading has yet to be determined, but it could be several million dollars.

Subclause (4) allows the proponents to obtain water required at the plant site from the Water Corporation, a water supply scheme developed by the proponents or another licensed water service provider. Where the proponents elect to obtain water from the Water Corporation, the State shall meet the capital costs of providing the iron and steel plant's water requirements where the capital cost exceeds that which would be applicable to the corporation supplying a similar amount and quality of water to the proponents at the Narngulu plant site. This additional capital cost will not be reflected in the charges paid by the proponents for the supply of water. Detailed costings for the provision of water to the Oakajee site have not yet been completed. It is currently estimated that the additional capital cost that will be met by the State Government could be of the order of \$8m. Where the water is obtained from a supply scheme operated by the proponents or any other licensed water service provider, the State has no obligation to contribute towards the capital costs incurred by the proponents or the water service provider.

Subclause (5) refers to the supply of electricity to the Oakajee site and applies only where it is obtained from the State's electricity corporation. This supply is limited to 20 megawatts and is for general usage. It specifically excludes the use of the electricity in the project's electric arc furnaces. The State shall meet the capital costs of providing the iron and steel plant's electricity requirements where the cost exceeds that which would be applicable to the supply of the same amount of electricity to the Narngulu plant site. These capital costs that are paid by the State will not be reflected in charges paid by the proponents for electricity. The detailed costings for the provision

of electricity to the Oakajee site have yet to be completed. It is currently estimated that the additional capital cost that will be met by the State Government could be of the order of \$3m.

Subclause (6) requires the State to construct a railway between the Oakajee plant site and the existing Geraldton to Mullewa railway line. The State shall meet the capital cost of building the railway line and will not seek to recover that capital expenditure in charges paid by the proponents for rail services. Detailed costings for the provision of the railway line between the Oakajee site and the existing railway have yet to be completed. It is currently estimated that the capital cost that will be met by the State Government could be of the order of \$30m. If the Port of Geraldton is used by the project for a period of time prior to the coming into operation of the Oakajee port, the State will also meet the cost of maintaining the railway between the Oakajee plant site and the Port of Geraldton.

Subclause (7) requires the State or a private owner-operator to construct and operate a port at Oakajee suitable for the needs of the project. The port will enable the project to use considerably larger vessels than those that would have been available to the project were it to use the existing port at Geraldton. This port should include -

a berth - without loading equipment - to load steel slab on a Panamax vessel;

a berth - without loading or offloading equipment - to load general cargo and off-load steel scrap and general cargo from a Handimax vessel; and

a road network in the port for vehicles - including steel slab carriers of up to 160 tonnes gross weight.

The State shall use all reasonable endeavours to enable the construction of the port at Oakajee to be completed as soon as practicable and, in any event, not later than five years after the commencement of construction of the iron and steel plant. In the interim, the parties acknowledge that it may be necessary to use the existing port at Geraldton. Detailed costings for the port at Oakajee have yet to be completed. The initial estimates costed the port at \$262m.

As previously stated, when the parties agree that clause 23 will come into effect, the obligations of clause 22 - the "Geraldton Port Facilities" clause - will not apply.

The remaining clauses are mainly procedural in nature and are standard to modern state agreement Acts. These clauses deal with zoning, rating, no discriminatory rates, no resumption, indemnity, assignment, variation to the agreement, force majeure, power to extend periods, consultation, arbitration, determination of the agreement, effect of determination of the agreement and notices.

I would like to bring two of the remaining clauses to the attention of the House. Clause 39 relates to the term of the agreement. The agreement will operate for up to 63 years from the date of ratification. It should be noted that provision exists for the parties to meet in the fiftieth year after the commencement of the agreement to consider whether the term of the agreement should be extended.

Clause 41 is the stamp duty clause. The agreement provides for limited stamp duty exemption on specific instruments for a period of three years. Additionally, any stamp duty already paid before the commencement date on an exempted document or instrument will be refunded.

In conclusion, this project has the potential to be one of the most important developments ever to happen in Western Australia. I am of the firm belief that if this project proceeds, it will not only signal the commencement of a new era for the mid-west region, but will make a major contribution towards the transformation of Western Australia from a quarry to the world to a renowned supplier of metals and processed materials. This agreement will send a clear signal to this State's neighbours in the Asia-Pacific region that Western Australia wants to be an active participant in the region's steel industry. For its part, the State will realise its longstanding desire of more than 30 years of seeing its iron ore converted to steel in Western Australia. For the An Feng Steel Co this project realises its desire to integrate its rolling mills in Taiwan with its own steel production facilities.

The commitment to this agreement and the possible development of the Oakajee industrial estate and port are decisions which the Government has not taken lightly. There will be a cost to the State. The decision has been taken with the future in mind and we must seize opportunities when they arise. I look forward to the completion of all the work required to bring about the commencement of the project. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Grill.

STATE TRADING CONCERNS AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

MR OMODEI (Warren-Blackwood - Minister for Local Government) [11.47 am]: I move -

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of the Bill is to amend the State Trading Concerns Act. Subject to a minor wording change initiated by the Parliamentary Counsel, this Bill is identical to the State Trading Concerns Amendment Bill 1996 which received its second reading on 17 October 1996.

The Government supports the underlying philosophy of the State Trading Concerns Act, which prohibits governments from entering into any business beyond the usual functions of State Government unless expressly authorised by Parliament. Therefore, the Bill, as drafted, will retain this important feature. However, legal advice has called into question the ability of departments to provide and market a wide range of services and products which clearly would not have been contemplated to be prohibited by the Act. The effect has proved a disincentive for departments to identify new sources of revenue which financial management reforms, such as net appropriations for departments, were intended to encourage. These include pay for use or cost recovery arrangements. Members will appreciate that commercialisation of the services and products to which I refer would reduce a department's dependence on general revenues and help to ease the burden on the taxpayers of this State.

In particular, this Government recognises the benefits that international projects can bring to the State through the export of public sector knowledge, skills and technology in participation with the private sector. Participation in international business ventures benefits the State, provides future trade opportunities and further enhances the economy and culture of Western Australia.

Clause 5 of the Bill will enable the Treasurer to authorise by regulation individual departments or sub-departments to carry on an activity involving the provision of goods, information or intellectual property; scientific, technical, education, training, management or advisory services; and advertising opportunities, which would include sponsorships.

The categories of activities specified in the Bill will facilitate the Government's commercialisation and export of public sector expertise initiatives in a limited form while still preserving the general constraint on the Government entering into business activities.

The requirement for activities to be prescribed provides an additional safeguard as the regulations will be subject to scrutiny and the power of disallowance by the Parliament.

The Crown Solicitor has advised that in addition to the Treasurer's power to authorise agencies to conduct a specific activity, there needs to be a power which will allow the agencies to charge for the services they provide. Therefore, clause 5 also provides for the Minister to set a fee or charge and to delegate that power to the chief executive officer of the agency. For administrative convenience the Bill also allows a fee or charge to be set in accordance with a procedure approved by the Minister.

Members will note that the Bill does not extend to statutory authorities or statutory positions which operate under the framework of a department, as their powers should be spelt out in their enabling legislation.

This Bill provides an important step forward in advancing the Government's financial management reforms. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Cunningham.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Motion, as Amended

Resumed from 18 March.

MR MARLBOROUGH (Peel) [11.50 am]: I take this opportunity to talk about one of the most insidious events that is happening currently in this State in the area of law and order. The Government pontificates and tries to convince this Parliament that it has introduced the correct regime to lower the incidence of crime and to put in place appropriate police numbers and standards that will protect the community, while at the same time it is assisting criminals to continue to operate without the law being able to touch them. I will highlight this concern by pointing to a specific case where criminals can steal money from innocent people, and having carried out that crime can remain free from the courts.

Presently, the Attorney General is having an argument with his federal counterpart. He has said that the State will not provide money from the legal aid budget; therefore, this case cannot progress and no action can be taken against the offender. On the other hand, when the Attorney General or the Government see an opportunity for political point scoring by processing a matter before the courts, mysteriously money is found. I intend to concentrate on a case where little people have been stung to the tune of millions of dollars by an offender who has already been before the

courts, but the action has been halted because of the Attorney General's and the Government's lack of interest in the process of law in this State.

The case in question relates to a Mr Anastasis Darcy Papas, who for many years operated in the community as an agent for the AMP company. Most of his dealings with the public were conducted on the basis that he was a well known AMP agent. He would sell his investment opportunities on the basis that the entire AMP organisation stood behind him. Therefore, many people visited Mr Papas to invest their life savings in whatever manner he suggested because they were confident that Mr Papas, having been an agent for the AMP for 15 years, had behind him the entire AMP network. I intend to illustrate how innocent people are being victimised by the standards set by this Government in its approach to the legal process in this State.

One person who went to see Mr Papas was Mr Carlo Lenzarini, a member of a hardworking Italian family. Mr Papas convinced Mr Lenzarini that he should put his family's life savings of \$96 000 into a company known as WA Furniture Industries. Mr Papas indicated that the company had the full support of the AMP organisation.

Mr Trenorden: Hardly likely! I am no friend of the AMP, but it is hardly likely that the agent would have complete AMP support.

Mr MARLBOROUGH: I do not dispute that. I am outlining how Mr Papas operated, and he was successful enough to be facing charges of taking more than \$4m from the Mr Lenzarinis of this State! Mr Papas convinced Mr Lenzarini to invest his \$96 000 in that company, but within a few weeks the company was in trouble. Knowing that, Mr Papas went one step further. He convinced Mr Lenzarini and a Mr Keightley that one way to help secure their investment - which was looking a bit dodgy - was to become company directors of WA Furniture Industries. To that end, they signed on as company directors. During that time, the company had set about purchasing some goods. One purchase was a four wheel drive Pajero from Halberts Mitsubishi Suzuki. This occurred in 1994 and the purchase price of the vehicle was \$56 000. It is worth noting that at that time the cost of a new Pajero was \$45 000. That leads me to the broader question of who was involved in setting the price of the Pajero, which normally sold for \$45 000. The question in the minds of many people is how far did Mr Papas involve other people in this web of deceit and theft. My constituents, who have lost their money, are suspicious about the role played by Halberts. They are also suspicious about the credit company involved, Advance Leasing. I will talk about Advance Leasing Ltd in some detail later. It is the leasing company of the Bank of South Australia, and we are all aware of the sorry history of that bank.

Mr Lenzarini and Mr Keightley had become company directors, three weeks before the company purchased the vehicle, a Pajero, for the cost of \$56 000. Within a short time Advance Leasing moved to repossess the vehicle even though the current manager of the furniture company had, after the company went broke, continued to meet the monthly payments of \$840 on the vehicle. The leasing company was concerned about repossessing the vehicle because of a number of factors, not the least of which was the end result: After repossession the vehicle was sold for \$27 000, just weeks after it had been purchased as a new vehicle for \$56 000.

At this stage the case will not go to court, although it should be heard in a court. The questions in the minds of my constituents are: Was anyone at Advance Leasing involved in this action which saw the vehicle sold for \$27 000 some weeks after it was purchased new for \$57 000 and in Mr Lenzarini and Mr Keightley being asked to pay the shortfall of \$18 000? My constituents were also concerned that Advance Leasing set out to obtain their signatures as directors, even though they had held those positions for fewer than three weeks at the time of purchase. Under the terms of the finance agreement, Advance Leasing obtained the signatures of those two directors; however, in their haste to sell this vehicle, they omitted important requirements under the Credit Act. I will be happy to table this document from Advance Leasing headed "The Finance Lease Terms and Conditions". That document required the signatures of the directors of WA Furniture Industries, whose parent company is Orense Pty Ltd. In the leasing company's haste to sell the vehicle it omitted to have in place the guarantor certificate. That section of the finance agreement was left blank.

Mr Trenorden: Guarantor certificates are useless in law.

Mr MARLBOROUGH: It is interesting that the member for Avon should say that. I do not know that much about the law; however, members on both sides of the House spent a lot of time on both the old and the new Credit Act putting in place safeguards that would, hopefully, protect the Mr Lenzarinis of the world. Those protections were based on disclosure.

Mr Trenorden: Many people have lost substantial assets by becoming guarantors for their children and other people. Courts have overturned those guarantor certificates quite regularly in recent years.

Mr MARLBOROUGH: I do not doubt that has happened. Advance Leasing set out to rectify its omission of the guarantors' signatures when it sold the vehicle for \$27 000. They attempted to get both Mr Lenzarini and Mr

Keightley to sign new documents on the basis that the vehicle had been sold in a different manner. Thankfully, neither one of those directors, who held positions in that company for three weeks - a company that had been recommended to them by Mr Papas - signed that document.

Mr Trenorden: When the vehicle was repossessed what was owed?

Mr MARLBOROUGH: I stated earlier that the shortfall was \$18 000. The picture I am painting of Mr Papas is of a person who went out of his way over many years with many clients to deliberately steal money from them. He did not mind how he operated as long as he maximised his returns. In this case he has ruined the lives of Mr Carlo Lenzarini and his family. They are broke. They do not have any resources. They have lost \$96 000, which they had borrowed to invest. They owe \$18 000 on a car they did not own or even drive. It was used by the company during its existence beyond the purchase date of the vehicle. Mr Papas is still a free man, although charges were laid against him. I will come to that issue. On the one hand, the Government states that it is accountable - as members opposite did when they were elected four years ago - and it will set the standard for law and order in this State to protect the people. On the other hand, since taking office, the Government has denuded itself of most of the responsibilities of government. The Government sold to the private sector just about anything that stood still for half a minute. One wonders these days what the Government manages. The bottom line is that if it managed no government facilities at all - if it privatised the hospitals, prison system and fire brigades - the least it should do as a Government would be to protect its citizens.

Mr Trenorden: Not even Robin Hood had a bow that big.

Mr MARLBOROUGH: The Government has not even got the string and timber to make the bow! In the four years members opposite have been in government, while they have pontificated about law and order, the crime figures have blown out of all proportion. We are faced with more crime. On the radio this morning the Minister for Transport, a member of the National Party, said that it was no longer safe for anybody to walk the streets of Perth. That is where law and order is today. After the horrific incident this week, where another young woman is missing in this State, the Minister for Transport says it is no longer safe for anybody to walk the streets of Perth. Part of the reason it is no longer safe, and criminal elements can continue to operate without fear of prosecution, is the insidious approach to law being generated by this Government through the Attorney General. This approach says that the State Government will not provide funds for Legal Aid to hear the cases of criminals such as Mr Papas before the court; although, it is a different story if the Government thinks it can make some political mileage out of taking people to court for victimless crimes. We have a string of victims who have lost over \$4m to Mr Papas. The Government is not in the process of taking Mr Papas to court. The Attorney General has blamed the Federal Government for the lack of funds. The Federal Government wants legal aid money that it provides to be used for breaches of commonwealth law. In the mean time, the Mr Lenzarinis and Mr Keightleys of this world are left floundering, penniless, while criminals such as Mr Papas walk away from prosecution.

Mr Trenorden: I thought you said Mr Papas has been charged.

Mr MARLBOROUGH: Yes, but his case cannot be processed. It is a classic. The victims suffer, and Mr Papas sits on his hands scot-free. I do not know why people would bother putting on a mask and robbing a bank; all they need do is set themselves up in business! They will then be protected in a system by the National Party, which obtained 5 per cent of the vote in this State, whose members make up numbers in here and have never once spoken out against these criminals being kept out of the courts. I will bet any money that many of the victims of Mr Papas come from the country. Let us see what has happened to Mr Papas. In a letter dated 13 December 1996 Detective Sergeant Lok states -

Mr Papas appeared in the District Court Perth on Wednesday 11 December 1996 and through his solicitor made application to Judge Hammond to have the prosecution of him adjourned.

Mr Papas informed the court that he did not have any money to pay for his legal defence of the charges and an application to Legal Aid had been refused.

Mr Papas is to make application to the Attorney General for an ex gratia payment to finance his defence. Should this be refused -

This is a man who, on some calculations, has stolen over \$4m from people in Western Australia -

- it is unlikely that Mr Papas will be prosecuted for offences he is alleged to have committed.

Case Law by way of the 'Dietrich' decision suggests that Mr Papas cannot be tried unless he is legally represented.

Of course he should be legally represented. There is no argument about that. It goes on -

A letter will be written to the Attorney General outlining the circumstances of this case and requesting that consideration be given to funding Mr Papas' defence to enable justice to be done.

Mr Wiese: Do you believe the information in that letter is correct? My understanding is that he certainly can be prosecuted but that if it goes to appeal, the decision will almost automatically be overturned. The interpretation in that letter is not correct.

Mr MARLBOROUGH: Why will it be overturned?

Mr Wiese: Because of the Dietrich decision.

Mr MARLBOROUGH: I thank the member for that interjection. We are being told that the letter might not be accurate in its timing, but the end result set out in the letter will remain the same. The key element is that at some stage during the legal process, Mr Papas will not receive legal aid. He has been recognised as having no money. Somewhere within the process someone will say, "Even though we determine you have no money and you should be represented by a lawyer, the process will not present you with a lawyer and will not therefore present the opportunity for your prosecution." The only thing the letter may be out of step with is the timing of when legal aid may not be available to Papas. That is not the issue at all. The key issue is that under this Government's policies, criminals like Papas are walking free. How can people, families, believe their investments are secure -

Mr Wiese: How do you suggest we overturn the High Court of Australia's decision? No appeal can be brought against a High Court judgment.

Mr MARLBOROUGH: It is no wonder the member is no longer the Minister for Police. I thought those opposite reckoned he had done not a bad job. By comparison with the job done by the then Attorney General, the member for Kingsley, he was streets in front because she knew nothing about law and order. At least he was trying hard. I thought, on the basis of his not doing a bad job, those opposite may have tapped him on the shoulder and told him to step aside for a younger person. It is fairly obvious why he sits where he does - he does not have a clue! I am not suggesting we apply to have the decision of the High Court overturned. I am saying that all people in the land should have the ability to be represented in a court of law by a defence lawyer.

That is not the issue. The issue is that this State Government wants to try to kid the people of Western Australia that it will protect their rights, look after their security and that of their sons and daughters; but when it comes to the corporate sector, people like Mr Papas can rip \$4m off families in this State and the Government will allow a system to remain in place that will not get him to court and take him through the processes. That is because the State Government is arguing with the Federal Government over who is responsible for allocating funding to so-called commonwealth or state matters or, more importantly, because at both a federal level and a state level the budget for legal aid has been reduced. That is the real issue. While the Government is going through that process of negotiation, Mr Lenzarini simply becomes a statistic on the red side of the ledger. It is part of the process of downsizing the public sector and the Government looking at only core issues. It has decided that Mr Lenzarini's case and the many people who have been caught by Mr Papas and people like him are not part of a core industry; they are part of a group of people whom the Government is not interested in protecting. The Government's decision not to fund legal aid allows Mr Papas to sit at home today, without prosecution because we cannot get him to court as a result of the fact that we do not have the money to pay his legal fees. Meanwhile, the victims continue to pay the price.

I ask members this: How can my constituents or those in any part of Western Australia be convinced that this Government has their best interests at heart? The Government talks about police numbers, moving public servants into police stations to do the keyboarding, computerisation, and building new police stations with bricks and mortar. It thinks law and order is all about police numbers and upgrading standards. However, we in this place and members of the public know Governments in a democratic society have an absolutely fundamental responsibility to look after the needs of the community. Certain things simply cannot be fobbed off to the private sector. This Government will be judged by how it looks after the fundamental needs of people. One of the fundamental needs of the Lenzarini family and the Keightley family is to see justice done. On many occasions when the member for Wagin was the Minister for Police he was on his feet arguing the need for justice to be seen to be done, and rightly so.

Mr Wiese: I am saying that guy should be brought to the courts and should be prosecuted, despite Dietrich, and that is where the responsibility is. If he goes to court and the court finds him guilty, we should then worry about what happens after that. He should be prosecuted. I agree with you totally. That is the problem we have always had in the Police Service.

Mr MARLBOROUGH: I do not know quite what the member means. His point may well be that the Dietrich judgment should be set aside so that people like Papas can be taken into court, without legal representation, but I do not agree with it. I have not reached a position at my stage of life where I believe people should go to court without

representation. Of course they should have the right of representation. That is not at issue. This is about a lack of funding, a lack of commitment, an Attorney General who has decided to make Mr Carlo Lenzarini and his family and Mr Keightley the victims. Anastasis Darcy Papas set out with a plan in mind to defraud these people of their life savings. These people will continue to be the victims while the Government continues to ignore its responsibilities by not putting in place the appropriate funding to take Mr Papas to court to make sure he faces proper judgment, to make sure the Lenzarinis of this world do not simply become another victim, to make sure people like Anastasis Darcy Papas are taken out of circulation and not allowed to hide behind company and family names when setting up other companies trying to rip people off.

I urge the Government to move rapidly and I ask those opposite to ascertain from the Attorney General why he continues to refuse to fund this case. It is a reflection on this Government's attitude to law and order. The National Party in particular should be aware that many a battling farmer will be looking to invest in more stable economic ventures. They are in danger of being convinced by the Papases of this world to put their money into certain areas and consequently of being ripped off. They deserve the Government's protection.

Amendment to Motion, as Amended

Mr MARLBOROUGH: I move -

That the following words be added to the motion -

but we regret to advise Your Excellency that the State Government has committed substantial sums of taxpayers' money to the Global Dance Foundation with no guarantee of a return for taxpayers; and further, this House calls on the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee to investigate the granting of public funds to Global Dance Foundation.

DR GALLOP (Victoria Park - Leader of the Opposition) [12.20 pm]: I support the amendment moved by the member for Peel. Obviously one of the major tasks facing any Government in Western Australia is the development of its State's tourism industry. Many elements are involved in the development of a sound tourism industry. If Governments of the day are successful with their tourism strategies, the spinoffs are enormous and can result in many secure jobs for the people of our State.

The many aspects involved in developing that industry are the creation of good infrastructure and facilities, an active, outward looking industry with high standards and very good promotion strategies throughout Australia and overseas. Bringing together all those elements has been the subject of attention of all States and, to some extent in recent years, the Commonwealth. Various arguments have been made about how that can be best done. One of the big questions facing Governments is to what extent we develop our tourism strategy around major events. We must make strategic decisions about the distribution of dollars allocated to tourism. Should the money be invested in a generalised strategy of promotion and infrastructure support or should it be focused on major events that become the lever by which we try to develop the more generalised strategy?

Over the past couple of decades a major events-type strategy has been developed in Western Australia. The conclusions we can reach about that are patchy. Some of the major events have proved to be beneficial for the State, but others have not. Difficult decisions must be made about how many dollars we put into that promotional basket. Since the election, this issue has come into focus as a result of what is now known as the Elle Racing fiasco and the Global Dance Foundation issue. The Opposition will continue to ask questions and pursue the Government in relation to the Elle Racing issue.

The matter with which we are dealing today relates to the Global Dance Foundation grant of \$430 000. I show the House the glossy brochure distributed by the Global Dance Foundation advertising a world dance congress to occur in Western Australia, hosted by the State Government of Western Australia in August 1997. This event is to be "The Largest Multicultural Arts Event in History." That is a fairly bold statement about what the State of Western Australia is supposed to be entering into.

A number of important issues are at stake. The first set of issues concerns accountability. They relate to the decision-making processes for committing public funds and ensuring that those funds are properly accounted for. Accountability issues are now well and truly on the agenda of state politics. The role of the Auditor General has been upgraded. Since the passing of the Financial Administration and Audit Act in the late 1980s the Auditor General has had great power to pursue his duties. He has been doing that with great vigour.

The Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee of this Parliament has been established for some years to examine these issues. In addition, advice has been given to members of Parliament by both the Royal Commission into Commercial Activities of Government and Other Matters and the Commission on Government. Essentially the

advice is that there should be more scrutiny of the commitment of public funds and that it should be more open and more vigorous.

Mr Cowan: We are still tidying up your mess.

Dr GALLOP: That argument has well and truly passed us now.

Mr Cowan: Unfortunately the debts are still there and we are still covering them.

Dr GALLOP: If the Deputy Leader continues to base his political strategy on that he is making a big mistake.

Mr Cowan: I have never based my political strategy on that.

Dr GALLOP: I think he has.

Mr Cowan: Every time I get a chance you will be reminded of your financial ineptitude.

Dr GALLOP: The Deputy Premier has become intellectually and politically lazy and as a result the Party has become complacent. Members of the National Party should take a hard look at their leader in the light of the path down which he is taking them. Ten years ago he was a strength to the National Party, but now he is a weakness. History works in those cycles.

Accountability is a very important issue. The accountability that the people of Western Australia are now concerned with relates to the decisions the Government is making.

I refer to the credibility issue related to the involvement of the State Government in this process. By its nature, this glossy pamphlet that has been distributed raises questions. It bears the words, "The Largest Multicultural Arts Event in History" - "110 Nations World Dance Congress 1997" - "heralding the 21st Century for the Arts hosted by the State Government of Western Australia". That gives every impression that the event will occur. No indication is given that the event may not occur. It indicates what will happen and when, and invites people to participate. It would be okay if the Global Dance Foundation as a private organisation were promoting this event. However, the State Government is involved. Photographs of the Premier, Richard Court, and the Lord Mayor of the City of Perth, Dr Peter Nattrass, are on the brochure. Endorsement is indicated by the State Government. This is not an issue about only the private sector but also about the credibility of the State of Western Australia. The issues we must be concerned with are not only accountability but also credibility issues. They require answers.

In June 1995 EventsCorp signed a contract with the Global Dance Foundation to provide the foundation with funding to assist it to hold a world dance congress in Perth in 1997. In November 1995 the proposed multicultural dance congress was the subject of some publicity. When that happened, the largest dance agency in Australia, the Australian Dance Council - Ausdance (WA), wrote to the Premier expressing concern about this proposed event. The concerns raised by Ausdance in 1995 have all stood the test of time. In other words, they are of concern today. The first issue was that interstate dance groups could not find a track record for Global Dance. Its name just appeared and it was given an enormous amount of government money to create an event; yet it had no apparent track record. The foundation needed at least \$2m to stage such an event. Indications were that major financial support would be needed in addition to what was given if this event were to take place. Another concern was that major dance groups were not consulted about the proposed event and, finally, that the lavish publicity created an expectation of success that would damage the credibility of the industry at home and overseas if the show failed to eventuate.

The points made by Ausdance in 1995 have all survived the test of time. The questions I now pose to this Parliament on the \$430 000 commitment by the State Government remain live questions because no announcement has been made by the Government that it has pulled out of this deal.

I will list the issues that the Opposition believes should be the subject of attention by the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee, which is ideally placed to deal with a matter like this. The first question is: What were the processes by which the decision was made? We have here a question of due diligence. Was due diligence followed in making the decision to grant the money to the Global Dance Foundation? Three subquestions are involved. First, how did it happen? From what we can gather, the now chairman of Global Dance, Peter Reynolds, said to the then Minister for Tourism - the Premier - that he had a good idea. He was sent to EventsCorp at the Western Australian Tourism Commission, which made the decision to grant the money. Second, what scrutiny was made of the proposal? We are told that a feasibility study was undertaken. However, we are not told when that feasibility study was done, who did it and what methodology was used. Third, who was consulted? We know that the dance industry was not consulted because that was a subject it raised.

Mr Pandal: Neither was the Department for the Arts.

Dr GALLOP: That raises another question about consultation: Was the Department for the Arts consulted? It is the member for South Perth's understanding that it was not. The public accounts committee would be in a good position to ask those questions and seek answers about whether due diligence was followed in the Tourism Commission-EventsCorp decision to grant the money.

The second issue is the nature of the contract. Given that we are now in an era in which these major events occur, the nature of the contract entered into by the Government is an important issue. As far as we know, the contract entered into has no guarantee of performance. From publicity about this matter it is known that \$430 000 was granted; however, the State could lose \$215 000 of that without having an event. We must know what guarantees of performance, if any, are built in. With whom is the contract? As far as we understand it, management services are provided by Mr Reynolds' family trust and money is channelled into that trust. However, Global Dance is a totally separate entity. It is interesting to note that Global Dance was established as an incorporated association. It is not a company, but an incorporated body. The accountability requirements for incorporated bodies are different from those for companies. The public accounts committee could ask whether it is appropriate for major moneys to go to incorporated bodies when they deal with major commercial events of this type. They are the sorts of questions that should be posed about the contract. The Global Dance Foundation emerged only a short time before the decision was made to grant the money. That is the very issue Ausdance raised in its letter to the Premier.

The third issue is: What has happened in the past two years? This question relates to the performance of the Tourism Commission and EventsCorp. Brochures on the proposed event in August 1997 have been distributed by the Global Dance Foundation. The State's reputation is on the line over this event. However, we now know that the event will not occur this year. What was done in that period from June 1995 to late 1996-early 1997, when it became obvious that the event would not occur, to monitor what was going on and to ensure that the State's taxpayers' dollars were properly spent? The performance of the Tourism Commission and EventsCorp should be on the agenda. What did they do to ensure that the money they committed through that contract was properly spent? That is an important issue in accountability.

The fourth issue that arises is a question over the credibility of Western Australia because this organisation is still advertising this event, not only through glossy brochures that can be obtained from its office in Osborne Park, but also on the Internet. As late as 11.30 last night Global Dance Foundation was still advertising on the Internet for this event that was to occur in August 1997. I hope the Government is concerned about this because there is no doubt that questions about major trade practices and fair trading issues are posed by the existence of this advertising on an Internet web page today. What has the Ministry of Fair Trading been doing about the situation in which not only Global Dance, but, through implication, the State -

Mr Bloffwitch: Who is the source of the advertisement on the Net? Is the Government or a private promoter putting it on the Net?

Dr GALLOP: The Government of Western Australia is involved through its support of this event.

Mr Bloffwitch: From whom did the material originate?

Dr GALLOP: The Global Dance Foundation

Mr Bloffwitch: So the Government has nothing to do with it.

Dr GALLOP: The Government has everything to do with it because it is hosting the event and it is a sponsor of the event.

Mr Bloffwitch: Just because it is on the Net does not mean the Government put it on the Net.

Dr GALLOP: No, Global Dance put it on the Net, but the Government is implicated because it is sponsoring this event and has given money to that organisation. An important question is raised that is related to trade practices. It is made more significant by the fact that the Government is implicated through its sponsorship.

Mr MacLean: How many organisations did you give money to for which you were not responsible when you were in government?

Dr GALLOP: The member for Wanneroo is delving into ancient history. I am interested in Western Australia in 1997 and the Government that the member supports that commits \$430 000 to an event that is not yet finalised and that in every probability will not occur. If that does not interest the member for Wanneroo, I suggest he pack his bags now and leave this Parliament.

The fifth question that is posed by this issue is: What will happen in the future? In recent days the Tourism Commission and EventsCorp have said they will consider whether continuing support will be given to the event. No

announcement has been made by the Government on whether that consideration has been entered into and whether conclusions have been reached on this event.

These are the issues the Opposition believes need analysis. It is our view that the public accounts committee is in a good position to look at these five issues. First, what decision making process was followed by the Tourism Commission, EventsCorp and the Government of Western Australia, and was due diligence involved in that process? Second, were any guarantees of performance built into the contract; is it an adequate contract for the sort of situation with which it is dealing - a major arts event; and are contracts of the sort that have been entered into recently adequate to the task at hand? Third, which monitoring mechanisms, if any, were set up by the Tourism Commission and EventsCorp to ensure that the money that passed over to the Peter Reynolds trust for Global Dance was properly spent? The fourth question relates to the continuing advertising of an event that has not yet occurred and that is likely not to occur - certainly not in August 1997. Finally, what is the future status of this event under the Government of Western Australia? These are major issues and the Opposition believes the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee of this Parliament is in a good position to give those questions a thorough analysis.

MR TRENORDEN (Avon) [12.40 pm]: As everyone in this House will recognise, I hope instantly, I am the Chairman of the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee, and I am a little annoyed that I must provide some minor defence of that committee.

Dr Gallop: It is not under attack so you need not defend it.

Mr TRENORDEN: The Leader of the Opposition will find if he reads *Hansard* that half-way through his speech he made an implication to that effect.

Dr Gallop: Not at all. When did I make that implication? I put the record clear: I fully support the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee. I did not imply in my speech that the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee was not doing its job.

Mr TRENORDEN: The Leader of the Opposition knows darned well that the committee comprises three government and two non-government members, and that the biggest inquiry undertaken by the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee was requested in a letter from the Leader of the Opposition without even following the parliamentary process of moving a substantive motion. The member was in opposition at the time and we had no obligation to pursue that matter - nevertheless, we did.

The Leader of the Opposition is running second on this issue. The Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee has met only twice and, obviously, no inquiry is currently before it. However, one of the early actions of the committee will be to meet with the Auditor General who has made public statements about his concerns on the dance issue and Elle Racing. I hope that the House recognises - the Minister for Works would be aware of this - that an historical agreement was made last year between the committee and the Auditor General, and that this agreement has been ratified by the new committee. We will work extremely closely with the Auditor General.

As Chairman of the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee, not as the member for Avon, I assure the Leader of the Opposition that in time this issue will be discussed by the committee.

Dr Gallop: Excellent! You can vote for the motion then.

Mr TRENORDEN: I was about to mention that point. Like all members, I am a politician and I accept that politics will always be involved with this issue. Importantly, I hope that if this House suggests that the committee should undertake an inquiry into this matter, it will do so by way of substantive motion, not amendment to the Address-in-Reply. That is a reasonable request from the Chairman of the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee.

I have given away no confidences of the committee, as it has not decided after its second meeting to conduct any inquiry. Certainly, this dance issue, and a number of other matters, will be discussed with the Auditor General, and the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee will make up its mind about whether to conduct an inquiry. The Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee need not conduct an inquiry on any recommendations from this Chamber, and the Leader of the Opposition knows that. However, in my experience, the committee has never refused to conduct an inquiry on matters referred to it. That can be checked.

Regarding the continuity of the committee procedure, it is important that matters are referred to the committee by substantive motion, not by amendment to the Address-in-Reply.

MR PENDAL (South Perth) [12.44 pm]: As some members would know, a number of dance companies operate in Perth, both public and private, some of which receive funds from the public purse. For example, public funding is provided to the WA Ballet Company and the Chrissie Parrott Dance Company. I think the latter company recently

closed down, which is a great pity given the level of excellence in its productions. Also, a number of smaller amateur groups can be found around Western Australia. Therefore, when a commitment was made to the extent of \$400 000 to the Global Dance Foundation, it is, first, a big amount of money in terms of arts funding and, second, something likely to have a significant impact on the livelihoods of neighbouring dance companies.

In late 1995, I was approached by a number of people in the dance community in Perth who were concerned that a very significant amount of money had been set aside, or promised by way of underwritings, to the event which is the subject of this amendment.

I will pose the following questions, and then tell the House the answers provide by the Minister for the Arts which indicate that this matter should be referred to the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee. Page 12618 of *Hansard* of 6 December 1995, question on notice 4415 from me to the Minister representing the Minister for the Arts reads -

- (1) Is the Government contributing funds towards the establishment and mounting of the World Dance Congress 1997 to be held in Perth?
- (2) If so, how much funding will be allocated?
- (3) Has a feasible study on the event been conducted?
- (4) If so, were the State's major professional dance organisations consulted?
- (5) If not, why not?
- (6) What is the background of the Global Dance Foundation, the congress organisers and promoters?
- (7) How did the Government become involved in hosting the World Dance Congress?

They are reasonable questions in search of accountability, about which I agree with the Leader of the Opposition. The answer provided gives a strong reason for the matter to go to the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee. The representing Minister replied as follows -

The Minister for the Arts has provided the following reply -

- (1) No money has been allocated to this project through the Department for the Arts. I ask the member to redirect this question to the Minister for Tourism.
- (2)-(7) Not applicable.

A large sum of money was to be allocated - I am not sure whether it ever was - or offered by way of an underwriting, through another Minister who did not have the direct responsibility for the funding. That is a very serious situation indeed, especially as the funding to the dance organisations tends to be a little on the light side anyway. Something is seriously amiss if another government agency, EventsCorp via the Tourism Commission in this case, bobs up and takes responsibility for this event, without consultation with, or passing information back to, the Department for the Arts which is especially set up to perform functions in this field.

I have heard debate in the last few minutes focus on the point of accountability, and I heard the rather curious interjection from a government member challenging the Leader of the Opposition to outline how often such things happened under the previous Labor Government. With greatest respect, that is not the point here. The level of accountability which the conservative members demanded from the Labor Government is no different from that which is demanded from the present Government.

A significant sum of money was doled out in one form or another by a department which has no expertise in this field. That is relevant to the point of accountability. When a Government makes a decision on any matter, one presumes that it will refer the matter to the agency or department with the relevant expertise. The Premier, who was the Minister for Tourism at the time, should have known that the first point of call for some scrutiny of, or for the rule to be run over the Global Dance Foundation was the department of State set up for that very purpose; that is, the Department for the Arts.

The amount of money involved represents a very significant proportion of the funds allocated to the Department for the Arts. It was not some seeding grant with which one might expect EventsCorp or the Tourism Commission to take a punt by allocating \$20 000 in order to attempt to attract some event on a global scale. We are talking about more than a seeding grant; this was very substantial both in terms of the Department for the Arts' budget and the local companies.

I do not know the latest figure for the annual grant to the WA Ballet Company, which is regarded as the premier dance company in Western Australia, but it is a private company that attracts significant funding from the State, and that is a good thing. The amount involved here would stack up very handsomely against the amount allocated to the WA Ballet Company each year. There is every reason for the public accounts committee to look not only at what happened but also at whether due process was followed.

Given what the Minister for the Arts said in this House in December 1995, it appears that he was not very impressed with what was going on. He said that his department had allocated no money for this project. He went on to disclaim any other knowledge; in fact, he made it very clear that he did not want to answer my questions and I was asked to redirect them to the Minister for Tourism. I did that and subsequently the Premier, in his capacity as Minister for Tourism, replied to me by mail. I cannot recall the response and I did not have time to consult it prior to speaking in this debate. However, it strongly suggests that the proper channels were not followed, and for that reason the public accounts committee should investigate the matter.

MR BROWN (Bassendean) [12.53 pm]: I will plot very carefully the chronology of this issue because it raises a number of substantial unanswered questions. However, before I do that, I will briefly respond to the member for Avon and his comments about this House's passing a resolution requesting the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee to examine this issue. The public accounts committee is the preeminent committee of this Parliament dealing with accountability; it is the one standing committee of this Parliament looking at accountability.

Mr Cowan: That is not in dispute.

Mr BROWN: That is right. Therefore, it does not matter one iota whether this Parliament, by a deliberative motion or a motion in an Address-in-Reply debate, specifically requests the public accounts committee to examine a particular issue. Secondly, this House cannot always be confident that the committee will examine substantial issues concerning the finances of this State. In the last Parliament I was a member of the public accounts committee. I asked the committee for over a year to investigate the contracting out of government services, which currently costs over \$1b. That is a very significant part of the State Government's budget. The three government members on the committee did everything possible to stymie that request. When the motion was finally put to the vote, as recorded in the committee's report, it was voted down by three members to two. For those members who might be questioning who voted for and against the motion: The three government members voted against it and the two opposition members voted for it. Therefore, we cannot always be confident that matters of considerable substance to this State will be looked at by members of the public accounts committee in their role as true watchdogs of this Parliament rather than as political members. That decision was purely political, there is no question at all about that.

Having dispensed with that shallow argument from the member for Avon, I will deal with the sequence of events, which is very important. In June 1995, the WA Tourism Commission signed a contract with the Global Dance Foundation to provide funding to assist the foundation in holding a world dance congress in Perth in August 1997. At the time the contract was signed, Mr Peter G. Reynolds was the chairman of the foundation - he was the chairman then and he is the chairman now. We are advised, but we have not seen it, that a feasibility study was carried out and that it indicated the State would benefit by up to \$6m if the dance congress were staged in Perth. We are yet to see a copy of that feasibility report.

Under the contract, EventsCorp would provide \$430 000 - not a small amount to hand to an organisation - but \$215 000 would be refunded to the Government if the event did not go ahead. It was an interesting contract.

In December 1995, the member for South Perth asked a question about this issue in this House. That question was not properly answered, like many others in this place. Little was heard of the foundation throughout 1996, but it appears from documents obtained via the Internet that the foundation was sending out material advertising the congress and seeking financial support. It is interesting to note that throughout 1995 and 1996 there was no mention of this event in the media, but, in particular, there was no mention of it by EventsCorp in its regular advertising of up and coming events. The Government has put \$430 000 into an event scheduled for August 1997 that has not been mentioned in EventsCorp's advertising.

Doubts about the foundation and the staging of the congress became public when the matter was raised in *The West Australian* on 24 January 1997. It was reported that the congress would be postponed until 1999. It was also revealed that when the initial feasibility study was carried out no credible Western Australian dance company or association had been consulted about the proposal. Indeed, there were questions from those involved in the dance industry about the foundation's ability to present this event. Of course, since then, the event has been postponed until 1999.

The Global Dance Foundation is not listed in the Perth telephone book, although details of the foundation, including the telephone and fax numbers, are available on its web site on the Internet. A telephone call to the foundation on

13 February confirmed that the dance congress had been cancelled due to funding difficulties. It was seeking funding to enable the congress to go ahead at a later date.

[Leave granted for speech to be continued.]

Debate thus adjourned.

[Continued below.]

Sitting suspended from 1.00 to 2.00 pm

STATEMENT - SPEAKER

Supplementary Questions

THE SPEAKER (Mr Strickland): Supplementary questions were trialled in this House over an extended period in 1995 and 1996. In the original 1995 trial, supplementary questions were restricted to seeking an elucidation of an answer just given, rather than to developing the theme of the original question.

In its second interim report, tabled on 30 November 1995, the Select Committee on Procedure reviewed the trial of supplementary questions and recommended that they become a permanent feature of questions without notice, with the Chair allowing the member who asked the original question to ask one supplementary question which developed the theme of the original question. At the commencement of the 1996 session, Speaker Clarko adopted the recommendation and in this session I have followed that practice. While that gives members some latitude, it is not a licence to make a distant or ill-defined connection with another matter and seek to ask a supplementary question accordingly.

It would be counterproductive for the Speaker to seek to redefine the boundaries of supplementary questions past a reiteration of the requirement that a supplementary question may develop the theme of the original question. In the spirit of the Procedure Committee's recommendations and the recent practices adopted by this House, I therefore remind members that supplementary questions should be asked in precise terms, directly and without preamble, and should not normally consist of a number of parts. Where a supplementary question goes beyond the bounds of what is reasonable, the Chair will draw the attention of the House to it and, if necessary, rule it out of order. Knowing the House, however, it is unlikely that many supplementary questions will suffer that fate.

I will circulate detailed notes on supplementary questions in the near future.

[Questions without notice taken.]

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Amendment to Motion, as Amended

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MR BROWN (Bassendean) [2.40 pm]: Prior to the luncheon suspension I discussed the Global Dance Foundation and went through the chronology of events that by themselves raise a number of serious questions about the funding of that organisation. I will go through some of the other events that have occurred. Let us look first at what is the Global Dance Foundation and where it came from. On 21 February 1995 an application was made under the Associations Incorporation Act for the registration of this foundation. In June 1995 the application to have the foundation incorporated was accepted by the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs. In the same month the Government entered into an agreement with the foundation to provide \$430 000 to the foundation. One might ask what took place between the Government and those seeking the registration of this foundation prior to its being registered as a foundation.

On the face of it, it seems as though the registration of the foundation and its establishment was done for the sole purpose of creating a vehicle for the Government to provide that sort of money. The foundation was not in operation before June 1995; it simply did not exist. In June 1995 not only was it established in law, but the Government provided it with a contract for \$430 000. Comment has been made in the Press that a feasibility study was carried out on the funds to be made available to the foundation. If that is true, when was that feasibility study carried out? The foundation came into operation on 1 June 1995, yet the money was provided to the foundation in the same month. Was a feasibility study into the capacity of this organisation to deliver what it said it would deliver carried out in three or four weeks? Was there that sort of rush in the decision making process for the Government to give this money to the foundation in that short period?

When the Opposition asks for details of that feasibility study, such as who carried out the study and what the study did, it is not possible to get a copy of it. I refer in particular to questions asked in the other place about that level of

detail - questions that the Minister in the other place has avoided answering. If a feasibility study was conducted, and if it was done properly and appropriately and it came to the conclusion that it is said it came to, why is that not detailed? Why was it so difficult to get a copy of that study when questions were asked in the other place? What is being hidden from the Parliament and the people of Western Australia? Why can we not get answers to those questions? Why are we not told who carried out the feasibility study, when the study was conducted, and whether the study was carried out before the Global Dance Foundation was incorporated, and, if so, on what basis the study on the foundation's ability to deliver what it said it could deliver before it was created was carried out? These are serious questions because they go to the due diligence and accountability of the Government in making these funds available.

Other interesting issues arise from funds being made available. The first, as alluded to by the member for South Perth, is that no discussion was held with the dance industry, which has expertise in this area. That is most unusual. Also, no evidence exists of any previous involvement by the mainstay of the foundation, Peter Reynolds, or the Global Dance Foundation in organising similar events. No evidence has been put on the table by the Government to suggest that this person or body is experienced in organising such an event. No evidence is available to indicate that there are grounds for the provision of these funds.

Second, the Opposition has had difficulty obtaining copies of any feasibility study that has allegedly been carried out. Third, we do not know whether that study was carried out or when it was carried out. We do not know who carried it out, the ability of the person or persons carrying it out, what they recommended, and how they arrived at their conclusions - given that they were allegedly carrying out a feasibility study on an organisation to deliver this program. They either carried out that study within three or four weeks, because that was the period between the date of registration of the organisation and the date the money was made available; or, alternatively, the feasibility study was carried out into the capacity of an organisation to do this work before the organisation was even formed. How in the world that could be done is beyond me. I do not understand how that is possible. Someone should inform me.

No evidence exists of Mr Reynolds' business background or experience in organising promotional events such as this being investigated. I thought that in any prudent investigation an examination would be made of the capacity of the organisation to deliver what it said it could deliver. Basic advice provided by the Australian Securities Commission about the sorts of things the average person should check on when he considers investing in companies or entering into commercial arrangements with companies states that one must look at how long the company has been in business under its current name. That information tells us something about the company: Is it a long-established company? Is it a reputable organisation? At the time the money was made available the Global Dance Foundation had been in operation for no more than one month.

The ASC guide refers further to a company's status; whether it is registered or deregistered or whether an external administrator has been appointed. It is difficult to get information on that under the Associations Incorporation Act. At least if it were a company, one could find out who the directors of that company were and their expertise. This organisation is registered under the Associations Incorporation Act, so Parliament has no detail on the expertise of the board, who is on its board or whether the foundation has the skills to carry out this task.

In examining the foundation one could look at its principal place of business, as recommended by the Australian Securities Commission. That is difficult to do with the foundation as it is not even in the phone book! The ASC also recommends that a company's share capital be questioned, but it is difficult to look at the foundation's financial base under the Associations Incorporation Act as we do not know its shareholders.

The Australian Securities Commission's recommended tests are not very difficult to meet when considering the veracity of an organisation's ability to deliver a service. They are basic tests, yet Parliament does not know the answers in relation to this organisation.

The operation of this foundation is quite a mystery. The Premier was asked who authorised the funds. It was a simple question. Who authorised \$430 000 to be paid to the foundation? Did the Minister, the Tourism Commission or Cabinet authorise it? Presumably someone did. Presumably, it is not too difficult to find out who gave the authorisation by looking at records.

Mr Bloffwitch: It was EventsCorp.

Mr BROWN: It would be an unusual circumstance in which EventsCorp, an administrative arm of government, had authority to sign off \$430 000 without any reference to a Minister. Is that how government is being run? Does the Government place the money into the hands of the bureaucrats, with no reference to the Minister, so contracts of \$500m or \$50m can be entered into? In that case, we do not know the Government's commitments. Presumably, accountability in government means that Ministers make these decisions.

Many questions remain to be answered, and unless they can be satisfactorily answered in every detail, this matter warrants a thorough and detailed investigation by the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee.

MS McHALE (Thornlie) [2.53 pm]: When the Premier responds to my colleague's questions, he might also address my comments. Picking up on the comments of the members for South Perth and Bassendean, I shall refer to the lack of consultation with the dance community on this matter. My presentation will focus on accountability to our arts community which, as opposition spokesperson on the arts, is of particular concern to me.

How accountable has the Government been to the dance and arts community? Apparently something like 5 500 packages were distributed nationally and internationally in 1995 promoting Global Dance. Of course, the packages generated considerable interest from around the world in Global Dance, and I understand that inquiries were received by the dance community in Western Australia and elsewhere in the country. People wanted to know what was going on. The congress was to be hosted by the Western Australian Government and the material contained invitations from the Premier and the Minister for the Arts. People asked what the congress was about, but the dance network in Western Australia knew nothing about it.

In 1995 the dance community raised a number of concerns about the congress, which were touched on earlier in debate, such as the commitment of huge financial resources to stage the event. The dance industry is under financial stress and could have done with that money. If this congress will cost in the region of \$1.5m to \$2m, it is a significant amount of money which could have been well spent in our dance community.

Mr Court: What did you say it would cost?

Ms McHALE: I said that the dance communities were looking at about \$1.5m to stage the congress. I do not say that it was government money - I refer to the cost.

Mr Court: Do not give the impression that it was government money.

Ms McHALE: *Hansard* will indicate that I did not say it was government money. We know that \$430 000 of government money - which is half of the amount allocated to the Western Australian Ballet per year - has been committed at this stage.

The dance community also asked why it had not been consulted on this issue. Worse than the lack of consultation throughout this saga was the veil of secrecy due to supposed contractual obligations and confidentiality. Western Australia, as with Australia generally, has an extensive, well-respected dance community and network. I am concerned about the very damaging effect of this episode on the credibility of our dance industry in this State and internationally. The international dance community wants to know what has happened to the congress and, apart from anything else, it feels that this matter has damaged the credibility of one of our most significant arts communities.

In 1995, the Premier was approached by the dance community to express its concerns about the congress. However, no action was taken to address those concerns or to look more closely at what was taking place. The member for South Perth asked questions. I gather that he wrote to the Premier, and the reply in September 1996, some nine months later, still expressed support for the congress. EventsCorp appears to have handed over money with no evidence that it consulted the credible dance network in our community.

The question must be answered. Why has \$430 000 been expended without instituting safeguards so it could be recouped if the congress did not eventuate? A hiatus in activity seems to have occurred from 1995 to late 1996 and early 1997 when the matter became public. I am not saying that people were asked to keep quiet, but this hiatus is strange. I wonder whether people were told to lie low, keep quiet and not to ask questions about it.

I know the answer to this rhetorical question is yes: Did the Government know about the World Dance Alliance hosted in 1996 held in Victoria, co-hosted by Australia and Indonesia? Obviously, confusion arose with the Global Dance Congress being organised at the same time as the World Dance Alliance in 1996.

That World Dance Alliance presents another anomaly; that is, the promotional material for the Global Dance Congress refers to", getting together our fraternity or family of dance in Australia for the first time. I am not sure whether it was a final draft, but the Premier is quoted in the promotional material as saying that the congress will draw together for the first time all of the many ages, nations and disciplines from the world's fraternity of dance. This was then supposed to be happening in 1997, yet the Australian Dance Council's "Winter 1996 forum" was promoting the World Dance Alliance Congress which was held in July 1996, when it wrote -

The Congress program offers both the general public and dance professionals an opportunity to see, discuss and work with eminent dance and arts practitioners and writers from across Australia and around the world. Exchange, dialogue, debate and wit from an extraordinary line-up of presenters, in forums, demonstrations and workshops.

That was the World Dance Alliance Congress held in 1996. How can the Premier say that the Global Dance Congress will for the first time bring together an array from the world's fraternity of dance, when this happened in Australia in 1996?

The Minister for the Arts responded in March or April of 1996 to the dance community by still supporting an initiative to mount a world dance summit. It was a matter of about only eight or 12 weeks before the World Dance Alliance Congress. The obvious question is, how can the Government host a congress which is patently not what it is purported to be? How can the Premier and the Government support a function whose organisers describe Australian dance as separate and, by inference, somehow disjointed. It is an insult to the Australian dance community and again is patently wrong. The dance community is certainly diverse. We all recognise the whole range of dance from ballet through to rock and roll, about which somebody was lobbying me last week. It is not fragmented and in reality there is highly effective communication within the industry. The Australian Dance Council is recognised internationally as an effective network and it is also a chapter of the World Dance Alliance. Why then was it kept in the dark? Why the secrecy about the Global Dance Foundation?

The advertising material is untrue, misleading and ill informed; worse, it is being supported by the Government without advice from the credible dance networks and, I gather, without advice from Arts WA, a very eminent body which could provide information on what is happening in the world community of dance. In a way it is a great pity that the congress will not go ahead. It was promoted as the most global arts event in history involving 110 nations, which sounds like a fantastic event. I am certainly passionate about dance. However, passion for the event is dissipated; it is marred by suspicion, secrecy and lack of communication with the dance community which has been generated for the past two and a half years by unsatisfactory communication between the nations' dance groups and the Government about the concerns and anger of the dance community in relation to the proposed staging of the event.

The Premier informed the member for South Perth in September 1996 that the event was to occur in August 1998. I gather it has been deferred again to some time in the future. Goodness knows if it will happen. Taking into account the history of the event and the lack of communication with eminent dance groups here and elsewhere, which rightfully could have given sound constructive advice without being part of the decision making, the whole matter is appalling for Western Australia because there has been no accountability.

MR COURT (Nedlands - Premier) [3.04 pm]: I thank members for their comments on this matter. I hope to be able to run through the different questions that have been raised. I remind members that this proposal was put to us as a tourism initiative and not as an arts initiative. I will go into the background of that shortly. The member for Thornlie was talking basically about what the Government was doing for the dance community. Very little had been done for many years for the dance community in Western Australia.

The dance community came to the Government and expressed the need for improved facilities in some of the different companies for training, etc. We have come up with what we believe is a terrific project with the King Street arts centre, which will provide facilities for the dance community. Hopefully it will be completed some time this year. It will lead Australia in providing inner city facilities to assist some of the companies. If members wish to talk dollars, it is not cheap. It certainly will not cover itself commercially, but we believe it will be a terrific catalyst predominantly for the dance community but also for other areas of the arts.

The Government is totally committed to helping the arts in a number of areas. When we talk about a society having a high standard of living, we cannot say that is the case unless we are also prepared to put certain funding towards the arts. Therefore, on the question of support for the dance community, we have been willing to look at proposals put to us. That initiative, which we had committed ourselves to prior to the election and is now under construction, will be a good one.

I will give a little background before addressing some of the specific questions raised by the Leader of the Opposition. In general terms the proposal was put to the Government and to me that the dance community internationally had never come together in a coordinated way to enable all of the different areas of dance to gather in the one forum. The reason it had not occurred was that there was a lot of jealousy between the different areas of dance. Specialty groups in certain areas came together internationally but they had not been able to come together in such a large forum.

Mr Pandal: It is not unusual; it is what you would call competition.

Mr COURT: Yes, but in many areas it is possible for groups to come together where they have the common objective of improving their standards. I am not an expert on dance. One of the changes in that area is that many of the various Asian dance forms are very different from traditional dance in Europe and the United States. People have been hugely interested in taking many of the ideas from those areas and combining them with developments occurring in

what we might call the traditional western cultures. The proposal was put to us along the lines that Mr Reynolds had been involved with people who had good track records in teaching dance in this State. They had been responsible for a number of our very talented dancers being given initial training and then being found places in some of the world's finest dancing schools. Many Western Australians have gone on to become international stars in some of these different fields of dance. Mr Reynolds brought back to Perth for a performance, I think at the Burswood Dome, many Western Australians who have become international performers of some note. It is not as though we were talking to people who did not know what was happening in the international dance field. The proposal that was put to us was that they had a network and contacts in this area and would be able to attract support in getting this event up and running.

The reason that we showed an interest in this event is that this State has been successful in attracting many international sporting events, such as the Heineken Classic and Rally Australia, which are annual events; the Whitbread Round the World Race, which takes place every three years; the World Swimming Championships; and the aerobics world championships, the triathlon world championships and the windsurfing world championships, which will take place in the next 18 months and are one off events for this State which have arisen in the lead up to the Olympic games. These events are good for the State. We were looking for ways in which we could sustain some new events, because in order to attract existing events in the current climate, we have to pay huge dollars and engage in competitive bidding with other States. We wanted to establish a unique event which would become a regular feature of the tourism and arts calendars.

I am explaining why we gave this matter serious consideration. The people who put this proposition did have respectability with regard to their performance in working with young people in dance. No-one is more disappointed than I that this event has not gone ahead in the way that was presented to us. The responsibility for this matter rests with the Minister - in this case, me. I gave the approvals as Treasurer, as every day I give approvals to literally hundreds of things. I do not resile from my responsibility for this matter. We have made decisions on many tourism events that have been very successful. We have also made decisions on tourism events that are of some concern to us. Some of these high profile events cost \$2m or \$3m a year to fund. I am of the view, and I am sure the member for South Perth would agree, that when we are paying \$3m a year for an event, while it may have a terrific spin off effect, there does need to be a cut off point.

When we looked at some cultural events that we could attract, on the one hand an outlay of \$430 000 is a lot of money, but, on the other hand, if these people could make it work, it could become a significant event. I am most disappointed that this project is not running as we were told it would, but we will always have an open mind in trying to support these proposals.

Mr Pandal: Do you agree that if you had your time over again, at the very least the Department for the Arts, whose area of expertise this is, should have been brought into the picture, and I think the outcome would have absolved the Government of any liability?

Mr COURT: I cannot comment on who is involved in providing all the feasibility information. I certainly do not do that work. One of the skills which the Western Australian Tourism Commission has developed is weeding through the many proposals that come forward every week, and when we are dealing with the Bernie Ecclestons of this world we need to be pretty street smart to survive.

Mr Brown: Was there a feasibility study?

Mr COURT: Let me go through some of the questions. The Leader of the Opposition has asked that all the material be tabled. During a period a lot of work was carried out by the Tourism Commission in assessing the feasibilities that had been done by Peter Reynolds. I wanted to table all the information today so that the Leader of the Opposition could see all the processes that have been gone through, and I will certainly table the contract today, but because Crown Law is still negotiating with Mr Reynolds, I cannot make all the information available today.

I do not live in the world of "if I had my time over again". We have to make decisions, and some risk is always involved. All I can say is that the deals that are put forward for events like the World Swimming Championships involve millions of dollars. We do the best we can, and because this is a new event and does not have a track record, I agree that it is in the higher risk category. Many people say in hindsight that they have created events that have become huge successes. No better example can be found than the formula one Grand Prix, which was a non-event 20 years ago and has been turned into one of the biggest money making machines in world sport.

The first question asked by the Leader of the Opposition was: What process did the Government agree to for funding the \$430 000? Negotiations took place between the party and the Western Australian Tourism Commission, and the Tourism Commission endorsed the proposal to commit \$430 000 to this event. It did require supplementary funding, and in May 1995 the chief executive officer recommended to me as Treasurer that supplementary funds of \$430 000

be provided. It was agreed in June 1995 that the Acting Under Treasurer would submit a recommendation to me as Treasurer that a request for supplementary funding of \$215 000 for World Dance be approved, and the balance be approved in the following budget year. That was the funding process that took place, and that documentation is available. The contract was drawn up by the Crown Solicitor's Office, acting under instruction from EventsCorp, and Mr Reynolds was legally represented. The sponsorship agreement dated 26 May 1995 was between the Western Australian Development Commission and Global Dance Foundation Inc. I seek leave to table that contract.

Leave granted.

[See paper No 299.]

Mr COURT: The third question was about the monitoring process. I will run through this quickly, and members will see this in the material that we will table when we have got it all clear. Following the Government's provision of funding under the contract arrangements to Global Dance Foundation in accordance with the contract, GDF provided quarterly reports to EventsCorp. The first report was received by EventsCorp on 30 October 1995, and it has received quarterly reports since. In November 1995, following the receipt of the first report, EventsCorp sought clarification from GDF on the accounts, indemnity insurance and other matters.

EventsCorp was concerned about the lack of performance and sought Crown Law advice. Crown Law provided advice on what action EventsCorp could take regarding any breach of the contract by the Global Dance Foundation. The advice was that on the evidence there was no certainty that GDF had breached any of the conditions of the agreement. It was said that litigation, termination of the agreement or even a threat of termination of the agreement should be only a last resort. Acting on instructions from EventsCorp the Crown Solicitor's Office on 7 December 1995 set out areas of concern. Freehill Hollingdale and Page, on behalf of GDF, responded on 13 December 1995, and a further letter was sent by the Crown Solicitor's Office.

In May 1996 the Crown Solicitor's Office was again asked to review the contract and performance of GDF, and confirmed that GDF was not in breach. It recommended that EventsCorp continue to meet its obligations under the agreement, and continue to pressure and encourage GDF to do likewise. GDF advised the WA Tourism Commission that the foundation wished to postpone the event until August 1999. The foundation has sought approval from the WA Tourism Commission for postponement. The Tourism Commission has advised the foundation that it is willing to consider the proposal if certain terms and conditions are accepted by the foundation. Those conditions have not yet been accepted, and negotiations are continuing.

I cannot provide an answer about the final outcome because the negotiations are continuing. My point is that the WA Tourism Commission has done everything above board. It has made sure it receives proper advice, which it must do with all the contracts with which it deals. In the events world it is not easy, because many of the corporations are unusual bodies. Some are overseas, and often it is difficult to keep a full handle on them. It does not matter how large or reputable is an organisation, it is a constant worry. It is not like dealing with, say, a mining company. The organisations often have different structures for the way in which they establish promotional events.

The fourth question related to the Internet. The WA Tourism Commission has inquired into the issue of the presence on the Internet. It has been advised by GDF that as well as providing information on the congress it will be used to disseminate information about the proposed postponement, if it occurs. The foundation has also advised that it refused to take registrations when concerns arose about the potential to raise sufficient sponsorship to stage the event in 1997. That answers the question posed yesterday about registrations.

The Acting Commissioner of Consumer Affairs has advised that pages on the Internet do not indicate a breach of the Fair Trading Act, given that at this time no decision has been made to postpone the event.

Dr Gallop: The specific event has been advertised.

Mr COURT: He has advised that he is not aware of any complaints of misrepresentation other than those raised in the media by the Opposition.

Ms McHale: Premier, you said in September 1996 that it had been postponed until 1998.

Mr COURT: I said that the foundation asked for it to be postponed. We have set certain conditions, it has not agreed to those conditions, and negotiations are continuing.

As to the question about what will happen to the contract in future, under the contractual arrangements with the Tourism Commission, the event will be held this year. Members will note from the tabled contract that if it is not held this year, the money must be refunded. There are other arrangements under the contract. Certain guarantees have been put in by GDF that a certain number of people will participate. If that does not occur, certain other things will happen.

Ms McHale: You said in September 1996 that the Global Dance Foundation, the organisation managing the congress, had recently advised that the event would be postponed until August 1998, not that it was proposing to postpone the event.

Mr COURT: That was the request. I have said that the foundation has contracted to put on the event this year. We have said that we would agree to a postponement only if certain conditions were met. To date, the conditions have not been met. The foundation contracted to run the event this year. It has requested that it be deferred until 1999. The Tourism Commission has advised the Global Dance Foundation that if certain conditions are met, the deferral will be considered. Negotiations are continuing with the Tourism Commission, which wants the issue to be resolved quickly.

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

Mr COURT: One of the underlying feelings emanating from the Opposition is that there has been some wrongdoing inside the Tourism Commission or within government about this event. I turn now to a letter from the Office of the Auditor General.

Dr Gallop: The issue we raised is that it is a bad deal for the State. We believe it should be investigated so that in future the problems that emerged in this case will not emerge again.

Mr COURT: This letter from the Office of the Auditor General, dated 18 June 1996, will partly answer that question. The letter is headed "Audit Investigation", and reads -

The Office of the Auditor General has recently completed its investigation of certain financial aspects of the Western Australian Tourism Commission. The investigation was carried out following the receipt by the Office, on May 7 1996, of an anonymous letter alleging "concerns about financial management within EventsCorp and the marketing division of the Western Australian Tourism Commission" and that "certain improprieties have occurred with the knowledge of the CEO and the Board of Commissioners".

It is an anonymous letter, but it is heavy stuff. It continues -

The Auditor General decided to conduct an investigation under section 80 of the *Financial Administration and Audit Act 1985* which was verbally communicated to you on May 10, 1996.

The Opposition is saying that the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee should look into this matter, and so on. However, the letter continues -

As communicated to you on May 20 the investigation did not identify any evidence of impropriety by the Board, Chief Executive Officer or staff of the Commission. It did, however, identify areas where controls, financial management and event management could be improved. These findings have been referred to the Chairperson of the Commission for consideration and necessary action.

As a result of that letter, it looked into the way in which events are managed and a number of changes were undertaken. I table that letter.

[See paper No 300.]

Mr COURT: I agree with the comments of the Leader of the Opposition. When any event proposed and supported by the Government is not successful, I am the first person to support moves for accountability and openness. Members opposite will be able to follow the tabled information in detail. It outlines the dealings which took place in relation to this event. Please do not ask us for the same information on all events. The documentation is voluminous, and it will take a long time to put together. Even with a relatively small event such as this, much work is involved behind the scenes to get it right.

Part of the nature of EventsCorp and the reason it must be so ruthless in turning back many requests, particularly sporting events, is that many of the organisations involved in the past did not have in place the professional backup required.

Mr Brown: Was a feasibility study done?

Mr COURT: I said that extensive feasibility studies were carried out by Mr Reynolds which were then assessed by the Tourism Commission.

Mr Brown: Before May 1995?

Mr COURT: The sequence of events is available from the material under freedom of information. I will table it in the Parliament.

Dr Gallop: It would be an important question if it was done after the decision was made.

Mr COURT: I said at the beginning of my comments that I wanted to table that today. However, we have had advice that because of some of the continuing negotiations further advice is being sought. I have tabled the contract. The Government is only too willing to be fully accountable on these matters.

As I said to the member for Thornlie, the Government wants to do everything to help the arts. This matter was put to us as a tourism promotion. We saw it as a way of achieving a regular cultural event promoting the arts in this State.

Mr Brown: Do you have a problem with the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee examining the matter?

Mr COURT: As I said, the Auditor General has just carried out an examination.

Mr Brown: It is a different process.

Mr COURT: I do not have any say about the public accounts committee's investigations.

Mr Brown: It is a question of the Parliament's giving a general direction to the PAC.

Mr COURT: The public accounts committee can investigate what it wants.

Mr Brown: What is your view? Should the PAC examine it?

Mr COURT: I will provide members with all the information; if that is not good enough -

Mr Brown: You are not answering the question.

Mr COURT: I did a lot of time in opposition when the Labor Government would not give anything.

Mr Brown: You are not answering the question. You either support it or you don't?

Mr COURT: I am answering the question; I said members opposite will get all the information. They want to carry out an investigation, but I have tabled a letter saying that as a result of a tip-off in an anonymous letter the Auditor General carried out an investigation and came up with a response. If members opposite want to keep spending their energies on this, they should go for it.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result -

Ayes (18)

Mr Brown	Mr Grill	Mr Pandal
Mr Carpenter	Ms MacTiernan	Mr Riebeling
Dr Constable	Mr McGinty	Mr Ripper
Dr Edwards	Mr McGowan	Mr Thomas
Dr Gallop	Ms McHale	Ms Warnock
Mr Graham	Mr Marlborough	Mr Cunningham (<i>Teller</i>)

Noes (30)

Mr Ainsworth	Mrs Holmes	Mr Prince
Mr Baker	Mr House	Mr Shave
Mr Barnett	Mr Kierath	Mr Sullivan
Mr Board	Mr MacLean	Mr Sweetman
Mr Court	Mr Marshall	Mr Trenorden
Mr Cowan	Mr McNee	Mr Tubby
Mr Day	Mr Minson	Dr Turnbull
Mrs Edwardes	Mr Omodei	Mrs van de Klashorst
Dr Hames	Mr Osborne	Mr Wiese
Mrs Hodson-Thomas	Mrs Parker	Mr Bloffwitch (<i>Teller</i>)

Pairs

Mr Kobelke	Mr Bradshaw
Mrs Roberts	Mr Nicholls
Ms Anwyl	Mr Masters

Amendment thus negatived.

Debate (on motion, as amended) Resumed

MR WIESE (Wagin) [3.36 pm]: I first congratulate both you, Mr Deputy Speaker, and the Speaker on election to your positions in the House. I have great faith that you will carry out those roles and responsibilities very well and effectively.

I also welcome and congratulate all the new members who have joined this House. I wish them a fruitful and successful parliamentary career. No doubt their role in here will be very different from what they did before. I hope they will find it satisfying and enjoyable, although for some sitting on the opposition benches is never quite as enjoyable as being on this side. However, it is probably not a bad grounding.

Mr Pandal: It depends where you are sitting.

Mr WIESE: I do not regret having been in opposition in the initial stages after being elected to Parliament. It helps when coming to government, as inevitably the Opposition will in the future; although it may be some way down the track. That background will not be of any harm to those members.

One of the disadvantages of being one of the last speakers in the Address-in-Reply debate is that some issues have been canvassed. One of the issues I will touch on - I do not think it will be any surprise to members that someone from the National Party is doing it - is one-vote-one-value. It has already been broadly debated during this Address-in-Reply.

One-vote-one-value is a major issue for the people in Western Australia who come from outside the metropolitan area. The National Party has strongly canvassed it and taken a strong stance. I am pleased that the Minister responsible for electoral affairs indicated in a statement in the past week or so that the Liberal Party would be reluctant to propose reducing vote weighting if it did not have the support of its coalition ally; namely, the National Party. I hope that is an indication that the strong stand by the National Party is starting to be heard in those areas in which it needs to be heard. I believe one approach to the question has not yet been taken up and I feel very strongly on this issue. The stance of the National Party should be supported by every non-metropolitan member of Parliament. Western Australia is having problems getting a fair deal from the federal system of government because the representation in the Federal Parliament, especially the House of Representatives, is dominated by members from Melbourne and Sydney. They represent almost half the population of Australia. Bearing in mind the decisions from Canberra and the adverse impact they have on Western Australia, and on its aspirations to develop and to provide infrastructure for that development, I wonder how any member of Parliament in Western Australia - let alone those from non-metropolitan areas - can argue for one-vote-one-value. I cannot follow the rationale of those who do not support the stance of the National Party. If this State decides to opt for one-vote-one-value, the non-metropolitan areas of Western Australia will get the same sort of deal from a State Parliament which predominantly contains representatives of the metropolitan area, as Western Australia gets from a Federal Parliament with a high proportion of representatives from Sydney and Melbourne. Members should bear that in mind when thinking about moves and changes towards a system of one-vote-one-value in Western Australia.

The second issue I shall tackle is the gold tax. It has been well and truly aired in this Address-in-Reply debate. I am ambivalent about the gold tax. I would love to see the present situation retained for only one reason; that is, the gold industry is able to continue if no royalty is imposed. I see how effectively that gold industry functions, how much investment it attracts, how many jobs it provides and how much export income it earns. While the gold industry is able to continue with no royalty it provides a glowing example of what an industry can do when it is given this practical encouragement by the Government to provide jobs and earn export income. For that reason there is a case for maintaining the existing situation. I have the same concerns expressed by other speakers that if the exemption were removed from the gold industry, it would have flow-on effects. Mines with low grades of ore which are operating successfully at the moment, providing jobs and earning export income will become more marginalised or may close. The same applies to the high cost, deep mines operating on less rich deposits. They will also perhaps become marginalised or fail. That is the big downside of the proposal to introduce a gold royalty. Such a royalty would have flow-on effects, for example, in the town of Katanning in my electorate, where the Badgebup mine is operating on deposits with low quantities of gold per tonne. The effect could flow to the town of Boddington, which has mines operating in a similar situation. Should a gold royalty be imposed, a substantial amount of the money gathered from that royalty must go back to the industry and communities from which it is raised, especially those communities that will be adversely affected by that decision. The Government must seriously consider this if the proposals apparently being touted come to fruition.

The reason for my ambivalence relates to the other side of the coin; that is, why should the gold industry be the one mining industry exempt from paying a royalty? In my electorate, east of Narrogin in the Wickpin area, is a world class kaolin deposit. Kaolin is a low cost per tonne mineral operation when it is sold on the export market. There is an enormous deposit of kaolin of very high quality - as good as that anywhere in the world. That operation has

several problems, including water headworks charges, the cost of Western Power providing power to the site and the actual cost of power and provision of transport. Those problems can be solved by discussions in coming months and years. One of the problems is that the proposed royalty would be significant in relation to the price kaolin fetches on the export market. If that royalty could be halved or removed altogether, the chances of that mine getting up and running would improve enormously. It would very quickly come into production as a mine, provide a substantial number of jobs, generate expenditure between \$200m and \$300m for the establishment of the mine, and earn significant export income for Western Australia. If it is good enough for the gold industry not to have a royalty, there is a very good case for an exemption for kaolin, even if it were only for the next five or 10 years while the mine is being established. Such an operation would provide much needed jobs in the upper great southern area and would attract substantial export earnings for Western Australia. That is why I am ambivalent and why we need to think very carefully before we impose a royalty on the gold industry. It is a shining example of what happens when one encourages and provides incentives to industry.

I will now refer to another issue that is very much more local to my electorate. It relates to the Shire of Kojonup and the provision of meat inspection services. Under the Health Act as it existed until July last year, a shire council with an abattoir within its boundaries was compelled to provide meat inspection services. The Shire of Kojonup was one of seven or eight such councils.

The shire was in a very difficult situation because all the signs indicated that the Kojonup abattoir operation was not going well. For several years, the shire tried to get the Health Department to change the legislation to allow it - and all shires or providers of meat inspection services - to withdraw the service if payment was not being received, or to request a deposit to ensure that the abattoir paid for the services provided. The Health Department obviously agreed with that stand, because eventually it changed the legislation after three or four years of very intense lobbying around the State. However, the change was too late for the Shire of Kojonup because, as had been signalled and feared, the abattoir eventually went into liquidation and its debts far outweighed its value. In fact, there is no chance that the Shire of Kojonup will be able to recover any of the moneys owed to it by the abattoir, and the ratepayers of Kojonup have been left with a bill of \$54 150.82 or the potential equivalent of an increase of 4 per cent in their shire rates.

The shire knew what was coming and that it had a problem, and it did everything it could to avoid that situation. It even went to the Health Department and threatened to withdraw its meat inspection services. The department's response was that if the shire withdrew its services, the department would provide the service and send the shire the bill.

The Health Department and the Government of Western Australia have a very strong moral responsibility to ensure that the ratepayers of Kojonup are not left with that bill. The Health Department or the Government has a very strong moral responsibility to make a one-off ex gratia payment to the shire to wipe out the debt. The shire would never have been owed that money if it had been allowed to do what it wanted to do - that is, withdraw the service - or if the Health Department had acted far more promptly to change the legislation to allow all local government authorities to put in place the safeguards that any business would implement to ensure that it was not lumbered with a very substantial debt.

I understand that seven or eight other shire councils around the State have been left in a similar situation; that is, being lumbered with a debt that they should never have faced, as a result of the failure of the system to act promptly to enable them to put in place the safeguards that are now available. I hope that the Government will take that message on board and act on it.

The other matter that I want to raise has been canvassed by at least one or two speakers and in an amendment, and it relates to the Australian taxation system. The debate on this issue tended to dwell on the taxation system as it relates to Western Australia. However, the question goes far wider than that, and the amendments moved by the member for South Perth widened the debate even further to take in the total taxation system. I strongly believe that our taxation system contains very major disincentives to the development of small industry, to investment in private industry and hence to the creation of jobs and export opportunities, and the manufacture of goods that are currently being imported. Our current taxation system kills small business operators and drives jobs offshore. I do not think many members would argue that that does not happen.

Mr Bloffwitch: The only thing it is good for is employment, because we need three people to fill out the forms.

Mr WIESE: I will refer to that because it is one of the issues. The other tragedy of our system is that it drives offshore some of the very good, new technologies that are invented or developed in Australia, and even in Western Australia. Those technologies are brought to fruition overseas and we spend our precious Australian and Western Australian dollars importing into this country technologies that we originally developed. We desperately need to reintroduce a system of worthwhile investment allowances or some similar mechanism.

Mr Bloffwitch interjected.

Mr WIESE: We need investment allowances or depreciation allowances which are worthwhile and which encourage the producers of goods, wealth, jobs and export income to invest in Australia. Of course, the opposite is happening: Some of the bigger operators are investing in offshore production and importing the goods produced. That investment represents lost jobs, income and export earnings.

Members opposite should take that message on board very strongly. They are talking, as they should be and as we all should be, about the loss of jobs and lack of jobs in Australia and Western Australia. People will not invest in new plant and technologies that will provide jobs for our young people and the unemployed while our current tax system contains these disincentives.

I have had a strong belief all my life, and nothing has changed it, that Australian workers, given the best technology and equipment available, can compete successfully with the workers of any other country in the world, even though some of those workers receive much lower wages. We must encourage manufacturers to install the best plant and technology. That does not happen at the present time because there are very strong disincentives. For example, if a manufacturer were to invest \$200 000 in plant for a factory or farm, when the time comes to fill in his tax return he has spent \$200 000 and at best he will get a 20 per cent tax deduction; that is, \$40 000. That leaves him with \$160 000 that he has already spent and he will have to pay tax on that \$160 000. If that tax is at a rate of let us say 30 per cent - sometimes it will be higher than that - in addition to the \$200 000 that he has spent, he will have to pay another \$48 000 in tax. Small wonder that the producers of jobs, the manufacturers, the factory owners and the potential investors in new factories in Australia, do not put them in. That sort of disincentive will stop them doing so. That is why I have said we need to change our system of taxation. We need to provide investment and depreciation allowances which are real and meaningful and which encourage the entrepreneurs to develop and expand their operations by providing the best equipment and technology so that the jobs that we so desperately need right around Australia and certainly here in Western Australia are created. The current taxation system is a major disincentive for people who want to get into business and establish new industries in this State.

In Western Australia - I will use the farming industry as an example - we had some of the best manufacturers of machinery and plant. Chamberlains at Welshpool provided hundreds of jobs. It manufactured tractors that were used, not only in Western Australia, but also all over Australia. That has gone. That company also manufactured a range of cultivation equipment. Pederick's in Wagin manufactured equipment that was used all over Australia. Phillips in Merredin manufactured huge four-wheel drive tractors that were again used all over Australia. They were good tractors. I know they were good because I had two of them. I still have one and it still does a good job. All of that is gone. All that farm machinery that was once manufactured in Western Australia is being imported from countries like America and more particularly from Canada. That is a tragedy because export money is going out of this country to bring that equipment in. Those Western Australian jobs are gone. It has added to our balance of payments deficit and it has been a disaster for Australia. That is why we need to reform the taxation system of this nation.

In closing my comments on tax reform, I will address an issue raised by members of the Opposition. They said it would be dreadful if a goods and services tax were introduced and talked about the cost of compliance with that tax. What about the cost of compliance with our existing, antiquated, outdated, ineffective, inefficient taxation system? The costs associated with compliance with that system are astronomical. I do not think members will have to worry about the cost of complying with a goods and services tax, because most of it will be done through technology and computerisation which now exists.

Mr Ripper: So you are a supporter of the GST?

Mr WIESE: My word I am with one reservation: If a GST is introduced as part of taxation reform, we have to make all reforms. We have to get rid of some of the other useless and bad taxes that exist at the moment. I am not only referring to federal taxes. I am referring also to the state payroll tax and the financial benefits tax, which is a dreadful tax for people in country and remote areas. It serves no purpose. If a GST is introduced, we have to reform the taxation system totally. I am very strongly in favour of a GST and of making those taxation reforms. I go so far as to say that I believe those reforms are absolutely essential if we are to get this country back on track and provide jobs.

I return to my original statement on tax reform. There are strong and real disincentives for people who want to expand or establish new industries under the existing taxation system.

I would like the opportunity to talk about many other issues. I will get that chance at some stage in the future. One of the issues about which I will speak is the reforms that have been made in the Police Service and the direction that service will be taking in the future. We have made some real progress in that area; however, we have some way to

go. I wish the new Minister the best of luck. He has my full support implementing the reforms that were started under my ministry. I thank the House for listening to my Address-in-Reply speech.

DR CONSTABLE (Churchlands) [4.05 pm]: Mr Deputy Speaker, I add my congratulations to the Speaker on his taking the Chair in this House and also to you on your election as Chairman of Committees and Deputy Speaker. I am sure that, in the next four years, we will see some interesting reforms in the way the House conducts itself. The leadership that has already been shown by the Speaker on the upgrading of Parliament House is only one of the examples of what I hope will happen in the next four years. On the matter of changes to Parliament House, I foreshadow moving an amendment to the Address-in-Reply later.

Before I address two or three matters of substance this afternoon, I will comment on the recent election and thank a number of people who have supported me in the time I have been a member of Parliament. I want to thank especially a half a dozen people who have been with me through that time and have helped me fight three elections in only five and a half years, which is a big ask for supporters. They have been totally supportive of my candidacy. They helped me not only at election time, but also during the in-between times with their wise counsel as well as with practical assistance. Those people include Jeff Langdon, Cliff Rocke, Barbara Adrian, Helen Taylor, Brian King, Liz Newby, Ray Thompson, former Senator Peter Sim, and many others. If I had the time I would be able to name 300 people who have supported me.

In the last week or so, many members have thanked their families. My family was totally supportive of my re-election at the last election as it has been during the past five and a half years. The result of my election as the member for Churchlands is an indication of the extraordinary efforts of my supporters. We aimed to get over 83 per cent and we were very pleased to do so.

The election produced some confusing times for voters. The member for Cottesloe would agree that many voters were angry and confused on election day by the change in boundaries and also by the change in the names of electorates. The names of many electorates changed with the redistribution. When the Electoral Act is amended, one of the amendments should relate to the names of electorates remaining stable as in the federal system. Changing the names of electorates causes a great deal of confusion. I am still receiving correspondence from some Ministers addressed to the member for Floreat and I am still being referred to in the media as the member for Floreat. I do not mind that. I have very fond memories of being the member for Floreat. With the redistribution the name of my electorate was changed to Churchlands and I suspect other members are having similar problems to me with the change of name of their electorates. It is one issue we should address if we are to consider electoral reform.

I will refer briefly to the Governor's speech and the Government's program which was part of that speech. There are two comments in that speech which I will quote. The first is -

Communication and consultation will guide the Government in its direction.

We must be very careful to make sure that the Government means what it says about "consultation". Since I have been in this place we have had under both a Labor and coalition government what I refer to as "Clayton's consultation". The Government makes a decision and says it is going out to consult. While that is appropriate in some cases, in most cases it is more appropriate to first undertake general consultation before making a decision. The Government can then come up with a single recommendation or a range of them and consult again with the interested people or groups on the recommendation or recommendations which could be modified before a final decision is made.

The second brief quotation from the Governor's speech which I will quote concerns the Commission on Government and it states -

The Coalition established the Commission on Government -

I might add after a great deal of procrastination -

- and staunchly supports open and accountable government.

It is up to each member in this place to make sure that happens, both with issues relating to their electorates and general issues affecting the community at large. I am sure all members will be looking at many aspects of government accountability in the next four years. I certainly will.

There is nothing in the Governor's speech about the implementation of the COG recommendations. We need a firm commitment to, and a timetable for, implementation of many of the recommendations. We have had enough rhetoric. It is now 1997 and the 1980's have long since passed. The time has come to grasp the nettle and institute many of COG's recommendations.

The Governor's speech referred to a review of the Education Act which is something that has been promised for some time. I know that review has taken a long time which is what one would expect for an Act as important, comprehensive and large as the Education Act. I look forward to the new legislation being brought into the Parliament, hopefully later this year.

Members know that the purpose of the Governor's speech is essentially to lay down the Government's program for the coming year. While it is interesting to see what is included in the speech, it is equally interesting to ponder on what has not been said in the speech. For instance, for some time the Government has promised a new animal welfare Act. Again, there was no mention of it in the Governor's speech, but I know a great deal of work has gone into the preparation of a new Act. Many groups in the community are concerned to see new legislation in this area and they include animal welfare groups, researchers in many fields - medical, agricultural and veterinary sciences - the animal ethics committees which perform an important role in this community, particularly in universities and other organisations. The time has come to put new legislation in place so people are not worried about what the future holds.

A review of local government boundaries is in place and it is important that it is monitored very carefully by this Parliament because the final decision will be in the hands of the Minister, not the Parliament. I have given a couple of examples of some of the issues which were not included in the Governor's speech which I hope will be resolved in the short term.

I turn now to an issue which was raised on the front page of *The West Australian* last Saturday. I refer to the decision by Education Ministers around Australia on literacy testing and the concern expressed about the high level of poor literacy skills among young people in the community. I will quote three short paragraphs from the article to set the scene for my comments. It reads -

WA Education Minister Colin Barnett said every child starting school next year would have to achieve minimum literacy and numeracy standards within four years.

That is a very important aim of any education system and nobody would disagree with the Minister. The article continues -

Remedial programs would be provided for students having difficulties.

Again, nobody would disagree with that comment. To continue -

He said Year 1 students would not be tested -

As an educator in a past life I would agree it is very difficult to design tests for mass testing for children of that age. The article continues -

- but teachers would assess their progress as part of WA's early childhood programs.

Universal testing of Years 3 and 5 students would be introduced in the next three years. There were also plans to retest students in Years 7 and 9.

The politics of literacy is an interesting area. Over the years landmark reports about this issue have been prepared by Senate committees. It is an important issue for any Government. In its broader sense, the cornerstone of education is literacy, especially in a democracy where it is the Government's role to make sure that every citizen has the opportunity to be literate and numerate and to participate as fully as possible in society. Governments are obliged to seek the highest standards of literacy for citizens and young people through the education system. I applaud the Education Ministers for the resolve they have in this regard. Because of the importance of education in our society, it is not surprising that nearly 25 per cent of the State's Budget is spent on education.

I found a number of the comments in *The West Australian* rather disturbing and I will start with the comments of the Federal Education Minister, Dr Kemp, on the decision of the Education Ministers. The article states -

"It is a national disgrace that 30 per cent of young teenagers cannot read properly," Dr Kemp said.

"There has been no improvement in literacy standards in the last 20 years. In fact it has deteriorated among boys.

"It is clear that our education policies -

I would add to that, "and practices" -

- are failing a large number of children. Clearly this situation cannot continue. Parents, quite rightly, have demanded improvement and the government's of Australia have listened and acted."

Thirty per cent of children is a very high percentage and I presume that when Dr Kemp made that statement he had the data to back it up. My reading in this area suggests it is a rather high estimate of young people. In the 20 years I have been involved in education in this State, the numbers have been somewhere between 15 and 20 per cent. Even if it is 15 per cent it is extremely high and it is something we must look at.

Mr Barnett: The last results in 1995 indicated that 10 per cent of children are not up to a satisfactory literacy standard. I suspect it is in that order, but it is a significant number.

Dr CONSTABLE: If it is one in 10 or 15 in 100 we have a problem which we must deal with. The initiative is aimed at that. The comment in the article that there has been no improvement in literacy standards in the last 20 years and they have deteriorated among boys is extremely worrying. In relation to male juveniles, a range of issues, including education, must be addressed very seriously. Of the young teenagers in detention centres, between 70 and 80 per cent are illiterate or semi-literate and would certainly have trouble in the work force. One of the reasons which is often given for young male juveniles getting into trouble with the law is their lack of literacy skills. It has been shown in many studies and commentaries that it is possible for many of those students to be detected at an early age. We must take a long term view of those problems in juvenile justice and ensure those children have every possibility in the school system to gain the literacy skills they require.

The article in *The West Australian* on Saturday continued -

Years 3 and 5 students in public and private schools will be tested annually in the three Rs and the results sent to their parents as part of a Federal Government bid to make schools more accountable.

There is obvious agreement that at those ages - certainly at year 3 - we can start testing in a mass sense to collect data to see, firstly, how the system is going and, secondly, how individuals are achieving within the system. As someone who has been involved in a lot of educational testing and the development of tests, particularly individual tests for small children, I agree that this testing and evaluation program is important. In education, we should be doing more evaluating and reviewing, and systematically collecting data so we know how good are our school programs. Without this type of data we cannot make proper judgments. It is not sufficient to say that a program such as First Steps works well. We need hard data to judge where it is working well, where it may not be working well and how it might be modified to make it work better. Unless we have the resources to do this sort of testing, I do not think we can make progress with our education system.

It is equally important when we have a testing program that the will and resources exist to provide follow up work with those children who need extra help. The Minister confirmed in answer to a question I asked yesterday that the results of testing would be provided to parents. If the department intends to send the results to parents, an implied promise is that something will be done if children have problems. It is important that early on we make sure the resources are available to do that job properly and to follow up individuals who need help.

I refer to another article in *The West Australian*. I would not normally rely on articles in the media this much. However, I am looking forward to a ministerial statement on these issues so members can be fully briefed in this House. Today's *The West Australian* contained an article about the cost of the testing program, and who will be responsible for the cost. It is a great pity that this initiative has been taken without the Education Minister's thinking through who will pay for it, who is responsible for it, and how much it will cost.

Mr Barnett: The current testing cost is about \$1m a year. This will be more than that. Details on the benchmarks, the testing and funding will be resolved by July of this year.

Dr CONSTABLE: I appreciate that. That is a little more information than we had yesterday. However, too often since 1983 there have been good initiatives in education, but no resources provided to follow up those programs. I will not take time now to go through a litany of those programs, but there were many good initiatives, some of which did not work very well because they were not properly funded. Teachers have found that very frustrating. In this instance let us ensure that funding is provided, and that we do not have too many squabbles about it. The Federal Government should be contributing to this initiative; it has been involved in it. It is an important national issue. That involvement should be easy to work out. In addition, the Federal Government should contribute some specially earmarked funds towards remedial programs since it was part of that initiative. A commitment has been made to testing and a financial burden goes with that. We have an implied commitment to remedial and extra programming, and a financial burden goes with that. The Government must ensure that the resources are available.

Over the years attention has been paid to remedial education; however, more attention must be paid to it. To do it properly we will need extra teachers or existing teachers will need extra training. In some cases, for those children who are very much at risk of failure, such as those who end up in detention centres with poor or no literacy skills, we need smaller classes, whether part time or full time. The testing program will be of limited use if these extra resources are not provided.

An article in *The West Australian* on Saturday states -

The results will be used to compare how well the States and Territories and public and private schools are educating the nation's children.

A comment in the newspaper this morning related to the value of comparisons with other States. It is simply not true that comparing WA students with their Eastern States counterparts is not relevant because of enrolment age differences. These tests will be standardised. The whole point of that is that comparisons can be made with children of the same age. I will not go into the details of standardised testing, and the process to develop it; however, we will be able to compare children from State to State and within our own system from year to year.

This program will identify not only children who are at risk, but also it will give some idea about those children who are performing extremely well in our education system and, hopefully, provide some extra enrichment or acceleration for those children as well.

Amendment to Motion, as Amended

Dr CONSTABLE: I move -

That the following words be added to the motion -

and wishes to inform Your Excellency that this House supports the Speaker in his timely comments regarding the urgent need for the Government to commit funds to upgrade and improve facilities at Parliament House.

I will begin by repeating my opening comment: I congratulate the Speaker on his leadership generally and also, particularly, on this subject. I refer again to his comments in *The West Australian* on 19 February. The article commented on the Speaker's view on the needs of Parliament House. This was before the member for Innaloo became Speaker of the House. The article states -

A multi-million-dollar upgrade of parliamentary staff and MPs' offices would be high on his agenda. He said it had been more than 35 years since major improvements were made to the building.

"We have to make sure that the Parliament meets its requirements to service the functions that it does for the next 50 years," he said.

Parliament House might need to be extended to accommodate staff. He said the current situation, where some staff were stationed in corridors, was unacceptable.

I am sure there would be unanimous approval of those comments from members of this House. There was widespread acceptance of those comments in the wider community, particularly in the print media. I was interested that last week on a matter of procedure the member for Greenough took up this issue with some gusto. I refer to the editorial in *The West Australian* on 24 February which referred to substandard conditions in this Parliament. It stated -

... Innaloo MLA George Strickland has been refreshingly candid about his plans to rebuild State Parliament ... Mr Strickland has faced up to the reality that the efficiency of the parliamentary process is impaired by the primitive conditions under which people in Parliament House have to work.

It would not surprise me if our new members had noticed in their first few hours in this House that the conditions are primitive with members having to share offices, and very poor conditions for the staff. *The West Australian* editorial went on to say that it is both a workplace of democracy and its most visible symbol. We owe it to the State of Western Australia to ensure this visible symbol is one of which we can be proud. The Commission on Government had much to say about this issue as well, and confirms the comments of the Speaker. At paragraph 9.5.4 of its report the Commission on Government said -

An efficiently functioning Parliament House is an essential ingredient in the structure of democratic and accountable government ... Parliament House lacks sufficient basic amenities for its proper functioning. A major redevelopment plan should be commissioned for Parliament House to functionally upgrade it and to protect it as a place of heritage value.

The heritage aspects of this place were well recognised by the Commission on Government. Its recommendation relating to this matter states -

A redevelopment plan for the upgrading of Parliament House should be commissioned and implemented as a matter of high priority.

There is very much universal agreement on the need to make sure this House is upgraded physically in order to function properly in its role as the guardian of democracy in this State. It is probably fair to describe the physical attributes of this House as a very sad symbol of what we are here for. The building looks very tired, very old fashioned. The furniture in many of the offices looks as though it should have been auctioned or put on a scrap heap a long time ago.

Mr Barnett: Some of the members look like that!

Dr CONSTABLE: That is the Minister's opinion. I am always interested in the response of visitors to Parliament House, who come in here with me and who have never been here before. They have often expressed their shock and horror that the building has been left to decay in the way in which it has. When they come in here they expect to find something different from what they see.

The poor working conditions of the staff have been mentioned many times in debates, and I will not go into that in great detail except to say again that many aspects of this building would not pass an inspection by WorkSafe Western Australia. The building simply is not big enough. It is cramped and crowded. People are working under temporary conditions, and have been doing so for many years. Members must share offices. There is a lack of privacy, a lack of ability to have a confidential conversation with a constituent or with someone on the telephone or who comes to visit a member in Parliament House, and a lack of meeting rooms. Ministers must often meet in corridors, when they should be meeting in privacy so that people can present their case to them in a confidential manner.

I always tell people that we have reverse cycle airconditioning in here; that is, it is hot in the summer and cold in the winter. The humidity and closeness of the atmosphere in this Chamber just this afternoon has been extraordinary. In many ways these physical conditions are so bad that they can at times lead to low morale.

On 19 December 1995 I asked the Premier a question about the need to provide adequate facilities here. Question 691 states -

- (1) When can we expect work to begin on extensions to, and refurbishment of, Parliament House to provide even basic facilities for members, staff and the media?

As part of his response the Premier said that the facilities at Parliament House were not adequate. He made a promise that in future attention would be paid to this matter. That is 16 months ago, and matters have not improved; they have got worse. I hope those on the other side of the House will support this amendment to the Address-in-Reply. We need more than promises - they are easy to make; we need a timetable to make sure that an upgrading and extension of this building will be completed before the end of the century. It is in the Government's hands to do this and I urge it to get on with the planning as soon as possible so that by the turn of the century the upgrading of this House can be completed.

MR PENDAL (South Perth) [4.34 pm]: In seconding the amendment, I put to members that today we have an opportunity to display a level of bipartisanship in support of the amendment which is not often apparent in a Chamber of this kind. Ten years ago a previous government led by Mr Burke made the last commitment to make significant changes to the accommodation of those in Parliament House. On that occasion in the upper House the Government, with briefings prior to the announcement contained in the Budget, sought to put the matter on a bipartisan basis by seeking support from outside the government party, and that occurred. The sad thing was that subsequently the Government scuttled its own efforts at bipartisanship when public opinion allegedly began running against the inclusion of such an item in the Budget for that year, and the Government withdrew leaving the then Opposition in the position where it was defending a government announcement.

Everyone has a vested interest in seeing some significant upgrading and extensions to Parliament House. Some members might ask whether we can afford it. I will give this example: I repeat, it is now 10 years since the then Premier, Mr Burke, suggested Parliament House should be expanded. This morning I took the trouble to look at the capital works program - that is, the program that funds activities of this kind with schools, gaols, ports or roads - which has taken place in the past 10 years since that undertaking was made. The expenditure for the capital works program for the year in which the promise was made was \$1.088b - a lot of money. The following year it went to \$1.209b and there was a steady, progressive increase until the estimate for 1996-97, in which we are approving general loan and capital works fund expenditure of about \$2.7b.

If we aggregate the costs over the 10 years, we will find that we have approved general loan and capital works funding of \$16.5b - a massive amount of money. Perhaps members could work this out: If we had decided to stick with that level of bipartisanship in 1986-87 and allocated no more than 0.1 per cent of the general loan and capital works funds in the years since, by now we would have paid for all the required extensions to Parliament House. Some years ago it was estimated that we needed \$100m to do the job. If we take my calculations - 0.01 per cent of

the \$16.5b in that period - on face value, we would have set aside by now \$165m, which would have been more than enough to have carried out the work, and it would have been money well spent.

We all get frightened - I have no doubt it will happen again if this amendment of the member for Churchlands is passed today - that this issue will rightly get publicity; the media will give us tentative and early support; and then there will be some sort of public movement against it. We will then be told we are being extravagant and we are looking after ourselves in seeking to have these extensions to Parliament House. It is almost a proforma of what might happen; however, it should be part of a wider agenda. I do not think it is good enough to look at the extensions to Parliament House in isolation, as though that will solve all of the problems of the legislative branch of government. In addressing the notion of an expanded Parliament House, the Government must also address research facilities for members. Additionally, we must look at other reforms, such as additional sittings each session and at committees being able to sit while Parliament is in session, which they are currently unable to do.

Each of those three things is a recommendation of the Commission on Government; however, so too is the question of an expanded Parliament House. Not many people work in conditions like those in which people in this building must work. I do not need to tell anyone here, although it is good to remind people, that in some parts of the building people still work in dog boxes. That term was coined by the present Premier when he was in opposition 10 years ago and when he rightly objected to those so-called temporary cubicles being built. So temporary have they been that a decade later they are still with us. As part of the wider agenda not only did COG say that research facilities should be provided, that committees should have the capacity to sit while Parliament is sitting, and things of that nature, but in recommendation 172 COG empowers members of this House to bite the bullet and to be a little courageous for once in their lives; that is, to say to the public that the work is necessary and, if required, to appoint a group of people to sell the idea to the public. If necessary, the proposal can be separated from the Government if it is frightened that it is not able to do that. The recommendation from COG was intended to empower Parliament to do something for itself. Recommendation 172 of report No 5, tabled in this place in August 1996, states -

1. A redevelopment plan for the upgrading of Parliament House should be commissioned and implemented -

I ask members to remember the next few words -

- as a matter of high priority.

That does not mean next year, in a five year rolling program, or by the year 2025 when we will all be gone from this place, but as a matter of high priority. The COG then gives the Premier the political wherewithal to defend himself and the Government against any adverse reaction from the public because it states -

The Treasurer should be identified as the minister responsible for recommending the appropriation of the necessary funds for the implementation of the redevelopment plan.

Anyone who has taken the opportunity to visit other Parliaments in Australia will know that other than, I think, the Tasmanian Parliament, not one Parliament in Australia has not had the guts to bite the bullet on this matter. Within the framework of a heritage building, the South Australian Parliament recently did a good job of expanding its facilities. The New South Wales Parliament simply dug a large hole in the ground in the courtyard and went down six or seven stories.

Mr Cowan: What did they fill it with?

Mr Barnett: Speeches by the member for South Perth!

Mr PENDAL: I was going to say that they filled it with ministerial speeches, but the Leader of the House got in first. To his credit, Joh Bjelke-Petersen in Queensland, who was frequently derided for having no respect for the parliamentary process, was the first Premier of his generation in Australia to give members of Parliament proper facilities. He believed that because members travelled long distances to the Queensland State Parliament, they were entitled to decent conditions. That is another good reason the Deputy Premier can support a proposition of this kind.

Members should consider what happened in a small community such as the Northern Territory. I do not know how many members have visited that Parliament. Five hundred years from now that building will still be impressive. It is a fantastic building set on a most impressive site, overlooking the bay, with a people's hall and a single Chamber. It is a credit to a small community like that.

Mrs Roberts: The Commonwealth paid for it.

Mr PENDAL: The Commonwealth did not pay for it; the taxpayers of Australia paid for it. No money in this country is commonwealth money, and no money is state money - it is all the people's money. Someone had the courage to

say that they would not put up with a little tin shed, which is effectively what they had, and they spent money on a building that in 500 years will still be a credit to Australian architecture. I appeal, as did the member for Churchlands, for members to do the right thing and turn this into a bipartisan matter. It will empower the Government to do the right thing. Perhaps the Government will then take notice of what COG says; namely, that the facilities at Parliament House should be upgraded, not by the centenary of federation, and not by the turn of the century, but as a matter of high priority. For that reason the amendment deserves the unanimous and impartial support of every member of this House.

MS WARNOCK (Perth) [4.46 pm]: I am more than pleased to support this timely endeavour by the Speaker of this Parliament to upgrade and improve Parliament House. I cannot support the member for South Perth in everything he said, although he said that he was not an unqualified supporter of Joh Bjelke-Petersen. Nonetheless, I am happy to support the thrust of his comments. We must be courageous about this matter, largely because this building belongs to the people and it should be kept in proper condition for the people.

Since coming to this Parliament in early 1993 I have been both amazed and dismayed at the state of this fine heritage building - most particularly at the conditions in which people who work in this building, whomever they may be, are obliged to function. "Dog box" is the correct term to describe the accommodation of staff who work downstairs. The education officers' office is a disgraceful dog box, as is the stationery office, which in 1997 offers barbaric working conditions. Many others in Parliament House work in conditions that, frankly, would not be tolerated elsewhere. If it were not for the difficulty of persuading the community to spend any money on parliamentarians - although it is the staff surrounding the parliamentarians that we are thinking of here - an upgrade would have been carried out a long time ago.

It is reasonable to say that nobody on the public payroll should expect to exist in luxury in their working life. That would be wrong. However, it is not proper in modern times not to expect modern accommodation of the kind found in most contemporary workplaces. Most offices - certainly not most factories - would be airconditioned now. The fact that this place is not airconditioned is one of the first things about which visitors to the place remark. It is dreadful working here in summer. One or two offices are airconditioned, but the others, including this Chamber and the corridors, are uncomfortable places to be. It is obvious to all of us who work in these conditions that in 40 degree heat tempers get very short. We become intolerant of each other's behaviour in the sweaty conditions, which very much reduces the level of production particularly late at night. In those instances, the conditions generally decline to a lamentable degree.

We must all grab the nettle in both hands and decide that this is the time to do something about working conditions in Parliament. I love a heritage building. I love the 101-year-old house in which I live - which I hasten to add has been modified for modern working and living conditions - and we should be pleased to have a heritage building, even if it means we must spend some money on making conditions more bearable.

I applaud any efforts to preserve the elegance of this building. I approve of the ceiling painting performed over the summer break which is very fitting.

Mr Riebeling: You cannot see it for the lights.

Ms WARNOCK: It cannot be seen unless one looks up at it. I am not fond of the lights but I approve of the heritage-correct ceiling.

Mr Cowan: We thought it was a giant ice-cream cake!

Ms WARNOCK: I do not know how much the Deputy Premier knows about heritage-correct ceilings, but the work on the ceiling is a fine effort. I am pleased that some effort has been expended on preserving that heritage as it is very important that heritage features are retained. I am sensitive to heritage because not only do I live in a 101-year-old house, but also heritage buildings are falling around me every day in my electorate, being demolished for the northern city bypass. I am pleased to see a heritage building preserved.

While preserving the building's best qualities, it is time to expand the space in which we work. Everybody needs to be made more comfortable to be more productive. Since other members have mentioned other Parliaments around the world, I refer to the Dutch Parliament which is a beautiful, old heritage building. That building is surrounded by a modern building, which is an effective way of preserving the past and making the present more comfortable for people working in the building. The Speaker could certainly look at that as a pattern for improvement to this building.

As both of my colleagues from South Perth and Churchlands have remarked, some people will always say that any money spent on members of Parliament could be better spent elsewhere. We are frequently criticised for spending money on bettering our own circumstances. None of us is here for very long, not even the Deputy Premier who is

now described as the father of the House, and as the building belongs to the people, it should be preserved and improved for the people; namely, all those who work here, those who make regular visits and those who succeed us.

This building should be a source of pride and interest for young and older people who visit it. It should be seen as the proper cradle and home of democracy in this State, and I am prepared to go along with any plans the Speaker and the Government may have to improve the conditions in this building. At the same time as we seek to improve the building itself, we must preserve its heritage for future generations.

MR RIEBELING (Ashburton) [4.54 pm]: I also support the amendment moved by the member for Churchlands.

Mr House: That is the other 10 per cent of your vote gone.

Mr RIEBELING: I have not got 10 per cent left!

I have been a member of this place for only five years, and it strikes me that the working areas of Parliament for backbenchers are the worst areas in the building. The structure of this Chamber is magnificent, but it is intolerable to work in here without airconditioning. Visiting members of the public see small numbers of members in the Chamber, but we are encouraged not to be here. Among the few airconditioned places to which members have access are the dining room and the bar - two areas in which people would not want us to be. However, conditions in those two areas are far more pleasant than those in the Chamber where we should be at work.

The conditions in our rooms are even worse. The heat in summer and cold in winter, coupled with the cramped conditions - three members share one room in my case - means very little work can be done. No provision is made for computers and the like in members' rooms. All in all, it would appear that whoever decides on the resources to be allocated to this building thinks it is best to keep us drunk or eating! In that way, fewer members will be in the Chamber and legislation can be passed quickly.

It is important that the new Speaker, who apparently has a commitment to rebuilding or refurbishing this room and the conditions under which members of Parliament work, is fully supported. I hope the Government adopts a bipartisan approach to this problem, in which case the Opposition would agree to the proposal.

It has been argued that this Chamber would be very difficult to aircondition because of the heritage ceiling. I was somewhat convinced of that argument when I first heard it, but I visited the New Zealand Parliament, a building of a similar age, which has circles on its ceiling similar to those in this Chamber. The circles in New Zealand have been replaced with circular airconditioning ducts which operate efficiently, so the airconditioning of this room could take place with a minimum of fuss.

While we are working on the ceiling, the lights could be replaced with more appropriate ones. The current lights dominate our heritage ceiling, which should not be the case. The lights should allow us to see what we are reading without dominating this House.

Certain staff members in this place must work in appalling conditions - the officers downstairs have been mentioned - although I would not mind swapping rooms with some officers of the Parliament. The appalling conditions faced by some staff should also be improved.

Even when one wants to be efficient and work on electorate business in Parliament, it is extremely difficult to do so in either the Chamber or one's office. Another one or two people are always in the office either on the phone or at work, which makes a very difficult environment in which to get anything done.

I agree with the comments of the member for South Perth about research officers, although that issue is different from the question of this building.

The member for South Perth mentioned the Northern Territory Parliament. That has a magnificent building. I am not sure which Prime Minister was responsible for the work. I expect it was either Paul Keating or Bob Hawke.

Mrs Roberts: It was Paul Keating.

Mr Prince interjected.

Mr RIEBELING: Even though it was paid for through the taxation of the people, the money was distributed by the Government of Paul Keating. As members of this House know, a decision to spend money on politicians or the conditions in which they work is not popular in the electorates. Paul Keating was brave to make that decision. The Northern Territory will reap the rewards of it for many years. The conditions and resources available to members of Parliament in the Northern Territory are far superior to those experienced in this place. I hope the Government will have a serious look at the amendment and also at the opportunities to improve conditions in this place.

MR BLOFFWITCH (Geraldton) [5.01 pm] I must contribute to this debate because I certainly have been a critic of the conditions we have in Parliament House. Like many of the other speakers, I am disappointed that over the years we have not undertaken more work like the restoration of the Chamber's ceiling, which certainly adds to the beauty of the place. We have a magnificent Parliament. It was probably very good about five or 10 years after it was built. However, in this day and age when we wander not only around Australia, but also around the world and look at the facilities that other Parliaments have, we must feel that we are not served well and have been cheated. We have been cheated by previous Governments over the last 20 years. None has had the courage to bite the bullet.

I agree with the sentiment that has been expressed: It does not matter how we do it, we will be criticized. At least if we do it as a Parliament, it will happen. That is really what is needed. We do not need people to take cheap shots for political gain when we do put up a proposal or look at something. I can well remember the furore when we wanted to improve the gym. We wanted to put in a spa and squash court. Members will notice that we do not have either, so it never happened.

Dr Edwards: There is a spa.

Mr BLOFFWITCH: There is no squash court. I used to play squash on Tuesdays and Thursdays but I now sit in Parliament on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Would it not be nice if we could have a hit in the dinner break? As parliamentarians, if we are to refrain from doing something every time we are criticised by the Press because it will cost too much money, we will never do anything. It will really take a bold step. The amount of money we will have to spend will not be small. To provide every member with a reasonable sized office cannot be done in the existing building. We will have to look at whether we go over the freeway or back into the old college behind the Parliament. We will have to look at that scale of things, if we are to do this in a reasonable way. I believe that we will do it. I agree with the Commission on Government: The quicker we do it, the cheaper it will be. Every year that goes by means that it will cost more money. I wonder whether, as members of Parliament, we operate as effectively as we should and whether we are doing the job in 1997 as well as we should.

All of us have been to other Parliaments in Australia. In New South Wales members have nice offices with a receptionist. The member has a research officer who does research for him every day. A country member can rest in the little apartment facilities, which are superb. Surely if we are aiming at anything, we should be aiming at that type of thing. There is no reason that we cannot look at a package. We must at least start to get some plans together and do something. I do not know the best way to go about it, but I think we just set out our requirements and get somebody to draw up plans. It has happened a few times over the years. We must obtain some idea of the cost in order to work out how we will finance it and what we intend to do for facilities.

We are lucky we are a State Government, because under normal circumstances people would not put up with many of the conditions in the building. As members of Parliament we sit here in the summer when it is stinking hot; many workers in other work places would get up and walk out. We sit here and do the job.

Who is to blame? We are all to blame because we decide whether to do something. I think we all agree some change is needed. I urge all members, when the plans are drawn up and the costs established, let us stay out of the quick grab and smart little shot. Let us try to stay firm together to build a House of which we and the Western Australian people can be proud. I hope we have the courage to do it.

MRS ROBERTS (Midland) [5.09 pm] I join the members for Churchlands and South Perth in support of the amendment. I intend to keep my comments brief because some extremely pertinent remarks have been made by my colleagues on both sides of the House.

We are working in archaic conditions in this House. They are more like nineteenth century than twentieth century conditions, let alone twenty-first century conditions. To think that we do not have the facilities at Parliament House to enable us to do our jobs effectively is quite incredible in this day and age. In order to work efficiently we need computers and we need to be linked to our electorate offices. It does not matter whether an electorate office is as close as mine in Midland or in the north or south of the State. To be provided with on-line computers so that we can do our jobs more efficiently makes plain sense. It is common practice in any efficient business. We are not operating efficiently and we must do something about it.

I do not want the opportunity to go by without commenting on the conditions in which the staff of the Leader of the Opposition work. They work in a few small rooms and something ironically described as the summer palace, across Harvest Terrace and up the hill. It is a shame that once no longer in opposition the Government is quick to forget what it was like and the conditions its members and staff worked under. I have been told that since 1993, the lawn and the grounds of the summer palace have gone to the dogs - the lawn is dead - and that as a consequence of the cleaning contract which is in place, cobwebs and spiders are all over the outside of the building. It is like a poorly

maintained demountable classroom. It is appalling that people are asked to work there, or in the few rooms that adjoin the Leader of the Opposition's office, out of which a number of people work.

I suggest that when we think about the concerns of members of Parliament, we spare a thought for the people who work at Parliament House all year round, some of whom have been mentioned by the member for South Perth, and others of whom include the staff of the Leader of the Opposition. I am concerned that the working conditions of the staff of Parliament House are not subject to the occupational health, safety and welfare legislation to which workers everywhere else in the State, with the exception of police officers, are subject. The working conditions of many people in this place fail to measure up, in a number of ways, to the provisions of that legislation.

The member for Geraldton said, "We are the Parliament; we are the people who can do something about it." Unfortunately, from our perspective the only people who can do something about it are government members. The decision will be made by the Government, not the Parliament, and it will be budgeted and planned for by the Government. The member for Churchlands called upon the Government to provide that funding, and also to provide a definitive timetable for action. It is one thing to say it will happen; it is another to budget for it and put in place a timetable. It may not happen immediately, but if the funding and the timetable are in place, that will be of some respite to people, including members of Parliament, who work in this place.

I offer opposition support for the upgrade of the working conditions of everyone in this place. We are not seeking to make this a political issue. We hope the Government will act expeditiously to upgrade Parliament House.

MR MARSHALL (Dawesville - Parliamentary Secretary) [5.15 pm]: I have great pleasure in supporting the amendment moved by the member for Churchlands. Before I came into Parliament, I would pass the Parliament when driving along the freeway and look up in awe at this majestic building, which has a heritage value second to none and is a place on the hill that everyone respects. That was my view from the outside. However, when I was elected and came inside this place, I was quite amazed at the poor conditions in which parliamentarians and the staff of Parliament House have to work. Most of the people I know who have been in business and whom I bring to Parliament House are appalled at the conditions. I do not know of one business that does not have airconditioning, good lighting, good reception areas and good working conditions with desks and other facilities that help employees to perform well.

Three months after I took up my position as the then member for Murray, in the back pocket, I had to go to an optician to have my eyes checked for the first time in my life, and I realised that my problem was caused by the dullness of the lights.

Mr Riebeling: On that side!

Mr MARSHALL: Dullness of the lights here, and dullness over there.

I was a member of the Joint House Committee, and when we complained about the lighting, the then Speaker agreed that it was time the lighting was changed. That was one of the first steps that was taken to modernise this place, and members may recall the uproar, particularly from the Opposition, which could not accept that there had been a change and that something good had been done in this place. Members of the Opposition came into this Chamber wearing sunglasses and saying that the glare was too much, and even the Press in the gallery were playing up as though it was too glary. Two years later, no-one is silly enough to wear an eyeshade; we have accepted these good working conditions.

Members who were sitting in the back at that time could hear only parts of the conversation on the front bench, so once again the backbenchers complained that we needed to do something; and it was almost as though people had never complained before but had just put up with it. People are judged by the company they keep and the facilities they accept. If we accept second-rate facilities, very soon we will become second-rate. We said that we needed to have microphones, and in front of us now, for the first time in the history of this place, are microphones. Over the years, when comments have been made about the need to upgrade Parliament House, it has been said that it is a political ploy, and it has been put in the too hard basket and shelved. If we really believe in a project and we market it and convince people that it must be done, we will add to the lights and the microphones, and the airconditioning that is slowly creeping through this place. There is an agenda to put in airconditioning gradually from the top of the building to the bottom - I do not know the exact route it is taking - and some offices are ready to be airconditioned, as was the case with the improvements to the lighting in offices.

However, that is only a small change. This place looks magnificent from the outside, but when we compare it with other Parliaments in Australia, we come off second best. I as a West Australian like to think that we lead Australia in every field, and although this Parliament leads it in original architecture, it does not lead it in facilities. Like all the other speakers, I agree with the amendment moved by the member for Churchlands. I would not like to see this amendment shelved. I would like us to pick it up and go for it. I have always believed that during the next four years

of this Government, a budget will make provision for an upgrade of the facilities in this place. The House is in disrepair and is falling apart.

If I could add something that is close to my heart, some 15 years ago I used to have a hit with Margaret Court at the parliamentary tennis court while training her for the world championships. That court was of international standard. Now, one would not play a C grade game on that court because the kikuyu has gone right through it and no-one cares about it. We should be proud of the facilities here, but they are second rate, and the sooner we change that situation, the better.

Amendment on the Amendment to Motion, as Amended

MR BOARD (Murdoch - Minister for Works) [5.20 pm]: I move -

To delete all words after "regarding" in line 2, with a view to substituting the following -

the need to upgrade and improve facilities at Parliament House.

The issue raised by the member for Churchlands and supported by the member for South Perth is an important one not only for members of Parliament but also for the people of Western Australia. I am sure that the new members who entered this place a fortnight ago are in the same position as I was in 1993 when I entered Parliament. They would feel a certain awe about this Legislative Assembly. However, once they get past that feeling, they will start to look at the facilities in this House and the working conditions accepted by members of Parliament. I am now a Minister and I realise how difficult the working conditions are for Ministers, because they must hold meetings with constituents or advisers in the corridors. That is inappropriate.

The issues raised by previous speakers are of some significance and importance for members of this House and for the people of Western Australia. A Parliament House is more than just a workplace for members of Parliament. It is a symbol of a democratic process; it is a place to which people look for guidance and leadership. A Parliament House reflects much of the processes of the community and the way in which the community thinks about its democratic process. I applaud the States and countries around the world which have made significant contributions to the redevelopment of their Houses of Parliament which are, in some cases, hundreds of years old.

The member for Perth referred to the Parliament House in the Northern Territory. As I indicated earlier today, I was in Darwin last week and I had the opportunity to view the Northern Territory's Parliament House. It is a magnificent building. It is simple, elegant, functional, and, most importantly, it is cool. I believe it works well, not that I saw it in operation. It is a magnificent building for people to look at and enjoy as a symbol of their democratic process. In many ways the architecture of the building has been developed as a symbol of multiculturalism, indicating the link between Asia and Australia. Whoever is responsible for the planning of that Parliament House should be congratulated.

Dr Constable interjected.

Mr BOARD: I agree with the member. We have the opportunities they have had, and we should be addressing those issues. I agree with the statements by members opposite that some difficulties will arise from the community perception of what we are and what we do as members of Parliament. The upgrades required in this place will be expensive and extensive. I am sure that every member will support any call for an upgrade and extension to provide proper working conditions in Parliament House.

Mrs Roberts: Will you do something about it?

Mr BOARD: This issue is a question for the Government and for all members. In particular, it is a question for the Government when setting its priorities. If any member went to the community and asked which would be preferred at this time - a school, a hospital upgrade or a road -

Several members interjected.

Mr Pental: Have your conditions improved since you became a Minister? That is the silliest argument I have ever heard. You should be supporting the amendment, not moving another amendment.

Mr BOARD: I am supporting the need for an upgrade of Parliament House.

Mr Pental: You are not. You have moved an amendment.

Mr BOARD: I have moved an amendment because the Government has priorities. Every Government needs to access its priorities at any given time. The Government is looking at its priorities. Without doubt this issue is of great concern to the Government.

Mr Pental: Money is being spent on the Capita Centre where the Premier has his office, because the owners of the building want to retain the Premier as an occupant.

Mr BOARD: As the Minister for Works, I have had the opportunity of looking at new facilities management contracts for some 900 government buildings in Perth and around the State. Parliament House is maintained currently by the private sector, as a result of a facilities management contract. As a result of my investigations, Mr Vince Pacecca has informed me that the upgrade, management and maintenance of the facility is improving as a result of the work of that private sector contract.

This is an important issue for all members of Parliament. It is important for the Government, and we are treating it with a great deal of earnest. However, the Government has many priorities and at the moment we must strike a balance in our priorities. That is the issue that confronts the Government currently.

MR COURT (Nedlands - Premier) [5.28 pm]: In the past, normally if a Government moved to spend money on Parliament House there would be much community backlash -

Dr Constable: There would not be any backlash this time.

Mr COURT: If the member will allow me to finish my comments, I said that normally if a Government wanted to spend money on Parliament House there would be a community backlash. This time it is a media driven campaign to improve the facilities at Parliament House, and I think there is an understanding in the community that a need exists for the facilities to be improved. By way of interjection the member for South Perth said that the Government is spending money on the Capita Centre -

Mr Pental: I did not say that the Government was spending money. I said that the owners of the building were spending money on the building because they want to retain the occupancy of the Premier. I see nothing unsumptuous in ministerial offices, and that is my point.

Mr COURT: The Government of the day took out a long lease at the top of the market on accommodation in the Capita building at, from memory, more than \$400 a square metre. Prior to the expiry of the lease at the bottom of the market we renegotiated the lease, resulting in a considerable cut in rental and a good saving. We also insisted that the building and the lifts be upgraded.

Mr Pental: That is my point; therefore you should support this amendment unamended.

Mr COURT: It is not costing us money; it is saving us money.

Mr Pental: This is not a St Patrick's day joke is it?

Mr COURT: We are saving money because rather than paying \$400 a square metre for rent we have negotiated it down. At the same time all the facilities are being upgraded.

Two important Western Australian buildings should be prestigious buildings on prestigious sites; namely, the main court building and Parliament House. There is no doubt this building is on a prestigious site. It overlooks the freeway at the top of the city.

It is no secret that we decided to build the courts first. We are having difficulty finding a suitable location for a new court complex. We do not want to build on an area such as Supreme Court Gardens but we accept that it must be a prestigious site. The upgrading of Parliament House boils down in many ways to the timing of a capital works project. We are under financial pressure on all fronts and it will be an expensive exercise. As members will see in the estimates for this forthcoming Budget, finding the funding will be difficult. Although people may talk about spending \$100m on Parliament House, unfortunately that amount of money does not go far in a Health budget where problems exist.

I am aware that the time has come when these facilities should be improved. I could not attend the first part of this debate; I was meeting an ambassador from another country in appalling conditions. I appreciate that most of the Ministers do not have offices and it is difficult for them to work. As a result of being in opposition for 10 years I know the joys of the summer palace. Although members have said it is worse now, I do not think it could be much worse.

Mrs Roberts: Nothing has been done in the past four years. It has become dilapidated.

Mr COURT: That is not right; one of the first things this Government did was approve expenditure for the summer palace. Like other members, the media and other people who must use this building, I agree that the facilities are not up to scratch. Western Australia is outperforming other States in economic growth. It is embarrassing that we do not have more Premiers' Conferences or leaders' forums here because the facilities are not suitable. As soon as

it is possible within budgetary constraints we will make some moves in relation to Parliament House. I cannot say that we will commit funds because a Budget is to be brought down that will not include funds allocated for that work. However, If we achieve an upturn in revenue, it is an area that must be addressed.

I agree with the member for Churchlands that it will not provoke a public backlash provided it is done in a responsible way. It therefore must be done when the money is available. Our challenge is to juggle things so that we can find the funds for it.

I share the sentiments of the other speakers and I hope that at some stage during the next four years the opportunity will arise to start this project.

MR BROWN (Bassendean) [5.35 pm]: It is important to look at the functioning of the Parliament in determining what is appropriate. It is a question of what is appropriate not for the comfort of members of Parliament but for the working of the Parliament. I am sure I am like many other members who try to undertake research in this place in the middle of summer, unless they spend their time in the library. I have tried it on a number of occasions in an unairconditioned office and have had to stop working because the pieces of paper with which I was working finished up wet with perspiration.

It is a matter not simply of the comfort of members of Parliament, but of the functioning of Parliament as a whole. As government members will know, opposition members do not have research facilities. Therefore it is necessary for to us carry out our own research. We do not have policy officers, advisers or the bureaucracy of government behind us. If we wish to carry out research, only we can do it. It is no good giving it to our electorate officers because they are busy and there is no capacity for them to undertake research. Those of us in opposition spokesperson roles must carry out some research in order to be effective. In this climate - fortunately it is not terribly severe - we lose opportunities to carry out that research.

I am often chided as a member of Parliament for how luxurious this place appears to be. When I hear that I invite people to sit in the chair in my office. However, I warn them not to kick back too far in the chair or they will crack their head against the person behind them. I also invite them to put three books on the desk because when they are open there is no room left on the desk. When people see those conditions they make no argument about office working conditions and other arrangements being improved.

As one of our new members commented, they may argue about salaries, superannuation and other matters but they do not argue with us about our working conditions. It would be pleasant working in more comfortable surroundings, but it is a matter not of what is more or less comfortable, but of what contributes to the workings of Parliament. Members on both sides of the House have told me that they find it difficult to work in the present conditions.

Another point made by the Minister in moving an amendment to the amendment was public opinion and the allocation of funds. The Minister made the observation that if the general public were asked whether they would prefer funds to be spent on hospitals, schools or some other developments, the answer would be that money should be spent in those areas rather than on politicians and Parliament House. I agree. However, equally, if members of the public were asked whether the \$400 000 spent on public opinion polling to help the Government win the election was good use of taxpayers' money, a different answer would be forthcoming. If members of the public were asked whether the \$400 000 spent on workplace agreements advertisements and the hundreds of thousands of dollars spent on television advertisements showing the Premier in a helicopter talking about sewerage were good use of taxpayers' money, a different answer would be forthcoming. People say they can do without the political advertising and the propaganda. They ask why taxpayers are paying for public opinion polling used by the Government. It is a matter of the questions asked about the allocation of money.

I agree with the Minister that if members of the public were asked whether money should be spent on Princess Margaret Hospital for Children or Parliament House, they would all say it should be spent on the hospital. Most members in this place would probably agree with that. However, if people were asked whether taxpayers' money should be spent on public opinion polling, the Minister for Labour Relations' workplace agreements advertising campaign or some of the other politically motivated campaigns which are not in the public's interest, rather than on Parliament House, they would probably say it would be better to improve the conditions at Parliament House and improve the manner in which decisions are reached.

Mr Day: What about \$1.5b on WA Inc deals? Was that a better way of spending it?

Mr BROWN: It is easy to see why the member is Minister for Police. The Government has real talent on its side. I am happy to support the amendment. It is time for a plan to be developed for the upgrading of this place.

Mr Pandal: Which amendment are you talking about?

Mr BROWN: The amendment moved by the member for Churchlands, and not the amendment on the amendment. It is time for a clear plan to be developed to improve the operations of this place. Just as reasonable demands are now being made by parents of schoolchildren for airconditioning in schools, equally one is hard pressed to say that in 1997 airconditioning is a luxury enjoyed by few. These days most people working in offices, particularly those doing exacting work, have that part of their environment regulated. I support the amendment moved by the member for Churchlands, and look forward to its being passed by this House. I look forward to some clear plans coming before this House indicating the changes to be made to ensure a better working environment.

MR COWAN (Merredin - Deputy Premier) [5.44 pm]: I was very interested to note the shift in public opinion, and the capacity of members to express the point of view they have probably felt for some time that Parliament House needs to be upgraded. This is not a new issue. The only thing new about the entire issue is that since the release of the Commission on Government report, there has been some sympathy in the media for the concept of upgrading Parliament House. It appears a few people are jumping on the bandwagon trying to associate themselves with the catchcry that Parliament House should be upgraded. I feel very comfortable with that because it is about time this place was upgraded. Perhaps those members who have leapt on the media bandwagon should consider what has been done in the past, and put something more cohesive together to indicate what exactly they are talking about with regard to improvements to Parliament House.

I have heard members opposite say - perhaps they are right - that they are thinking only of the people who work in this place. Of course that includes them. That is fine, but when this building is improved it must take on a much greater emphasis than just catering for those who work here. This building is much more than a work facility. It is symbolic with respect to its location and the place where the Parliament sits. That location took a beating many years ago when a decision was made to build the freeway to give better access to traffic flowing north and south on one of the corridors along which this city is aligned. The original plan for the freeway took it through the old Mount Hospital and the church below the Barracks Arch, and it then swept around along the existing route. The reserve on which Parliament House was located would have been retained in its entirety. Unfortunately, the forces working against that at the time, such as the shareholders and directors of the Emu brewery, those working in the Mount Hospital, and the church, strongly opposed that plan. As a consequence, the parliamentary precinct was truncated and the freeway was built through it. That is one of the first planning mistakes, because as a result this facility is completely cut off from the city. That issue should be addressed.

The western side of the building is quite different from the rest and it has been altered to a great extent since its original construction. The eastern side of the building was completed in 1965, and I once heard that side of the building described as a giant urinal. That is somewhat uncharitable but, nevertheless, it is not in keeping with the facade of the western side. It would be an architect's nightmare to blend the different facets of Parliament House. I have not yet seen plans which are satisfactory to anybody, and we must first undertake development of plans. I have seen a number of plans. One process referred to a block on the side of Parliament House, and another to the block on which the car park is located. When the last renovations were made to the southern side of this building, the foundations were built for this wing in such a way that the car park could be excavated and placed underground, and facilities could be provided at ground level for members. It would not be an easy task for any architect or planner to provide a facility compatible with the existing facility.

I strongly favour the concept of bridging the freeway, using the land and extending Parliament House to the east at a level that does not detract from the front of the building. Notwithstanding the derogatory comments made about the front, it has some character which could be improved if properly dealt with.

That type of planning requires considerable time and public consultation. I have some difficulty with the member for Churchlands' proposal. She seems to want to jump on the media bandwagon; she wants a commitment now and everything done immediately. We should acknowledge that Parliament House must be improved, but I do not want to see any more piecemeal improvements. The lounge on the next floor that was divided in two is now of no value to anyone. I do not know how many people enjoy going into that select committee or meeting room; it is awful.

The facilities available to members and the people who work in Parliament are substandard; there is no question about that. I would like to see the western side of the building restored so that we have a colonnade the length of the House, and I would like some of the changes that have been made to the hospitality section of the building to be removed. We could then enjoy the building's original grandeur - those rooms were much larger.

I would also like the office facilities extended to the east, and we could do that if we were to bridge the freeway. Who knows, we might be able to use the barracks arch as the entry to Parliament House. *The West Australian* was particularly strident in its criticism of that proposal. It was in favour of improving the building and a great number of other things, but not of having a grand entry to Parliament House. That is the last thing that members of Parliament would have on their minds but, in true form, *The West Australian* had to have something to pick on.

There is merit in what the member for Churchlands has put in her amendment, and it is appropriate for this House to acknowledge that merit. However, at the same time, we should take our time and ensure that the public has its say - not only *The West Australian*, which has been leading the debate.

The Premier said that something must be done, but that there are significant priorities. I wonder how many members, when they see the Budget, will have words of glowing praise about it or whether they will say that their constituency did not get enough. There will be plenty of that, but how many members will stand in this place and say that they are prepared to sacrifice some of the money allocated to their constituency to improve Parliament House? That will not happen.

The amendment to the amendment provides a more appropriate process for this place to pursue. I do not deny that the member for Churchlands can do what she has done; that is, bring something to the public's attention that has already been raised by the Speaker and *The West Australian*. If she wants to join that group, that is fine. However, the Government has significant funding priorities, and those priorities mean that we cannot provide an open-ended funding commitment.

At some stage, instead of having an idea about what should be done, we should have a plan that can be put on the table detailing what members and the public want. The Government will be seeking to do that over the next 12 months to two years.

MR MINSON (Greenough) [5.58 pm]: I made some comments in this place a week ago about this issue, so it is appropriate that I add to them briefly. It is true that one can always make do and do without, and that is appropriate for Governments. I listened with great care to the Deputy Premier's contribution and if members care to walk past the dining room they will see that the member for Fremantle, when he was Minister for Works, had the original plans showing the completed eastern side of the building framed and presented to the Parliament, and when I was Minister for Works I had drawings framed for the western side. All elevations of Parliament House are available. This was planned to be a magnificent building with minarets and so on.

The Deputy Premier has raised an extremely important issue. It is most important that we commit to something. I was a Minister and I had to argue long and hard for funding commitments for people with disabilities. There were many commitments, but that was the one for which I had to fight hardest and longest. At that time, if someone had suggested that we spend X dollars on Parliament House - I suspect that \$100m is conservative if we are to do this properly - I probably would not have supported it.

I also made the comment the other day that there will never be a right time to do this. We must make the commitment that we will decide what to do and put in place a plan to achieve it. I cannot say on behalf of the Government that we should commit \$10m or \$100m over two years; but, I do want us to decide what we will do. I have great sympathy for the plan to turn the freeway area into a tunnel, but I am not interested in the details of the entrance, and I do not think any member is. However, this should be a substantial building. I will be long gone before it is the substantial building that we are envisaging. As the member for Bassendean outlined, this place must be functional and it must fulfil the requirements of a Parliament House - it certainly does not at the moment.

I alluded to the fact that as Minister for Disability Services I had people in tears in the corridor on a number of occasions. That is not acceptable. There is a certain degree of urgency to this issue, but it is not such that we should commit to spending \$100m in the next few years. We should decide what we will do and put in place a plan to which we can commit ourselves.

I have sympathy with both the amendment and the amendment to the amendment because, having been a Minister, I can see that Ministers would not want to support an amendment committing them to urgent expenditure of unknown funds. I cannot support that part of the amendment, so I will support the amendment to the amendment. However, it is time that the Government presented to this House a plan, a timetable and a route by which we will arrive at a decision about what we will do with this place. It will go on and on and I am getting older. I do not want to go to my grave without at least a plan being put in place.

It is time for this Government and this House to make a commitment at least to arriving at a plan. I am sorry the Premier is not here, but I ask him, through the Minister in the Chamber, to give some thought in Cabinet to how the Government will handle this planning process. When the money arrives, as we hope it will, nothing will happen for the simple reason that we will then need to enter into the planning stage. There are already many plans. We should decide what we will do and then try to apply a time frame to it. That is the commitment I would like to see.

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.30 pm

MR AINSWORTH (Roe) [7.30 pm]: The amendment that was before the House prior to a move to amend it can be quite easily supported. The initial amendment moved by the member for Churchlands supports your suggestion,

Mr Speaker, for something to be done about this place and the accommodation that this place affords to not only members, staff and the media but also the public. It did not specify any amount of money or time frame in which the upgrading should occur but rather supported comments made by you, Mr Speaker, to do something fairly soon, which I support.

We cannot expect the Government to commit large sums of money in the forthcoming Budget because no-one would suggest that that was inferred in the member for Churchlands' amendment and it is not something I would support either. That is totally impractical for two reasons: First, the framework of the Budget is well and truly in place and there is not sufficient leeway to add projects of the magnitude of a total upgrading and extension of Parliament House. The second reason it is not practical is that even if the money were available, we know that these things take time to plan. We do not want to rush into something that may be only partially successful if it is done too quickly. I support what I believe the member for Churchlands was alluding to; that is, a commitment from both sides of this Parliament to work progressively towards an upgrading of Parliament House.

That plan for progressive improvements should be in two forms. The first is progressive improvements to the existing building, which all of us would agree should not be changed in a significant way to denigrate the great historic significance of the Chamber or of any other parts of the building, with the exception of things like the Strangers' Bar and some of the other add-ons which look out of place. The second part of those progressive improvements would be the additional office and reception facilities which we all agree are required. They are at least a two stage process.

The immediate steps that can be taken without significant cost but which should be done now include reallocating the existing space within Parliament House. I have spoken about this before, so I hope I cannot be accused of jumping on bandwagons also. If so, it is at least my second ride. The Parliamentary Library is tight for space. I propose that the space currently occupied by the Executive Officer of the Joint House Committee - this is in no way a reflection on the gentleman concerned or his family - be used by the library. Historically, the Executive Officer of the Joint House Committee lives in a flat on the lower floor of Parliament House. That flat occupies a space 50 per cent greater than the Parliamentary Library. Adjacent to the flat is a nice area which could become an enclosed courtyard which could be used by members for reading and other things when the weather is not inclement. Moving the library from the front of the building where it is now to the north side would free up a space which is equivalent to eight offices in this building. In one stroke we would increase the size of the library by 50 per cent and create eight new offices without spending significant amounts of money. In fact, it would only be a matter of pulling out partitions in one part of the building and putting them in another. We would then have a significant improvement to the existing building without damaging it.

Another immediate step could be to redefine the use of the old ballroom space on the top floor on the west side of the building. Currently, that ballroom is occupied by the television room, the select committee room and the billiard room. Those three rooms together occupy a space larger than this Chamber. At the moment they are underutilised and are ugly because of the way the partitions have been put into what was, in its heyday, a very stately and beautiful ballroom.

In addition to those physical changes that should be attended to immediately, some forward planning should be done by defining the needs of members, staff and the media, and, importantly, the needs of the public. People who come into this building cannot easily find a toilet. If they are here before dinner and want to stay after dinner, there is no place within this building for them to get a meal. They have to go away and come back. The public is poorly catered for in this place. The planning for an expanded Parliament House should take into account all of those people - the public, the media, staff and, last but not least, members of Parliament.

We should call for expressions of interest from architects to provide forward concept plans incorporating the needs to which I have just referred. That can be done immediately at very low cost. Providing funds to transform the chosen concept plan to a fully costed architectural design and, following that, providing a budget allocation for the project, would be a longer term project. It could be staged if necessary. It does not all have to be provided in one year's Budget if the cost is too great.

The time taken to carry out one of the suggestions by the Deputy Premier - to cover the freeway - would be significant. Perhaps that could be the first stage of the new building. Subsequent to the completion of that would be the building of the new facilities. It will not happen in 12 months even if the money were in the Budget right now. Members should not get too carried away by being worried about a huge Budget blowout if they agree to the project in principle. It will not happen overnight. It will take a number of years, if it is done properly. However, we cannot delay the start. It would not involve the expenditure of a huge amount of money, but it would involve a definite decision to do something about the building. The rest will take its course.

I said earlier as well as in a speech I made in this place last year that already there is space in this building which is underutilised. A rewriting of the contract under which the Executive Officer of the Joint House Committee is employed so that he would no longer be required to reside in premises within Parliament House -

Mr Pandal: Parliament actually owns impressive residences within 200 metres of this House.

Mr AINSWORTH: There are 101 ways to overcome this problem without causing any difficulty to either the individuals concerned or the running of the Parliament. If we look at this problem in a positive light, it becomes obvious that we can gain immediate benefit for very little cost and we would be very foolish not to go ahead and make the changes. Subsequent to that, we could put in place the other changes to which I have referred. These changes will not impact on the forthcoming state Budget and it would probably have a minimal impact on next year's Budget. I am talking about a staged redevelopment and extension or a totally new building rather than spending a large sum of money in one financial year.

For those members in this place who have not looked at the plans pertaining to this House I advise them that I have studied them and have drawn up some dimensions to compare office with office. The dimensions are relative one to the other; they do not refer to square metres. I have not bothered to translate it back that far. Liberal Party members will be interested to know that the Liberal Party room by my calculations is 6.8 units and the eight new offices which I said would become available if the library was moved total 21 units. It gives members a comparison; the library space to which I referred is over three times the size of the Liberal Party room.

Mr Osborne interjected.

Mr AINSWORTH: That is another possibility, but I will not go into it now.

Mr Board interjected.

Mr AINSWORTH: Everyone needs more room and perhaps even the National Party needs more room. The National Party could take the adjoining room. I would not discount that possibility. I was not going to put that proposition forward tonight, but I am glad the Minister did. I suggest to those members who are interested that they look at the three floor plans I have which I will table for the balance of this day's sitting.

[The paper was tabled for the information of members.]

Mr AINSWORTH: In speaking against the amendment to the amendment I am placed in a difficult position. Both the amendment and the amendment to the amendment can be read as saying exactly the same thing. The original amendment moved by the member for Churchlands referred to your remarks, Mr Speaker, about the urgent need to do something about this place being timely. Any member who says that there is not an urgent need to do something about this place has not been here long enough to find out how bad it is or they go around with their eyes closed. It has been my view for a long time. For eight years I have been in this place and I have seen Ministers of the Crown from both the coalition and Labor Governments sitting in a corridor trying to balance a book on their knee and doing government business in full public view without any privacy. Nothing has changed. To say there is no urgent need to do something about that, apart from the other things which we know are wrong with this place, is avoiding an important issue. It is not a matter of deciding whether to spend funds on a new school or hospital as opposed to spending them on Parliament House.

I agree with the member who said that if one frames a question the right way, one will get the answer one wants. If somebody asked me whether I wanted a hospital upgrade in a town in my electorate or better office space for Ministers in Parliament House, of course I would have to say that I represent my electorate first; therefore, I would go for the hospital upgrade. The answer is not as simple as that. As members of Parliament we have a broader responsibility to look after not only our electorates, but also a state facility which is for people from all the electorates. Therefore, we must be more statesmanlike - I do not know what the politically correct term for "statesman" is these days - and consider it from the point of view of looking after the needs of the whole community.

Another aspect of the urgency of improving facilities here which has not been commented on this evening is that we have a very good opportunity, given that before the life of this Parliament is finished we will be in a new century, to make plans and to start to put them in place so that as we go into the twenty-first century we will have the foundations for, and hopefully some of the structure of, a building which will be the premier building of this State for the next century. This building has served members for less than a century and is well behind the times. There must be forward thinking to put us well on the way to having an appropriate facility for the next century as well as the latter part of this century so that some members who may not be here in the twenty-first century will gain some of the benefits which we have discussed for so long.

I support the views put forward by the member for Churchlands. I will have little difficulty crossing the floor to vote for the amendment which talks about the urgent need to upgrade and improve facilities of Parliament House. There really was not a need to have the amendment to the amendment because it says the same thing.

I firmly place on the record my strong support for the urgent need to take some action to improve the facilities in this place. I reiterate that not a lot of money would be needed now, but something must be done now otherwise the members who follow us in this place in the next century will talk about the same issues in the same poor conditions well into the twenty-first century.

MRS van de KLASHORST (Swan Hills - Parliamentary Secretary) [7.48 pm]: I certainly support the need to upgrade and improve the facilities in this House. As previous speakers have said, action must be taken now.

I would like to throw another idea into the debate which should be canvassed. This is a very old building which is out of date and it would be very costly to upgrade it to bring it into the twenty-first century. We live in a society where underground cables are being installed in new buildings to put computer terminals in all offices. In addition, there are Internet connections and, in some cases, a central location where the computers are installed. Television rooms are provided in some of the modern buildings. In other words, many facilities are provided in modern buildings and, without spending a lot of money, it would be almost impossible to have them in this building. Perhaps this Parliament should not give consideration to improving or extending this building, but to building a modern, up to date Parliament House which would provide facilities and conditions for the staff appropriate for the year 2000 and beyond.

This building is 100 years old. It has many faults. For the cost of airconditioning this building we could probably build half a new building. The cost of upgrading this building and bringing it into the twenty-first century would be horrendous and tremendous. Members will note that some of the seats and fittings in this Chamber are starting to crack with age. I also refer to the style of seats on which we sit. These seats would be condemned in a modern office as non-ergonomic. The member for Collie and I must fight over the seat cushions. These seats were designed for gentlemen, not ladies who have shorter legs.

Mrs Roberts: Not all ladies have short legs.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: I have short legs, as do some of the other women.

Mrs Edwardes: Excuse me!

Mrs van de KLASHORST: Sorry, Minister. Parliament should be accessible to the community. This building is open to the public, so that the community can take an interest in and see what its representatives are doing. This building is not easily accessible; there are no transport links. It is serviced by a couple of buses. It has insufficient parking for visitors.

Mr Board: We can cycle in.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: The Minister for Works has suggested cycling. However, as someone who lives 57 kilometres away, that would be difficult. On the opening day of the parliamentary session guests were parked as far away as Kings Park, because we do not have sufficient parking facilities. This location has no access by train, and modern communications and transport links are important so people can visit Parliament easily.

Mrs Roberts: Maybe we should have the new Parliament in Midland. It has a very good train service. We could agree on that.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: I was just about to suggest that in the new century many more people will use public transport. There will be less use of motor vehicles. People will need easy access to a Parliament. Another important aspect we must consider is the cost of running a building. People who live in old homes will know that there are problems with installing solar hot water systems that utilise the light to provide heat. This building was built when such factors were not even considered. We need to extend our thinking, to think laterally and to go elsewhere. Facetiously, I am saying we should go to Midland, because that is my area. However, we do need to consider the location of a Parliament. The Parliament should not pay lip service to decentralisation. The community would benefit if we relocated the building further out of Perth, especially if it were on a transport link. We cannot provide modern kitchen and creche facilities and a modern library that utilises technology in this building. The Federal Government and the Government of the Northern Territory saw the problem and constructed new Parliament Houses. Western Australia would not be setting a precedent. We should think along those lines. This building would make a wonderful museum, and people would still be able to use it. It is not in the right place and is not the right building for Parliament in the next century. We must do something in the interim. I am jammed into a tiny little room with three other members, and members of staff are working in corridors. Perhaps in the planning stage we should think of relocating elsewhere.

MR MASTERS (Vasse) [7.55 pm]: Mr Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity to make my first speech after my maiden speech last week. I cannot speak on behalf of all new members in this place; however, as a new member it is appropriate that I advise the House what someone who has walked in here with new eyes and, hopefully, fresh ideas and a different way of looking at things believes about this issue.

The bottom line is that I agree in principle with just about everything that has been said. The conditions in this place are extremely cramped and limited. Members have spoken previously about holding meetings in corridors. That is not appropriate in this modern day and age. It is time to act. Many schemes could be investigated. We have heard other members talk about roofing over the freeway; and selling some land over the road that is crown land. My favourite is putting offices around the Public Gallery. That would create an enormous amount of space. That would create a small problem with the public, but nonetheless it is an idea. An alternative view would be that instead of government cars we could be issued with government camper vans, and we could park them outside in the car park, and we could retire there for the night. That would save a lot of driving and also provide meeting rooms. It is inappropriate that as a new member I be specific. All I can hope to do after six days in this House is to be general. I will leave it to wiser, older and more experienced heads than mine. I suggest that if there is not already an appropriate committee in this building that can deal with this subject, one should be formed. It should then get on with the job of investigating the needs of all the users of this building. Plans should be prepared, the design put on paper, the building costed, the budget prepared and it should then be built. It is a simple process that we should start to undertake. The important thing is that somewhere, sometime, someone in this building takes that first step.

DR CONSTABLE (Churchlands) [7.58 pm]: It will not come as any surprise that I do not support the amendment to the amendment. In listening to the members who have spoken on both the amendment and the amendment to the amendment, there has been a consensus of the need to upgrade and develop this building for the modern era. I sense, even though some government members spoke with some care, they too agree that there is a great sense of urgency. I thank the member for Roe for his comments in support of the notion of urgency. Even if we put aside the needs of members of Parliament, I find it difficult to understand that Ministers of this Government also put aside the needs of staff who work in this building. The staff in this building urgently need working conditions that are appropriate to the 1990s and to the laws that we set in this place for the people outside. It is a disgrace that the Government is willing to perpetuate a situation in this building for its staff that is substandard, and does not meet the standards that we have set for other people.

As the member for Greenough said in his comments, we must get started. However, it is no use putting off the decision to get started. The time to get started is now. If we are to have changes in the foreseeable future, this Parliament must take action to make sure that happens. It is not for the Government to decide; it is for the Parliament to decide. The original amendment to the Address-in-Reply gives not only support to you, Mr Speaker, but also a direction and a strong word from this Parliament that we think there is a need to get on with this job. I thank members who have spoken in support of this amendment. Here I mention the member for Dawesville, who spoke very strongly in support of it; the member for Greenough who did, too, although he equivocated a little; and the member for Roe.

Mrs Roberts: The member for Dawesville has been sent home in case he crosses the floor.

Dr CONSTABLE: I suppose that is one way of dealing with mistakes. I am very disappointed in what both the Premier and the Deputy Premier said. As father of the House, the Deputy Premier gave us a very interesting history lesson about Parliament House. I am sure in the years to come he will continue to educate us in this way, given his longstanding presence as a member of Parliament; however, he went a little too far in suggesting that people who have spoken in this debate have got on a bandwagon. I, for one, have been speaking on this issue for several years, not just in speeches but in trying to draw out the Government during question time about its intentions regarding this building. Mr Speaker, I suggest to you that perhaps the Deputy Premier has been on the gravy train for far too long. It must be very easy for him to get up and pontificate in the way in which he did, accusing others of getting on a bandwagon - in fact, a media bandwagon - when he has the comfort of his ministerial office most of the time. In any event, it is not a media bandwagon. The Commission on Government made comments and your comments, Mr Speaker, came long before those of the media in support of this proposal, as did the comments of many members of this Parliament. Tonight the Government has missed an opportunity to go beyond rhetoric and to start achieving something for the people of Western Australia, for the staff of this place and for members as well.

MR TRENORDEN (Avon) [8.03 pm]: I have been in this House for a number of years. It never ceases to disappoint me when these issues come forth in this way. Despite the words of the member for Churchlands, she has started a political process here tonight, and she cannot deny that. As an entity, this House is a political place. She has moved this motion to get some degree of publicity. That puts people like me in some difficulty.

I happen to believe in a couple of pieces of philosophy I was told some years ago. When I first came to this place I was fortunate enough to sit one seat away from the member for South Perth at the time, Hon Bill Grayden. In my early days he gave me some good counsel which I listened to well. In the years since then the Leader of the National Party, the member for Merredin, has also given me some wise counsel. One of the points they put into my head, which I believe totally, is this: If we believe in this institution, we must believe in the Chair, the position that you hold, Mr Speaker.

When the issue of the wearing of the robes and the wig by your predecessor was being discussed, Howard Sattler kept asking me whether I bowed to the Speaker every time I entered or exited the Chamber. The answer is that I do not; I give deference to the position, not to the person. That is what is missing in this debate.

Mr Speaker, I believe quite passionately that your role in this House is to lead any argument for additions to or the improvement of this place, and you should take that role. It should not be a political process; it should be a role of the 57 members of Parliament in this Chamber. At the same time some credence must be given to the fact that this Government has a budget. The original amendment says that money must be found for the upgrading of this building. From past figures, I presume it could be as much as \$40m, \$50m or more, depending on the plans. I do give due consideration to the Executive, of which I am not a part. The Executive must decide at what stage funds are placed in a budget for this upgrading and expansion.

Mr Pental: Who votes for the budget? It is not the Executive.

Dr Constable: It is the Parliament.

Mr TRENORDEN: That is right. It is meant to be passed by members of this House. The Speaker and the member for South Perth and I often talk about the priority of this House, which has been somewhat murdered over the past 20 years or so. Mr Speaker, you have my total support in raising this issue and taking it to a conclusion. It is up to every member in this House to make a decision about it. Mr Speaker, I am giving you that support as the member for Avon.

MRS ROBERTS (Midland) [8.05 pm]: One of the government members said that this was not a new issue - and it is not. It has a very long history. Members, irrespective of whether they have been here a short time or a long time, have the same view of this place. All people who come here must come to similar conclusions. I can only conclude that if a Government, which has been elected with the majority that this one has for a second term in office, is not prepared to make a stand now and say that it will commit to a complete refurbishment of this place, it will never happen, certainly not in this century. It does not require the allocation of the money in this year's Budget. As clearly enunciated by the member for Churchlands, it requires an agreement to put the funds in place to start planning for this upgrading now. If we do not do that now, it will not happen for another 10 years.

During the election campaign the Premier gave four year advance estimates. Most organisations plan financially up to five years or further in advance. The commitment must be made now to plan and budget for this item. Most of the funds will not be met from this Budget or probably even that of next year. However, we must look at the Budget in subsequent years. I can only assume that a Government, elected with such a majority, in the face of such a clear need here, must be planning a complete horror Budget. There must be some dreadful cuts in the areas of health, education, public transport and community safety. That can be the only possible reason for a Government to back away from this issue now. It must have enormous cuts lined up for the public of Western Australia, contrary to all of its election promises. The Government must have some very bad news for members of the public and does not feel it will be able to present the bad news on one hand and the refurbishment of Parliament House on the other. Contrary to what the Premier is saying in talking up the economy, especially what he said before the election about how our economy was bouncing along, it is obviously not doing that. Some Ministers are already bleating about federal cutbacks, blaming the Federal Government in advance of this Government's Budget. That is the only possible reason I can see for this complete backing off.

The member for Avon said that the member for Churchlands had started a political process tonight. She did not make it political; members of the Government, in moving the second amendment, made it so. The member for Churchlands offered bipartisan and even tripartisan support, and support beyond that. The Opposition has given its support for her original amendment, and we support the comments that you have made in the past, Mr Speaker. Those in the group who have made this issue political are not even the government backbenchers who have spoken, but those in the Executive of the Government who have come to the conclusion that they want to move this second amendment because they do not want to commit funding to the upgrading of Parliament House. We can only speculate why that would be. The member for Churchlands asked for a commitment to start the planning process now. A couple of the Ministers who have spoken have quickly forgotten what it is like to work in this building. They have not been appointed Ministers for long and suddenly the facilities here are nowhere near as important to them as when they first started in this place or when they were backbenchers.

Absent from the debate tonight was a display of any real concern for or care of the public. This is supposed to be the people's House. Unfortunately we do not make the people of Western Australia welcome in this place. How could we welcome people into this place when there is a complete lack of facilities? Anyone who comes to view Parliament is put through the tortuous test of going up the stairs to the public gallery. They cannot take notes. All kinds of restrictions are placed on them. There is nowhere for them to get a drink of water or a cup of tea or coffee. They cannot use the staff facilities or the members' facilities. They must even be escorted to the toilet because there are no toilet facilities in the public gallery. That is a disgrace. This is supposed to be the people's House.

Mr Johnson: There are toilets for the public gallery up there.

Mrs ROBERTS: Where are they?

Mr Johnson: They are through the doors.

Mrs ROBERTS: People have complained to me that they have asked to go to the toilet and they have been told that they will have to be escorted to the toilet.

Mr Johnson: They cannot get a cup of tea.

Mrs ROBERTS: They cannot get a cup of tea or coffee; they cannot get a bite to eat. They are not made to feel welcome. It is a disgrace that a House that is supposed to be the people's House does not make the people feel welcome. I thought that providing basic facilities for the public would have been high on the Government's agenda. However, that has not happened. Once Governments get into office they become wary of the political odium. Interestingly, the Premier now says that the political odium is not what is worrying the Government. There seems to have been a change in public opinion. As members on the government side said, one would have to be deaf, dumb and blind not to work out that this place is well behind the times, does not meet current needs and is like something from the Dark Ages. However, the Premier and his Minister for Works are resisting making a clear commitment and acknowledging the urgent need. I cannot see why they would do that, unless it is in light of some colossal budget restraints that they have not yet made clear to the people of Western Australia. There is a clear need for work to be done on this place.

As the member for Bassendean pointed out, it is always a matter of priority. It is always easy to hold up a school or a hospital or two and weigh them against doing work on this building. Equally, we can weigh up the cost of government advertising or consultants, the Northbridge tunnel, or many other things that the people of Western Australia think are wrong priorities. The Opposition joins the member for Churchlands in opposing the Government's amendment to her amendment.

Amendment on the amendment (words to be deleted) put and a division taken with the following result -

Ayes (23)

Mr Barnett	Mr House	Mr Prince
Mr Board	Mr Johnson	Mr Shave
Mr Court	Mr MacLean	Mr Sullivan
Mr Day	Mr Masters	Mr Sweetman
Mrs Edwardes	Mr McNee	Dr Turnbull
Dr Hames	Mr Minson	Mrs van de Klashorst
Mrs Hodson-Thomas	Mr Osborne	Mr Bloffwitch (<i>Teller</i>)
Mrs Holmes	Mrs Parker	

Noes (20)

Mr Ainsworth	Mr Graham	Mr Pendal
Ms Anwyl	Mr Grill	Mr Riebeling
Mr Brown	Ms MacTiernan	Mrs Roberts
Mr Carpenter	Mr Marlborough	Mr Thomas
Dr Constable	Mr McGinty	Mr Trenorden
Dr Edwards	Mr McGowan	Mr Cunningham (<i>Teller</i>)
Dr Gallop	Ms McHale	

Pairs

Mr Bradshaw	Mr Kobelke
Mr Nicholls	Mr Ripper
Mr Tubby	Ms Warnock

Amendment on the amendment thus passed.

Debate (amendment on the amendment) Resumed

MS MacTIERNAN (Armadale) [8.18 pm]: I place on record the areas in which primary change is required to the facilities that are provided in this place. We must begin with a decent telephone system. Each member in this place must have access to a telephone that has a memory capacity and a voice mail system attached to it and also must have access to facsimile facilities. I find it appalling that we must make do with a standard of technology that none of the staff in this place must endure. As a matter of urgency each member must have access to a computer terminal in his or her office. Members are overwhelmed by the volume of paper that comes through their offices. Much of this paper would be rendered unnecessary if we had proper computer access. The same technology should apply in this Chamber.

The need for technology is far more important than that for airconditioning or any of the other beautifications of our facilities for which members have argued. If we had the technological facilities, our rooms would be more suitable amenities, and would lead to a substantial reduction in the number of complaints members make about accommodation. The number one need for members is a technology upgrade.

Amendment on the amendment (words to be substituted) put and passed.

Amendment, as amended, put and passed.

Debate (on motion, as amended) Resumed

MR CUNNINGHAM (Girrawheen) [8.22 pm]: I have much pleasure in joining my colleagues on this side of the House in congratulating you, Mr Speaker, on your appointment. Great belief resides on this side of the House that you will bring much fairness and impartiality to the position.

I welcome the members for Rockingham, Thornlie, Willagee and Armadale to this wonderful House, and wish them every success and a very long stay contributing to the deliberations. I also wish government members an eventful and exciting stay in this place for three and a half years - I must be honest, it would be remiss of me to be wishing members opposite a very long stay in this place!

I am a very humble person and I am extremely thankful to be rewarded by the astute voters in the electorate of Girrawheen who saw fit to give me 62.7 per cent of the vote on a two-party preferred basis, which is almost a 5 000 vote majority, to represent them for the next four years. I appreciate those voters. I am also delighted and grateful to the people of the electorate for the opportunity to continue to be their member.

The member for Churchlands said thank you to many people today, and I am about to do the same. My campaign had 300 workers and I am extremely tempted to mention each of those 300 people, but I cannot do that. I give a great big thank you to people like Maria Liao and her family and friends; Bartong Pham, of the Vietnamese community and his family and friends; Bob Tanasoski, of the Macedonian community, and his family and friends; Marino Salinas, of the Filipino community, and his friends and family; Jack Victorien, from the Mauritian community, and his friends and family; Con Anastasiou, from the Greek connection, and his family and friends; Keith Mynard; Jenny Gateley; Darren Klarich; Billie Callaghan; Evelyn Greenwood; Leslie and John Bennett; Joe Fiala; John Davies; Laurie Hills; Noel Blackberry; Don Ward; John Cady; Brian Fisher; Jon Kelly; and people from the Shop Distributive and Allied Employees Association of Western Australia, particularly Joe Bullock.

Joe Bullock is a very close friend who will have a long and illustrious career in the union. I especially thank two very special people; namely, Carmel Macri, my campaign manager, and my very dear wife, Julie, who was the pivot behind the postal votes and fed the troops. I say a special thank you to all those wonderful people.

Today, 19 March, is a very significant day in the lives of three members of the Legislative Assembly. The member for Midland, formerly Glendalough, was elected on 19 March 1994, three years ago today, and the member for Belmont and I were elected on 19 March 1988.

I am very proud that I have two very special saints in this world: St Patrick, out of whom we made money last Monday night at a fund-raising function, and St Joseph, out of whom we would never think of doing such a thing, who is the patron saint of workers. I always regard myself as a worker first and a member of Parliament second, and never the reverse. The significance of 19 March is that it is the feast day of St Joseph who is a great patron of workers.

I move now to the serious part of my speech by bringing to the attention of members a crisis which exists with many parents of disabled and autistic children in my electorate. Autism is the cause of much heartbreak. It is a mental, emotional and behavioural disorder which appears in early childhood, almost always developing in the first three

years of a child's life. Many members would associate with the heartbreak of a parent of such a child, as they would be visited by such parents on occasions. The autistic child does not interact normally to a simple gesture of love. Autism affects many aspects of childhood and adolescent development and effectively isolates children in a lonely world of their own.

Autism can range from mild to extremely severe. Symptoms of autism can include repetitious behaviour, such as rocking back and forth, head banging, and touching and twirling objects. Autistic people have difficulty communicating with others and a limited range of interests in activities. The smallest change in their environment or daily routine can be a major disaster or upset in their lives. The symptoms of autistic disorders can be seen sometimes in very early infancy, although autism can appear after months of normal development in a child. Statistics show that seven in every 10 children with autistic disorders also have mental retardation or other problems with their brain function or structure at a very early age in life. Studies also estimate that 14 children out of every 10 000 have autism or a related condition. Those figures are from the Health Department. I believe it is more than 14 out of every 10 000. The Health Department has given us a very low figure.

It is three times more prevalent in males than in females. Research continues into autism, but a trigger for what causes autism cannot really be confirmed. Several studies suggest that autistic disorders might be caused by a combination of biological factors. It might be caused by exposure to a virus before birth, a problem with the immune system or even genetics. Studies of families and twins suggest a genetic basis, especially in families where more than one child suffers from autism. There is a great belief that brothers and sisters of people with autism are about 50 times more likely to have the disorder than any other people. Research has been continuing now for some years. Scientists hope to find the genes that are responsible for autism because knowledge of these genes could help doctors more easily diagnose the disorder in other children. Studies have found that people with autistic disorder have problems in several parts of their brain. These studies suggest that autism may be caused by an abnormal slowing down of the brain development before birth. Physical factors may affect later behaviour in that the way infants with autism process information may prevent them from paying normal attention to other people and to social interactions. This in turn may cause poor development of social skills, knowledge and awareness.

It is extremely important that early treatment of autism be effective and that children and adolescents with autism be given therapy because the brain is more readily influenced at that age. It is a disgrace that lack of funding by not only this Government but Governments over many years has continued to impair the progress of young people suffering from autism. People put the issue into a corner and put a blanket over it and hope it goes away. However, it does not go away. It is extremely important that funding in this year's state Budget be increased. If a child with autism is treated early in life - this Government can help in this matter - the cost of long term care can be reduced by hundreds of thousands of dollars. However, it has been reported that three out of five children with autistic disorder remain dependent when they are adults. That is a very high proportion. Autism exists amongst all nationalities, races and social classes, with four out of every five people with autism being male.

Autism is treatable. Studies show that all people who have autism can improve significantly with proper instruction and behavioural therapy. Many individuals with autism eventually become more responsive to others, as they learn to understand the world around them. Their world is very small. Using specially structured programs with much emphasis on individual instruction, autistic people can learn to function at home and in the community with some leading a relatively normal life. It is generally accepted that individuals with autism perform best at jobs which are structured and involve a degree of repetition. Some people with autism are working as artists, painters, office workers, computer operators, assembly line workers and competent employees of sheltered workshops. Autism does not appear to have an effect on recreational activities, enabling autistic individuals to enjoy activities on a par with their non-handicapped peers.

In the electorate of Girrawheen there exists a very devoted family fighting the system for continued funding of a lousy - I purposely use the word "lousy" - five hours respite for their autistic child. They wanted me to use their full names but I will use their Christian names. Linley and James, from Alexander Heights, are just like any other family in the Girrawheen electorate who are being harassed by this uncaring Government which wants to cut out their benefits. The news of the federal cuts to disabilities services of some \$830 000 brought them into my office. It has caused them much frustration and despair, and a lot of anger. Linley and James are already footing their own bills to look after their autistic child, Benjamin, at home. This family has a right to expect financial and physical support from the Government of the day. To care for an adult child of 16 years for 24 hours a day, seven days a week is truly a labour of love. It is heartbreaking, and is emotionally and physically demanding for any parent. However, to then be threatened with the loss of the only assistance that is granted - five paltry hours of respite care in 68 hours - is outrageous, disgraceful and unacceptable from any Government in any State of Australia.

I would like to share with members a letter from the very dedicated doctor who is looking after this family in crisis in my electorate. This letter can relate to any family in crisis in any electorate throughout the State. The letter states -

Ben is a 16 year old boy living with his family, mother Linley and stepfather James, in Alexander Heights. He has Kanner's syndrome, or primary autism.

Linley has cared for Ben in a loving family environment and resisted institutionalising Ben, which has resulted in tremendous progress for a boy with such a mental illness/handicap.

She did not want to put him into a home, and she could have done that any time she wanted. The letter continues -

He has had some behavioural training at Mildred Creek and Burbridge School, but it has been his mother who has patiently taught him to communicate and cooperate to the best of his ability and helped him to learn some self management skills. Nevertheless, Ben will always remain dependent for all care, direction, transport and daily living tasks. He needs 24 hour a day supervision and discipline.

Ben has no ability to communicate his feelings, other than outbursts of anger or frustration. He is quite a heavy, strong lad and Linley is a tiny lady - about 150 cm tall, or even less.

His dear mum brought him into the office, and he is huge; he would be nearly six foot at 16 years of age. The letter continues -

Her husband Jim is her main support in life, and helps her with the care of Ben and the emotional ups and downs, and the huge burden of care that he requires. They have no respite from this. Their lifestyle has been very limited by the constraints involved with Ben's management and the emotional and financial costs involved in trying to help him achieve his potential in life. There is virtually no community assistance available.

When Ben was younger Linley and Jim were able to physically restrain him whenever he had violent outbursts. Recently Ben had a sudden explosion while Linley was helping to enjoy a game of ten-pin bowling and he turned on her as she tried to restrain him and caused her a great deal of damage and anguish. Apart from the bruising and battering to her head and a perforated eardrum, the unprovoked attack was one of the nightmares she had always dreaded.

Ben is big enough to kill her and he is totally irrational and unable to be restrained if he gets excited. He has no intention to harm anyone but his outbursts are unpredictable and unrestrained violence. Afterwards, Ben is just his usual teddy bear docile self, quietly echoing anything you say to him and following orders quite passively.

Her husband Jim has been diagnosed with cancer. This has been a terrible trauma for the family and Linley has been faced with the prospect of losing her only support and strength in her fight to keep Ben at home in a loving, caring environment. All in all Linley has reached the point where her coping skills are stretched to the very limit.

Both Ben's family and Burbridge School have worked with him intensively over the past five to seven years. I know Burbridge School in Koondoola very well. It is one of the most wonderful schools that one could be involved with. They have been providing support, teaching him skills, modifying his behaviour and developing his oral and written language skills. At present, as a result of all this excellent management, Ben is improving out of sight and is coping with school, home and outside activities.

However, it is important to note that Ben's ability to cope so well is reliant on careful management, involving set routines with familiar people. He cannot have different people look after him at different times. He is still a very disabled young man who is capable of extremely challenging behaviour if not handled correctly. It is imperative that the crisis support/intervention be maintained so that Ben can remain an integrated community member within the family unit.

The current two hours per week of home help provided by Home and Community Care, City of Wanneroo, and the three hours per week of leisure/independent living support provided by the Department of Disability Services, North Metropolitan Region, must continue. There must be no thought of cutting this service but a commitment to increasing assistance for people like Linley and James in our community.

I would like to share with members a touching letter, one of many, that has been sent to my office from Ben's parents. It states -

Dear Ted,

I am writing to you to request your assistance in maintaining our severely disabled autistic son to continue to live within our family home. Our son's name is Benjamin.

In September 1996 our family experienced a crisis of major proportions. I suffered a severe assault from my disabled son resulting in a perforated eardrum. In that same month my husband was diagnosed with prostate cancer. My husband James had an operation in early December and was absent from work for 8 weeks. The cancer is still uppermost in our minds. I suffer from stress related asthma - due to the factors present in my life.

All family members, including Ben's brother David who is 20 and in his 3rd year of legal studies, continue to make innumerable compromises each and every day to facilitate Ben's continuing integration into the wider community via living in the regular family unit.

Already Ben, David and myself have survived the irretrievable breakdown of a marriage due to the particularly soul destroying nature of autism. We have been fortunate to have found a wonderful husband and father in James - we feel blessed to have been given a second chance to pursue our dream of being just like any other family in the community.

And further on -

We are funded until the end of April 1997. I request your assistance in maintaining our present level of funding. I await your early reply to this matter and thank you for your positive intervention on our family's behalf.

This family needs all the assistance that it can be given.

Amendment to Motion, as Amended

Mr CUNNINGHAM: I move -

That the following words be added to the motion -

but regrets to advise Your Excellency that Western Australians on limited incomes are facing additional hardship as a result of cutbacks made by the federal coalition Government in areas such as legal aid, public housing, dental care and disabilities.

MR CARPENTER (Willagee) [8.51 pm]: I will continue in a similar vein to my colleague, and I will address the area of disability services for which I have shadow portfolio responsibility. I feel privileged to have been given disability services as a shadow portfolio because in the few short weeks I have had that responsibility I have learned an enormous amount about the situation faced by people with disabilities, their families and support network. I have also begun to understand the dedication and commitment that people in this area put into the support they give the people they care for or to the communities of which they are part.

Unfortunately, currently the commonwealth-state disabilities agreement is being renegotiated, and it appears that the outcome might be less than ideal. It is a five year agreement which was struck in 1992 and expires in June this year. The first agreement was considered by most parties to be a major success. It was driven by the then Commonwealth Labor Government and various States. Most of the people I have spoken to in the disabilities area consider that the commonwealth-state disabilities agreement has delivered great improvements in that area. That improvement has been experienced in Western Australia. I give credit to the current Government and to the previous Minister for the work undertaken in this area. The previous Minister for Disability Services, the member for Greenough, has been congratulated by a number of people to whom I have spoken in that area, for the outcome he was able to achieve last year. The general consensus is that until recently both sides of politics had improved their commitment to disability services.

The "count us in" program for which the former Minister was able to acquire funding last year, is highly regarded and praised by people in the disabilities area. The State provided an 18 per cent increase in funding last year, and has locked itself into an additional \$125m over five years. The catchcry of the program was "count us in". Unfortunately, in recent days, the new Commonwealth Government does not seem to have the same commitment. The Commonwealth's attitude towards disabilities might be regarded as "count us out", even though the State Government's catchcry last year was "count us in". It is doubly unfortunate that the Commonwealth Government's attitude is being propagated in this State by the Federal Minister, Judi Moylan.

I understand, and the Minister has been led to understand, that under the new commonwealth-state disabilities agreement the Federal Government is planning to cut 6 per cent from the disabilities area; that is, 4 per cent in the first year, followed by 1 per cent in each of the next two years. That proposition is nothing short of disgraceful and despicable.

Mr Barnett: What was that figure?

Mr CARPENTER: It is 6 per cent over three years. It is 4 per cent, plus one plus one.

Mr Omodei: All is not lost yet.

Mr CARPENTER: Let us hope not. That is part of what we are doing now.

It is interesting to contrast the attitude of the Federal Government with the propaganda and perception it tries to portray that it is concerned about the battlers in our society. Howard and Costello are as little concerned for the battlers in society as one could imagine.

Ms MacTiernan: They want to make more battlers.

Mr CARPENTER: It was the previous Government which put this commonwealth-state disability agreement in place, and was warmly applauded for that.

Mr Prince: You must remember what we had to do to get your Labor Minister to comply.

Mr CARPENTER: One of the first actions by this current Federal Government was to attack funding for child care, then nursing home fees for the elderly as well as their pharmaceutical benefits. Then, Howard and Costello were so concerned about the battlers in society that they got stuck into the students by decreasing Austudy and increasing the higher education contribution scheme. Then, they lined up the unemployed because they deserved some punishment as well. They announced a cut in legal aid, and I am pleased that the State Government is doing everything it can to oppose that proposition - just as it should. It is disgraceful that the Federal Government should be moving in that direction.

Now, the Federal Government is lining up the disabled for some attention, which, in the Minister's words "attacks the most vulnerable people in our community". Not one member in this Parliament would support the Federal Government's proposals in this area. The 6 per cent cut is being described by its federal proponents as an efficiency dividend. The people to whom I have spoken in the disabilities area are grossly insulted by the suggestion that they should be making some dividend, when everyone knows they are stretching every dollar as far as possible already - and further.

In the disabilities area the scope is far greater than I thought. Last year the annual report of the Disabilities Services Commission was an eye opener. According to that report, 305 000 Western Australians, or about 18 per cent of the population, have a disability of some kind. Fourteen per cent of those people are disabled to the extent of having what is described as a handicap; 33 800 have a profound handicap and 28 600 have a severe handicap. According to that report, 270 people in Western Australia applied for supported accommodation funding, and 109 of those people received the funding; that is, 40 per cent. The report states that a significant number of people remain in critical need of alternative accommodation and support options. People in the disabilities field and the Minister recognise that they could not do enough, and many people deserved help but could not get it.

I understand that the figures for the 1996-97 and 1997-98 periods are 326 applicants for accommodation funding and 180 funded. I may stand corrected on those figures, but they are the ones that have been provided to me. Again, 146 applicants are still not funded.

A case which came to light in the other place yesterday and which came to my attention a month or so ago involved Janine and Bernard Neu of North Beach. Janine Neu was seven months pregnant in July last year when she contracted an illness called acute transverse cervical myelitis which rendered her a quadriplegic. Her child was born and she applied for accommodation support funding. Her application was rejected by the Disability Services Commission on the basis that she had not applied for funding before the cut-off date of 24 June last year. She did not contract the illness until July. She was also told she would have to wait until the middle of 1998 before her application could be approved because two years of funding had been blocked in. One of the reasons for that may be that it was a pre-election year. Another is that it often takes some time once funds have been allocated, for accommodation support to be put in place.

Mr Omodei: If you had looked at the commonwealth-state disabilities agreement funding program you would have seen a five year strategic plan. That is why the funds have been blocked in.

Mr CARPENTER: I understand there is a general view now that blocking funding for a long time is not ideal because it cuts out people such as the Neu family.

Mr Omodei: I agree there should be flexibility in the budget.

Mr CARPENTER: I was pleased to discover yesterday that once Channel 7 had threatened to bring public attention to the case the Minister managed to find the \$50 000.

Mr Omodei: That is untrue and you know it.

Mr CARPENTER: I congratulate the Minister for finding the money.

Mr Omodei: The money was being sought from the day the woman asked for it. Neither the Opposition nor Channel 7 found it.

Mr CARPENTER: I have the Minister's letter which provides the reasons for rejection of Mrs Neu's application. I made a personal approach and was told that it was most unlikely that funds would be found and that any publicity brought to the case may be counterproductive. However, I congratulate the Minister for finding the money for whatever reason.

Mr Omodei: At that time there were no funds available.

Mr CARPENTER: I am illustrating the point that many people are deserving cases of which the Neus are but one example. The Minister obviously agrees because he found the funding. Many people do not receive funding; the State is still short of money in this area.

Mr Omodei: There are two or three others apart from Mrs Neu who are in similar situations where funds are being sought.

Mr CARPENTER: I hope the funds are found, but the Commonwealth is not doing any favours by threatening to cut funding to disability services.

Since being the shadow spokesperson in this area I have spoken to a number of groups involved in the disability areas. I am concerned about the impact the commonwealth cuts will have on disability groups. Activ Foundation for people with developmental disabilities is one. Its total budget is about \$36m, of which \$10m is commonwealth funded. It sustained a 3 per cent cut from the Commonwealth last year and has been told that it faces a 1 per cent cut each year for the next three years.

Activ Foundation provides employment for 950 people who would no doubt otherwise be unemployed in this State. It provides accommodation and respite for 350 people; community access programs and facilities for 200 people; and recreation and transport for 1 800 people. Activ has a staff of 900, equating to 500 full time equivalent positions. It provides 28 employment areas in Western Australia and relies heavily on government funding. Historically, it has relied heavily on commonwealth funding. Any further cuts to funding from the Commonwealth will be devastating to Activ and the people it supports.

Already two Activ workplaces face some difficulties - one in the Minister's electorate of Manjimup, and the other in, I think, Narrogin. The prospect of further commonwealth cuts to Activ's budget will place the position of those two workplaces in even greater jeopardy. Activ cannot sustain further cuts. It is doing everything that it possibly can with every dollar. It has reached a stage where it will be forced to consider reducing the number of its services rather than lessening the quality.

On the other hand I refer to the Multiple Sclerosis Society with a turnover of only \$3m. One would not expect that a cut of approximately \$20 000 by the Federal Government would make a big impact. It seems like a small amount. However, it equates to about 1 000 hours of care that the Multiple Sclerosis Society can provide. The previous speaker described how devastating is the loss of two or three hours of care a week for families in need. The reduction of a few hours' care or respite a week can mean the difference between families staying together or being forced to live apart. I wonder what efficiency dividend is involved in forcing families apart, which will be conceivably the impact of the federal government cuts.

The People with Disabilities Group is an advocacy group for people with disabilities. It is small and has a staff of only five. Its funds comprise 50 per cent from the Commonwealth and 50 per cent from the State. It is in no position to sustain cuts to its budget. The simple fact is that reduced funding will make its tasks and its role as advocate more difficult.

The review of the commonwealth-state disabilities agreement undertaken by the Commonwealth last year - its own review - recommended increased funding; not cuts in funding. The review noted a lack of funding available for advocacy as a major problem for people in the disability area. The commonwealth review recommended strengthening of advocacy. It recognised the need for more funding to train carers and therapists and it acknowledged the need for greater emphasis on therapy. Cutting back in that area is contrary to the Commonwealth's own review undertaken last year. Recommendation 31 of the review reads -

As a matter of urgency, work be undertaken to more accurately identify the costs of meeting the unmet need for the Commonwealth/State Disability Agreement disability services. A commitment to provide funds to

meet these needs over a specified period of time should be made by all governments as part of the next Agreement.

They are the words from the Commonwealth's own review of the commonwealth-state disabilities agreement. The people involved in the area sent a clear message to the Commonwealth Government.

It is my understanding that the Minister for Disability Services, like other Ministers, was led to believe that the area of disability would be quarantined from the Federal Government's budget cuts.

Mr Omodei: That is not quite right. It foreshadowed the 3 per cent plus 1 per cent plus 1 per cent in subsequent years, but that was still to be the subject of negotiations when the CSDA was to be negotiated.

Mr CARPENTER: It is clear to anyone who is involved in, or has any knowledge of, this area that the Federal Government, far from cutting back in the area of disability, should increase funding. Despite the fact that it has provided considerable increases in funding over the past couple of years, the State Government should be considering providing extra funding.

There must be areas in the Budget from which funds can be diverted to Disability Services. The Minister said this area should have the first call on the public purse. I agree with him entirely. Certainly the area of Disability Services, where there is a clear and universally recognised unmet demand for services - a demand often in the crisis category - should be exempt from commonwealth budget cuts.

MR BROWN (Bassendean) [9.10 pm]: This amendment provides a rare opportunity for all members of this House to unite and send a message to the federal coalition Government that it is hurting those who can least afford to be hurt. This amendment seeks to encapsulate in many ways statements already made by members on both sides of the House about the impact of the federal coalition Government's budget cuts. Rather than simply make statements outside this place or statements in passing about empathising with those affected by the federal coalition Government's cuts, this amendment provides an opportunity for the Government and the Opposition to unite in one voice and tell the Federal Government that it is wrong, wrong, wrong with these cuts.

I will identify the degree of unanimity between members of the House on this issue. Last week I had the opportunity to make my Address-in-Reply speech. I dealt with a number of matters, including the impact of the federal coalition Government's cuts on the dental program. I am reported at page 227 in *Hansard* as saying -

The next matter concerns what could be deemed a transference of responsibility from the Federal Government to the State Government and its impact on constituents in my electorate. Members will be aware that in the last federal coalition Budget the dental program introduced by the Keating Government was abolished. As a result the criteria under which dental treatment is available through the Perth Dental Hospital were narrowed so that some people who could previously obtain treatment are now precluded from obtaining it. For example, some very low income people on part pensions are now unable to get that treatment. They are certainly unable to afford the cost of private dental treatment or private health insurance. A group of Australians are now unable to have that treatment and inevitably must bear the pain and frustration of failing to maintain proper dental care. This federal cutback will place extra pressure on the State Government to make up those funds.

I made that comment in this House on Wednesday, 12 March. Yesterday the Minister for Health addressed the same issue. His comments are recorded in the uncorrected proof of *Hansard*, from which one is not allowed to quote, and it is appropriate, therefore, to paraphrase the Minister's comments. The Minister said that as a result of the commonwealth program, dental health care had improved in Western Australia, and as a result of the federal coalition Government's budget cuts in the last Budget that improvement would be reversed. The Minister went on to say that the public dental clinics are already under considerable pressure to provide emergency treatment, and they certainly will not be able to cope with the increased demand placed on them. The Minister said country centres in Western Australia would be particularly hard hit because the State's country dental subsidy scheme could not meet the demand for services. The Minister also said that this was a bad decision by the federal Minister for Health and other federal members of the Parliament because it will affect the most disadvantaged persons in our community - pensioners, long term unemployed and many others who need assistance. The Minister for Health is nodding as I paraphrase him.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Osborne): I note the member is using the uncorrected proof; I hope he is not quoting from it.

Mr BROWN: I am only paraphrasing the Minister's statement.

Mr Prince: Paraphrasing with great accuracy.

Mr BROWN: There is unanimity that the federal coalition Government has taken this action which will impact on the most vulnerable in our community - pensioners, long term unemployed and other people on low incomes - who will not be able to afford proper dental health care as a result of the cutbacks.

I refer once more to my speech last week reported at page 227 of *Hansard*, in which I said that the federal coalition Government in its last Budget had slashed funding for legal aid, thereby denying people the opportunity to enforce the rights they would otherwise have. I made the point quite strongly that this was a significant decision by the Commonwealth because again it will affect people on low incomes who are not powerful in our community and who need state and commonwealth support to have their voices heard and their rights enforced. That view has been endorsed by the Attorney General in this State. I refer to his media statement issued on 24 February 1997 which states -

WA has taken the lead in resisting the Commonwealth's heartless cost-cutting exercise and we will continue to fight at every level.

On the question of legal aid there is unanimity on both sides of the House. It is an unusual situation in this State when the Opposition and the Attorney General agree that the federal coalition Government is heartless in this matter, and it has turned its back on people with low incomes. It has completely abandoned the commitments it made to such people before the last election. Again, there is unanimity across the Chamber.

There is also unanimity across the Chamber with regard to public housing. It is particularly pleasing to see that despite the former Minister for Housing taking a very gentle and soft approach to the actions of the Commonwealth before the last election, the new Minister for Housing is not so restrained. Indeed, he has been quite vociferous in his criticism of the federal coalition Government. I quote from a media statement of the Minister for Housing dated 20 February 1997 -

A meeting of State and Territory Housing Ministers in Brisbane today condemned any proposed cuts in public housing funding by the Federal Government.

The media statement continues -

"This will have an immediate impact on the provision of public housing to the needy as well as the residential construction sector," Dr Hames said.

He goes on to say -

"We have grave reservations about the proposed Commonwealth model for reform which totally replaces State capital funding with income assistance."

Again we have unanimity on the view that the federal coalition has taken the wrong step in cutting funds for public housing.

Mr Prince: In fairness, it should be pointed out that the current Federal Government is doing what the former Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Howe, was flagging in 1995.

Ms MacTiernan: Was it him or his staff?

Mr Prince: He did.

Mr BROWN: Whatever he may or may not have been flagging at the time, the current Federal Government has made this decision. It has been at pains to point out that it will not go along with a number of the policies and views of the former Labor Government. It is a Government making up its own mind about its policy prescriptions, and in that process it has decided to slash the amount of money allocated for public housing.

We now find that the Commonwealth has slashed funds for housing, dental care and legal aid, which will directly affect the battlers. Members will recall the big headlines about "Howard's Battlers". We were told how Prime Minister John Howard and the coalition Government would look after the battlers and legislate fairly for them. Howard was going to look after the little people, the powerless. We can see how he is doing that in Canberra today.

The only gratifying thing in this is that most Ministers who have had something to say have not tried to defend the indefensible. At least they have condemned these moves and said that they are wrong in principle, and that what the Prime Minister said is not truthful because this is what he is now doing. I commend the Ministers for saying that. It takes a great deal of courage to get stuck into one's federal counterparts, to say that they are wrong, that they have deceived the Australian people and that they could not give a cuss about the battlers in our community. The Federal Government intends to make these cuts, which will affect the weakest group in our society.

This amendment is the test for those Ministers and other members. Some Ministers opposite support these cuts; they think the Commonwealth has done the right thing. Obviously, the Minister for Local Government believes the Commonwealth has done the right thing in making these cuts.

Mr Omodei: That is rubbish.

Mr BROWN: We have him on record: The Minister for Local Government also disagrees. We will get a unanimous vote on this yet. The Minister disagrees with what the coalition Government is doing.

Mr Omodei interjected.

Mr BROWN: He cannot have it both ways: He cannot disagree and agree. He would like to, but it is not possible because when it comes to voting, members must sit on one side or the other.

This amendment will give the Government the opportunity to show its bona fides, to stand up for the battlers that the Howard Government has deserted, and to say, "Mr Prime Minister, you are wrong." His priorities in attacking the weakest in our community and those who do not have the capacity to defend their rights, his decision to remove assistance from those who need public housing and dental and health care funding from those who cannot afford it, are wrong. That is the message that this Parliament should send to the Federal Government. If it does send that message, and if we get a unanimous vote in this Parliament, we will have a collective effect on the decision-making processes in Canberra. If members take the party political position despite everything that has been said and if government members, in particular, are not prepared to support this proposition, they are walking away from courage and commitment. That would suggest that they are happy to say they support this proposition but they are not happy to vote for it. There are plenty of people in the community like that: Those who are happy to make statements but, when it comes to standing up and being counted, do not have the courage of their convictions.

I invite government members to join with the Opposition in voting for this amendment to send the message to Canberra that all parties in Western Australia are concerned about the Federal Government's taking decisions that impact on the weakest in our community. If we can achieve that - hopefully we can because the resolution before the Chair does not in any way contradict the statements made by various Ministers - then perhaps we can make some progress in protecting those who need our protection.

It is fair to say that the Federal Government has forgotten the commitments it made prior to the last election that it would look after those who need government support - the battlers. If there are any Howard battlers left, they must be starting to realise that they were conned.

Ms MacTiernan: There are many more now.

Mr BROWN: There probably are, and there will be many more as a result of some of the policies and legislation being pushed through the Federal Parliament. At least in this State we have an opportunity to stand up, if people have the courage of their convictions, and say that enough is enough. We should tell the Federal Parliament and the Prime Minister that they should not touch those programs and services that provide direct assistance to those in most need - the Australian battlers.

MR OMODEI (Warren-Blackwood - Minister for Disability Services) [9.29 pm]: This amendment is premature. It would have been more appropriate to say that this House supports the State Government in its efforts to maintain funding from the Commonwealth for legal aid, public housing, dental care and disabilities.

In its usual garbled fashion, the Opposition has jumped the gun. We know that the Commonwealth has foreshadowed budget cuts in these areas, but that has not yet occurred. I find this quite surprising. Members may have noted that I voted against the amendment in relation to the additions to Parliament House. I did that deliberately. In my first two months as Minister for Disability Services, I travelled around the State, particularly the metropolitan area, and I could not bring myself to vote for government funds to be spent on Parliament House when needs in the community have not been met. My predecessor in the portfolio worked tirelessly to ensure that people with disabilities get a fair deal in Western Australia. As the member for Willagee said, the Count Us In program, the strategic plan, and the Welcome Home campaign have been a great credit to the Minister and the Government, because without the Government's support the Minister would not have been able to put those programs in place. The \$125m over five years and the \$40m recurrent that the Government is allocating is above and beyond the normal Budget. Those funds will go a long way towards providing places for the 400 people in the community who require accommodation.

The suggestion that this Government is not conscious of the demands of the community for legal aid, public housing, dental care and disabilities is wrong. From the disability point of view, the area of concern to me, I will, if necessary, pursue every member of Federal Parliament in the corridors of Parliament House in Canberra to ensure that we get a fair deal. To that extent, we have mounted a significant campaign. With 10 hours' notice we had 45 to 50 of the 65 non-government organisations in my ministerial office. They have already started the campaign. It would have

been more appropriate for the Opposition to support the State Government in fending off the foreshadowed cuts and ensuring that federal members of Parliament were aware that people with disabilities cannot sustain these cuts. The member for Willagee rightly said that those people are the most vulnerable in the community.

I will go over some of the issues. The member for Girrawheen referred to people with autism. There are three organisations in this State that deal with autism: The Western Australian Autism Association; Mildred Creek, which is the organisation funded by the Disability Services Commission, and also Murdoch, which provides advocacy services for people with autism. We are concerned about that area of responsibility. The appropriate method for treating people with autism is still being investigated. It is one of the highest matters on my agenda. At the moment, two independent people are examining the best way of treating people with autism. I will report back to this place on the results of that assessment.

I know that the Opposition has not meant to make Janine Neu's case a political issue by seizing on a person's misfortune and playing politics. I hope that is not the case. I would like to think that disabilities is a bipartisan issue.

Mr Carpenter: I agree, but we got her the money.

Mr OMODEI: We certainly did. Royal Perth Hospital told me in December, I think, that Ms Neu was about to leave the hospital and no funds were available from the program at that time. We do not keep a pot of funds available. We would be criticised rightly if we had set aside funds waiting for something to happen. The DSC immediately referred the matter to the Minister for Health. I commend the people from the Silver Chain organisation who gave Ms Neu 12 hours per week. With her grandmother and mother from both sides of her family, we were able to keep her going until we found a package. That package has been finalised today. It is interesting to note that *The West Australian* and the media are still pursuing that issue. It is a good human interest story. There must be flexibility in the DSC budget to care for -

Mr Carpenter: They were left with the impression there were no channels whatever for getting the money. It was made clear to us.

Mr OMODEI: I am disappointed that was the case. From time to time people with severe disabilities come out of the blue. As I said to the member by way of interjection, two or three people are in the same situation and we are pursuing funds to support them. We have put together a package for Mrs Neu which includes 12 hours a day support by the Disabilities Services Commission. She will also have access to Silver Chain. I think she is being catered for admirably. When one considers the time that has elapsed between her being released from hospital and today, we have not been too bad in getting her the assistance she requires. A simple phone call to the Minister's office would have enabled the member to find out what was happening and he would be aware that the final package had been completed today.

Mr Carpenter: If you make inquiries in your department, you will find that I did and I went through all the right channels.

Mr OMODEI: I am glad. I hope that, if other people like Janine Neu arrive on the scene, we will be able to deal with them quickly also.

Every year an extra 50 people with disabilities come into the system. About half of those involve adult children whose parents are too old to look after them, and the other half are people with severe head injuries. An amount of \$2m is required to look after those people at a cost of \$40 000 each. If we do not maintain the funding, we will have another black hole in a very short time. In its last three years, the Labor Government spent \$1.967m for growth. In its first three years, this Government spent \$9.31m for growth and another \$11.4m this financial year. Those amounts are separate from the funds allocated under the Count Us In program. The Federal Government is suffering from budgetary constraints and we have inherited those. However, I will not play on that too much.

I do not think this Government should be ashamed of its support for people with disabilities. I hope that we can maintain increased funding. Today, I spent some time with the Lotteries Commission. We are considering a range of issues involving increased funding for people with disabilities. That includes property rationalisation and other things that should have happened in the past but have not happened. We need to pursue that with great vigour.

I have received good support from the non-government agencies. The budget for Disability Services in WA is about \$160m. About \$21m of that comes to the State through the commonwealth-state disability agreement. The member for Willagee indicated correctly that the commonwealth review of needs showed that there is a great unmet demand. That continues. That means we are behind the eight ball with this disability services budget. However, that does not mean we will lie down and let it roll over the top of us so that people's needs are not met by the Government. We are working actively in that area.

In relation to the slashing of funds referred to by the member for Bassendean, the previous Labor Federal Government left the current Federal Government in a precarious position. That does not excuse it for cutting funds to people with disabilities because if ever a group in the community requires assistance, the people with disabilities are the most vulnerable. I would go to death's door to defend those people. A sobering experience for all members of Parliament would be to visit places such as the Dorset Hostel, Mildred Creek and Pyrton near Midland, and see the people who are looked after by those organisations. The effort that the carers put into looking after these people is fantastic.

There are still many things left for us to do. For instance, the Government must do more in the transport area so that people who are wheelchair bound can get onto public transport. The central area transit system works well. However, Westrail buses need to be modified. Public buildings, including hotels, have inadequate access for people with disabilities. The Government is working on these issues. The Australian Building Codes Board is investigating access to public buildings for people with disabilities in conjunction with the requirements of the Commonwealth's disabilities discrimination legislation and the current review of that Act.

Members on this side of the House will vote against the amendment. The wording of the amendment is premature. If members opposite have people in their electorates who encounter problems arising from their disability, I invite them to contact my office where they will receive a sympathetic hearing. One in five people in the community has some form of disability. My father has been blind for 34 years and my mother has cared for him all that time. I know what it is like to have a person in the family with a disability.

This State was fortunate to have the member for Greenough as the previous Minister for Disability Services because he made great strides in improving the lot of people with disabilities in this State. He built up a rapport with the non-government organisations, which was very positive.

I reiterate my hope that we will adopt a bipartisan approach to disability services to improve the lot of the disabled. It should not become a political issue.

As I said, the Government will not support the amendment but it is certainly willing to work with the Opposition to help the disabled.

MS ANWYL (Kalgoorlie) [9.42 pm]: I support the amendment, but I will specifically address the question of legal aid.

Mr Omodei: The Federal Government has not yet decided -

Ms ANWYL: It is fairly clear what its agenda is and if the Minister cannot recognise that, it explains why no effective lobbying is occurring. One of the issues raised in this amendment is dental care. We heard today from the Minister for Health that the State will not be able to make up the shortfall caused by the cut in federal funding.

Mr Prince: I made that announcement yesterday.

Ms ANWYL: Does it make any difference? The reality is that the federal cuts were foreshadowed months ago and it has taken many months for the Minister to outline what the State Government will do. Is the Minister for Disability Services suggesting that we should take a similar approach on all these issues? If that is the stance of the Government, I can only suggest that what has happened with dental care will be repeated in legal aid, public housing and disabilities. As I said, the dental care issue is a fait accompli. Are we to sit back and wait for the Government's response to each of the other issues? While some representations are being made, it is the Opposition's opinion that they are not sufficient.

With legal aid, the difficulties faced by people seeking assistance to pursue legal cases is well known by all members. I presume they have received queries from constituents who are simply not eligible for legal aid. In the 1970s the Law Society of Western Australia began to provide an organised scheme whereby solicitors could assist people who were having difficulty meeting legal fees. For some time many solicitors have provided various kinds of pro bono assistance. This form of assistance can only increase in the future, given the government cuts. Members know that the cost of justice is high and that the Western Australian Legal Aid Commission is tightening eligibility all the time. Some recent examples of that include the end to the provision of aid for Courts of Petty Sessions cases, the end to private representation for pleas of guilty in more serious cases and the end to assistance for restraining orders and a variety of other matters. The reality is that the legal aid budget in this State is principally spent on criminal and family law matters.

The important thing members should note about the cost of justice is that the Howard Government has been contributing to it in a real way by increasing court fees. It is interesting to note the price hikes which occurred in the last federal Budget. I was a practising lawyer and I am sensitive to criticism of lawyers. Everyone points their finger at the lawyers when it comes to the cost of justice.

Mr Minson interjected.

Ms ANWYL: If the member will listen, the point I am trying to make is that in the Federal Court alone the filing fee, which is the fee one pays when he starts an action, has been increased from \$358 to \$1 600. How can that be fair and equitable? The hearing fee which has been imposed is \$1 500. From the start, the Federal Government is collecting \$2 700 before a person can proceed to have a case heard and before he contemplates the cost of a solicitor.

In the Family Court the filing fee was increased from \$368 to \$460 and a hearing fee of \$400 has been imposed for the first time. Of course, there are some big players who monopolise the time of the court, but by and large litigants are ordinary people, not large corporations. I will take the example of somebody who is trying to pursue a bankruptcy to recover a modest amount from a debtor. Often, it is a small business. Immediately the small business is faced with a \$1 600 filing fee and, I understand, it is \$1 100 per day to have the bankruptcy hearing. The fees are huge.

Mr Shave: Politicians are too busy watching what lawyers are charging to develop bad habits.

Ms ANWYL: In any event, one of the main functions of government is to resolve the kinds of disputes which are occurring between citizens. In the October edition of the *Australian Law Journal*, Mr Justice Young, in referring to the increases in filing fees - members should remember that they were increased in the Howard Liberal Government's last Budget - wonders whether the increase in federal fees will mean that more litigation will take place in the States. That is something which this Parliament should be concerned about because it will increase the costs associated with the administration of justice and it is something this State can ill-afford. The federal model seems to be to move towards a user-pays systems.

Mr Pandal: What is a comparable filing fee in the Western Australian Supreme Court?

Ms ANWYL: It is about \$250 as opposed to \$1 600 in the Federal Court. There is no hearing fee in the Western Australian Supreme Court, but there is an entry fee of approximately \$250.

Mr Justice Young said in the article in the *Australian Law Journal* -

A system where the criminal court makes defendants pay for their trial is akin to the Chinese system of paying for the bullet which is used to execute you.

He said that the bulk of the state courts' work is petty cases; that is, small criminal matters. If we extend that principle, it is difficult to see how civil litigants will be able to escape huge increases in costs. That is only one factor which the Legal Aid Commission must pick up with respect to the cost of running cases. The Legal Aid Commission is not exempt from those fees. While the Family Court has some exemption from fees, my experience is that it is extremely difficult to have fees in that court waived. I suspect that will be the experience of all the litigants involved in that court. The Family Court is a good example, because in matters of child custody litigants often do not have much choice about being in that court.

Mr Prince: You have the ludicrous situation where you pay an enormous filing fee for an application for the dissolution of marriage and nothing for a property settlement that might be worth millions.

Ms ANWYL: That is changing.

Mr Prince: So it should.

Ms ANWYL: That will also increase legal aid costs.

Mr Prince: Legal aid has never been available for people who fight over significant property. It is available for custody issues, but not over property.

Ms ANWYL: No. The bulk of the legal aid budget in this State goes to criminal and family law matters. It is acknowledged that many people are already missing out in the provision of legal aid. With the strict financial eligibility criteria for legal aid one's net income must be less than \$200 a week. In this debate I will not address all of those people who fall outside of that eligibility test.

Mr Prince: What do you think of the Dietrich principle?

Ms ANWYL: The difficulty with serious criminal cases is a decision of the High Court for an indefinite stay, rather than proceeding against someone who is unrepresented. The Legal Aid Commission has failed not only in this State, but also Australia-wide to address the extreme cost of protracted criminal cases. There must be some recognition that the commission must apply a type of merit test in these sorts of cases. The Dietrich decision protects the rights of those charged. That must be a fundamental part of our law because we have the golden thread; that is, one is innocent until proved guilty. Although that is a necessary protection it has created huge problems which mean that

many people miss out on legal assistance because expensive trials are funded. I have argued for many years that the commission must come to terms with a merit-type scenario. I do not have all those answers. Many people are missing out already.

There are three metropolitan legal aid offices, located at Perth, Fremantle and Midland and offices in Bunbury, Port Hedland, Broome, and, as of January 1995, Kalgoorlie-Boulder. A pretty definite opinion has been voiced by the Director of Legal Aid, Carol Bahemia, that at least \$3.3m will be sliced off the state contribution in the first year of this round of cuts. It is important to note exactly what funds are being made available. I refer to an article in the February 1997 edition of the *Australian Law Journal* by Justice Steytler who is one of our Supreme Court justices. His Honour states that current contribution of the State Government was \$8m. If one looks at the proposed \$3.3m cut one gets some appreciation of how far reaching these cuts will be. It is also important that other types of legal services provided to low income earners in the State have been closed. The consumer credit legal service will be closed, and the future of the youth legal service is uncertain beyond the end of this financial year. A number of community legal centres are also facing federal budget cuts. It is not as if other agencies will exist to take up the slack. Those agencies have problems of their own. My concern as a country member is that access to legal services for country people is already restricted. Some informal mention has been made that about \$1m of that \$3.3m will be applied to those four regional offices. It is difficult to see how the existing country legal aid offices can be further contracted. The fact is that they must service huge areas - perhaps with the exception of Bunbury - where access to Perth is not possible.

Justice Steytler said that unlike some other States Western Australia has had some cuts in its legal aid expenditure and there is real concern about what the future holds. He also points out, as has been pointed out by Sir Ronald Wilson, that some of the services which will necessarily be cut will probably result in breaches of some of the international conventions. An obvious example if one looks to the dollars that are being spent in the family law arena are the separate child representation cases; that is, where the Family Court orders separate representation of children in a dispute, generally a custody dispute. It is clear from the United Nations convention on the rights of children that the Government has an obligation to protect children - for example, in the re: K type of decision where there are allegations of sexual abuse, neglect or some other serious types of allegations. The Legal Aid Commission has not been able to fund all cases where the Family Court judge has directed funding be granted. I see the Minister for Health nodding his head. That problem is on a par with the long term criminal trial problem. They are of equal seriousness.

I was particularly disappointed to note that the federal Attorney General was critical of the Family Court and the Chief Judge of the Family Court in that debate.

Mr Prince: In which case he should be critical of the High Court in the Dietrich decision.

Ms ANWYL: He probably is; I do not know. The federal Attorney General is blaming the Family Court for a decision which exists, basically, to protect the rights of children in our society. The Legal Aid Commission is currently struggling to come to terms with the existing problems in this State. It is for that reason that I urge members opposite to support this amendment because of the effect of funding cuts on legal aid. The implications are enormous. It is not just a matter of assisting individual litigants, but also of providing a wide range of services by way of self-help forums, training and so forth.

One specific initiative of the Legal Aid Commission in this State that is in jeopardy and that has huge ramifications is the domestic violence legal unit. That unit is fairly new, having been set up only a couple of years ago. It is recognised that women who leave violent relationships are often in more danger of death than when they were in those violent relationships. I am talking about spousal homicides. There were about 46 in 1995 in this State alone, including the lives of children. The State Legal Aid Commission is not able to employ any more staff, because it does not know what its funding position will be. The coordinator of the domestic violence legal unit has left, or is leaving her job, and no replacement will be appointed. Women who are in fairly difficult positions are not able to get assistance with contested restraining orders; that is, where the other partner is contesting the woman's right to that restraining order. Members can imagine the dynamics and fear that are occurring in those positions. Surely that is an example of where legal aid should be available on a very wide test, but it simply is not happening because the commission is not able to employ the staff members because it does not know whether it will be able to pay them beyond 30 June this year.

As I said before, it is not good enough to say that the cuts have not happened yet and that the Government is negotiating to try to stop them. It must be understood that the legal aid system is already in a state of turmoil in this State for a number of reasons and many people are missing out. The Federal Government has increased the cost of justice. I gave the example of the massive hike in Federal Court fees from \$358 to \$1 600 to start an action. I urge all members to support this amendment.

MR PRINCE (Albany - Minister for Health) [10.00 pm]: I do not support this amendment, but I do support much of the sentiment. I think the amendment is miscast. I will address a couple of areas, the first being legal aid. I appreciate that the member for Kalgoorlie was perhaps not around when lawyers ran a legal aid service for nothing before the debacle of the Australian Legal Aid Office came into existence under Mr Whitlam's Government and thereafter progressed. The member talked about legal aid in terms of its being an institution, being the Legal Aid Commission and having offices here and there. In Albany there is no office; there never has been. A group of lawyers front up on Thursday every week, give free legal advice and deal with clients for nothing, and they have done that for years and years. In many places the legal profession will continue to do that.

Mr Riebeling: Not in that many areas.

Mr PRINCE: Perhaps not, but I am just pointing out my experience. I know it is continuing. The legal aid system has never paid lawyers well. It paid only 80 per cent of its scheduled fee, which is approximately half of what should have been charged anyway, and the lawyers then had to wait for months for payment. In my opinion the legal aid system has chewed up far too much money in administration. I am sure a much better system could be run, were the number of people on staff to be reduced - that is what the member for Kalgoorlie has been talking about - which would free up more funds so that more people could be employed at a much reduced hourly rate than they would otherwise be paid to look after those who need legal representation. However, that is another matter.

I will make one comment on public housing, on which I interjected. I was Minister for Housing when the plan, which is being mooted again now, was first floated by the then Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Howe. In fact, it was more than floated. We were told as an assembled group of Housing Ministers that there would be a cut in the capital funding from the Commonwealth under the commonwealth-state housing agreement. At the time we all protested at the model being put forward of private sector funding the capital and so on. Long term rentals may well be suitable for a big city, such as Sydney or Melbourne and big conglomerates of that nature, and it may work in some parts of Perth; but it would not work in country areas because there is not the capital growth to make the economy of the model operate.

This matter was no secret two or three years ago. I recall discussing it informally with a number of members opposite. I do not know whether the member for Burrup, as he is now, recalls it. It is not new. It has come out of the Canberra Treasury side of things, rather than anything else. In that sense it should not be laid at the feet of the current Federal Government as a bad idea, because it has been around for some time and in any event was to be put into effect by the previous federal Labor Government.

I have made this State's position on the dental care program perfectly clear. It was announced in last year's federal Budget that the dental program would cease. I have made this Government's position abundantly clear; that is, it is a bad decision because it will have an adverse effect on 40 000 people in this State who are at pension level income and whose oral hygiene and oral health will diminish. Although these people ultimately may be treated through the state run system - that is, the Perth Dental Hospital and a number of other clinics around the country - the waiting time will be longer and longer. That is bad health, particularly when dealing with the people who are most disadvantaged in society.

In this debate we must never forget that the Prime Minister, Mr Howard, is looking after the battlers. They are those in middle Australia whom the federal Labor Government for 13 years gradually - I do not know whether it was deliberate - disenfranchised and marginalised. Middle Australia revolted at the last election and removed the Keating Government by the greatest margin ever in the history of this federation; the second greatest margin to remove a government was when Whitlam was removed in 1975. Members opposite obviously do not understand that they are lousy economic managers. We have a national debt of over \$200b and action must be taken to reduce the debt and to correct the balance of payments.

Mr Riebeling: How much did that increase last month?

Mr Brown: How much is public debt?

Mr PRINCE: I ask those opposite to let me finish. That is a disastrous state of affairs. I object very strongly and take very much to heart that the areas we are discussing tonight should not be cut. It is a matter of where the cuts should be made. People who are in public housing, those on pensions who look to a subsidised system to provide care for their teeth, people with disabilities about whom the member for Greenough can speak far more eloquently than I, should not be the people whose services are to be cut. The system should look much more at the featherbedding in the commonwealth Public Service and other areas, than at these people. I am told that there is in the vicinity of 9 000 public servants in the commonwealth Health Department. They deliver two programs: One is to do with better hearing; and the second is part of a rehabilitation program. They otherwise deliver no programs of an operational nature. Those are all delivered by the States. We must wonder why so many people are involved, working hard on

administration, when a good deal of that resource could be freed up to provide better health care, whether it be dental or anything else.

At some stage a much harder decision must be made by the Federal Government that it is in the business of policy and of planning, but not of having huge employment in the public sector which is paid for by the taxpayer. The taxpayers should be receiving services for the dollars they pay. I object to the cuts in the areas that are being flagged at the moment, but there must be cuts because the economy of this nation has been put on the rack for 13 years by the federal colleagues of those opposite.

MR RIEBELING (Ashburton) [10.07 pm]: I am somewhat disappointed in the comments by the Minister for Health in this debate. Today in question time, in answer to a question from the member for Kimberley on the cutting of the dental care program, he urged people on this side to do exactly what we are doing; that is, to support his position to tell the Federal Government that it is doing the wrong thing by cutting the dental care program. We on this side listen very intently to what the Minister for Health says at all times. We rushed out and drafted an amendment in the exact terms that he wants. Then he comes in here and says that he cannot support it. It is an amazing situation. He knows, probably better than most on the other side, the impact these cuts will have on country people, especially in legal aid, public housing and dental care. He lives in the country and he has acted as a lawyer in the country, although he is not currently practising. He has been the Minister for Housing and is now the Minister for Health. He knows the impact of all of these cuts on those who will be affected. That is why I am somewhat disappointed that the Minister has chosen to take the stance he has. I do not think he believes what he is saying. I think he knows that the Federal Government is cutting in the wrong areas. It is cutting deep into budgets that are designed to assist people who are in the weakest position to assist themselves. People in country areas are even more affected by these cuts than those in the metropolitan area because of a lack of competition and a limited opportunity to access the services, other than government-provided services, that these cuts will affect.

That is particularly the case with legal aid. As the member for Kalgoorlie said, the main impact of that will be the removal of legal aid in the Court of Petty Sessions and for people seeking restraining orders. Over 90 per cent of the courts' work in this State is in the jurisdiction of the Court of Petty Sessions. That is the busiest court. It is the court with which the majority of people have contact. They are the ordinary people in the street who are not normally involved in the criminal system. Many do not have the means to obtain legal advice through the private system. It is interesting that the Minister for Health suggests that, at least in Albany, legal aid is not needed because the lawyers band together to assist anyone who cannot afford legal representation.

Mr Prince: I did not say that; I said that that was what the lawyers had done there for years. There is legal aid, but no officers.

Mr RIEBELING: That is similar to the argument sometimes used for abolishing Medicare. Under the old system if a person was sick, someone would look after him. I suggest that we have moved on since those days.

Mr Bloffwitch: We have gone backwards.

Mrs van de Klashorst interjected.

Mr RIEBELING: People expect that a certain level of protection will be given to those on low incomes. They should not have to beg and explain their financial position to people so they can protect their rights in the court. I have no doubt that the police charge people who cannot afford private lawyers with charges they can get off as often as they charge well-off people. If well-off people are charged incorrectly, they hotfoot it to the nearest lawyer and that lawyer will no doubt put up a case that will be successful in court. The same should occur if a case is defensible in court, no matter what a person's means. We are talking about a system of justice; not a system where the rich have access to justice -

Mr Bloffwitch: I think legal aid is a good thing, too. Ninety per cent of the people who apply for legal aid in Geraldton do not get it under the current system anyway.

Mr RIEBELING: I do not think that is right. If the member for Geraldton attends the Court of Petty Sessions on an arrest morning, he will find that everyone there is represented by legal aid.

Mr Bloffwitch: If you are a criminal, you get it.

Mr RIEBELING: No, these people are not necessarily criminals. The problem the member has is he thinks that if a person is charged, he is guilty. He should be in France; that is not our system. Under Western Australia's system, if a person is charged, he is not guilty until the prosecution proves he is guilty. That is the mistake the member makes. These people are not criminals; they are referred to as defendants. They are defending a case that the Crown puts against them. It is a simple process. In every Court of Petty Sessions in this land the defendant will explain to the legal aid lawyer his recollection of the events, and that lawyer will decide whether the person has a defence

or not. Those who are guilty will then be represented in a plea of mitigation of penalty and will be processed through the system. No great case is held that will cost thousands of dollars. It would cost a couple of hundred dollars for a lawyer in the private sector to represent that person along that line.

Many people do not have the means to pay any fines or to pay a lawyer the couple of hundred dollars that may be required if the legal aid system is removed for pleas of guilty. If it is removed, the court system will suffer because people will not know what they are supposed to be doing. They will not be able to afford the advice; therefore, more people may plead not guilty than should do so. If people are unsure whether they are guilty under the law and no-one is available to advise them, many people will plead not guilty. It will result in a false economy, at least on the State's part. The State foots the bill for the running of the courts. If the list blows out due to a lack of legal advice, the State will wear the bill. That simple advice, which is given on a bulk basis, is very efficient.

Legal aid officers based in Port Hedland have serviced the Pilbara region for as long as I can recall, and I have been there for 16 years. Their services to the Pilbara community have been invaluable. It is unthinkable that that type of service was removed from people who needed it. We are not talking about people who are exceptionally wealthy or who have hidden their wealth, as in the case the Minister for Health mentioned in which legal aid was refused, but about the average punter who is picked up for drink driving and who wants to know what his rights are. It is a great shame that that type of system is being removed.

The Minister for Health mentioned that the restructuring of the housing agreement was in the pipeline for a number of years. That is the case. However, this Government is proceeding towards the implementation of the changes to that system within the next couple of years. In October or November last year I wrote to a number of people in Homeswest suggesting that if the changes came into being, they would have a dramatic impact on existing and future tenants of Homeswest. The Minister for Housing said that I was in the business of scaremongering and that I did not know what I was talking about. He said he would resist any changes and that the future of Homeswest was assured. That does not appear to be the situation now.

I turn to dental health care. The dental health system which was Commonwealth funded was removed from Karratha for a six month period last year. The dentists, through whom people could access the system, were deregistered. People could not access the dental scheme in the Karratha region. I am fortunate in a way because I already know what will be the impact of removing the system when it occurs across the State. The decision to remove the dentist had a huge impact on the relatively small number of pensioners living in the Karratha area, who had absolutely no way of accessing the dental service. They rang the state Dental Services and were advised that the dental clinic in Hedland would service their needs. The problem is that the service is approximately 250 kilometres from Karratha and, despite what people may think, every resident in the north does not own a vehicle. It was a difficult task for them to get to Port Hedland for dental treatment. During the six months without access to the scheme, I dealt with about eight people who came into my office with similar problems. They required urgent dental treatment and had no means of accessing it. Some considerable effort was expended to get the service resumed.

Mr Graham: The current Government did exactly the same thing in Paraburdoo; it closed down the dental health services.

Mr RIEBELING: That is right. The other interesting thing about the Pilbara, as I was going to mention in a speech shortly, was that access to dental service in the metropolitan area through the patient assisted travel scheme is very restrictive. It was not an option for people to access the dental treatment. It was no alternative to the scheme because most of the services dentists provide are not accessible under the scheme. That is another health issue I will mention shortly.

I urge members opposite to think about the amendment. If they read it with an open mind, they will see it reflects a bipartisan approach to the Commonwealth's actions with state funding. We have heard over the last couple of weeks the Premier and almost every Minister saying that they expect a raw deal from the Federal Government. In December that did not appear to be a problem as everything was rosy; we had open books, and revenue and how much could be spent was known. All that went out the window. The statements were made on the basis that the Premier and his Ministers were telling us the truth.

We now see what the Federal Government is planning. The Opposition hopes that the Government takes the opportunity to adopt a bipartisan approach in dealing with the Federal Government to show that the whole House is firmly behind the Premier when he goes to Canberra to maximise the amount of money directed to this State.

MR McGOWAN (Rockingham) [10.24 pm]: I am relatively new in this place as this is my fifth day in this Chamber, yet every day I have witnessed the Premier explain how hard done by the State has been by the Commonwealth Government. He has said that the State is missing out on grants and that it is being penalised because it does not have a gold royalty, and he has made various other comments. The Opposition tonight has moved an amendment to the

Address-in-Reply to bring that situation to the attention of the Governor. We have stated that the cutbacks proposed by the Federal Government are detrimental to the people of Western Australia.

What could be more in line with what the Premier has said in the past five days in this Parliament than such a statement to the Governor? Every day in this House the Opposition moves an amendment to the motion which reflects what the Premier says, yet it is opposed by members opposite. It seems in my limited experience here that a number of members opposite agree with the Opposition on many issues it raises, particularly in the area of one-vote-one-value and improvements to Parliament House. Probably, the majority of members opposite agree with what opposition members say but do not vote with the Opposition. I am at a loss to explain that. I note that you, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr Ainsworth), and the member for Avon had the courage to vote with the Opposition today.

Mr House: I look forward to the day you cross the floor and vote with the Government; it will be a long time coming, my friend.

Mr McGOWAN: Members opposite say that they are not bound by their party; but they agree with us yet do not have the courage to cross the floor.

Mr House: I look forward to the day you have the courage to cross.

Mr McGOWAN: I am looking forward to it too.

Two issues relate to the amendment before us which I will address; namely, legal aid and dental care. The free dental system was funded by the Commonwealth from 1992 until the federal coalition Budget of last year scrapped the scheme. The scheme funding amounted to \$47m across the nation, with \$9.2m directed to Western Australia each year. That funding meant that the clinics in Rockingham, North Perth, Fremantle, Victoria Park, Subiaco and Nedlands, as well as a number of country centres, including Geraldton and Bunbury, received a dental clinic which provided free dental services for people most in need. The funding cut by the Commonwealth Government is affecting those who can least afford it. A number of people, principally pensioners, have contacted my electoral office, stating that they have turned up for appointments at the dental clinics only to discover that the service is no longer free.

Importantly, since the Commonwealth scheme was scrapped, a 20 per cent fee has been imposed on every person who visits a state dental clinic for any dental work performed. This fee has been imposed by stealth. No mention has been made of it anywhere by the Government at any time. I have done a little research on this issue: I looked through *Hansard* to examine what the Minister for Health has had to say on this issue when confronted directly about it. On 21 August 1996 he was asked what the State would do in relation to the imminent cessation of the commonwealth dental scheme, to which he replied -

I will guarantee that I will talk to Dr Michael Wooldridge as soon as possible . . . to work out how to manage the matter, bearings in mind it is a commonwealth funded program for which the State is merely the agency.

On the same day he gave a similar response to direct questioning on the point. On 17 October the Minister gave the following answer -

It is being worked on at the moment and I give an assurance that patients' needs will come first, as they always have done under this Government.

Again, on 17 October the Minister replied -

I am trying to maintain the service, but it is a matter of being able to find funds out of the administrative services side of the Health budget. . . .

If the saving can be found, clearly the Government will maintain the service.

Absolutely no mention was made of a 20 per cent fee which the State Government introduced on 21 January this year. The first that most people who have turned up at a State dental clinic hear of this is after they have made their appointment. It normally takes anything up to 18 months before they have an appointment to see a dentist, even if it is merely for a check-up. They are then confronted with a 20 per cent fee of which they have had absolutely no notice. The Liberal Party health document, dated 5 December 1996, is entitled "Building Better Health. Western Australian Coalition Policies Leading into the 21st Century". Under "Summary of Major Achievements" it reads -

Maintaining and extending many services across the State in the face of significantly reduced Commonwealth funding in areas such as the dental program . . .

Where is the mention of the 20 per cent fee? That statement was issued nine days before the state election and one month before the fee was imposed. Members can go through the entire Liberal Party document issued before the last election and find absolutely no mention whatsoever of the 20 per cent fee. The fee was imposed by the Government by stealth because it did not make the good people of Western Australia aware of it before imposing it. It is a total disgrace for this Government to claim to have any interest in the health of people of Western Australia when it misleads people a few days before an election.

The second subject I will refer to is legal aid funding. In this area I have a degree of sympathy with the State Government. I understand that it is not this Government's fault that the Commonwealth Government is cutting legal aid funding. However, it should perhaps be a little more vocal about it and join with us in voting for this amendment. The Minister for Health is a lawyer from Albany. He made mention of the fact that a number of lawyers in Albany are doing a large amount of pro bono work for people in the Albany region. That is not unique to Albany. Lawyers in my electorate of Rockingham also undertake Citizens Advice Bureau work. The Minister for Health was quite disparaging of the Legal Aid Commission. He said it was basically a disorganised sort of mob and that it did not provide a good service. That has not been my experience with legal aid. I undertook a lot of work with legal aid in my time in the Navy. I found it to be a very lean operation, providing a good service to people and being very small on bureaucracy and big on service. I am sure that has been the experience of a number of members in this place who have referred people to the Legal Aid Commission. It is also a very compassionate organisation. It is filled with a great number of people whose sole aim is to help others.

As to legal aid funding, the High Court in the case of Dietrich, of which I am sure most members will be aware, indicated that there would be a permanent stay of proceedings when a person was unable to procure legal representation on a criminal matter due to lack of funding. I have no love of the so-called impoverished millionaires who seek to obtain legal aid funding, but I do believe very strongly that people who have merit in their case and cannot afford a lawyer to defend themselves before a court should be provided with legal assistance in order to do so. I note that the High Court is also of that view. The cutting of legal aid funding appears to be directly contrary to what the High Court is saying. We must object to it most strenuously. The Opposition is doing that tonight. It must be brought to this Parliament's attention that the party most at fault is the federal Liberal Party. An extract from *The West Australian* dated 4 March 1997 reads -

Prime Minister John Howard accused WA yesterday of siphoning tens of millions of Commonwealth dollars to finance State legal matters.

I have no great love of the Western Australian Government but on this occasion the Prime Minister was being somewhat selective on that matter and showed very poor judgment in criticising the Western Australian Government and its Attorney General for what they had done. I am sure that the Government will appreciate that I am defending it.

Mr Shave: The public knows that we are a very good Government. That is why it voted for us.

Mr McGOWAN: No it does not. The Prime Minister had this to say in relation to the Western Australian Government and its legal aid funding -

We have not reduced the funding available to legal aid commissions in the current financial year and it follows from that that much of the confected outrage of some State attorneys-general is completely erroneously based . . .

We estimate that tens of millions of Commonwealth dollars have been siphoned off under the present arrangements to fund legal aid schemes for State matters.

What is legal aid money for? The large number of legal matters which come before the courts are criminal matters. They should be the central focus of legal aid, yet the Prime Minister was saying that somehow commonwealth funds should not be directed towards them. I note that the Attorney General also objected to what the Prime Minister had to say. I commend the Attorney General for what he did there and I have sympathy for the State Government in this instance.

MRS van de KLASHORST (Swan Hills - Parliamentary Secretary) [10.37 pm]: Unfortunately, we do not live in a fairy tale world. If it were an ideal world, we would have enough money for every single thing we want. Life is not like that. As my mother often told me when I asked for things as a child, "Money does not grow on trees." I wish it did. If it did grow on trees, I would be able to afford lawyers. About 90 per cent of Australians cannot afford lawyers because they have priced themselves out of the pocket of the normal, everyday battler. That is a shame and something somewhere must be done to bring lawyers within reach of most people in Western Australia.

I agree with the member for Rockingham and disagree with the member for Kalgoorlie. The member for Rockingham praised the Attorney General and the Western Australian Government for trying to maintain legal aid in this State. The member for Kalgoorlie said, if I am correct, that no effective lobbying is occurring. I am concerned that she apparently does not read the newspaper. If she had been following the newspaper for the past several months, she would have seen that not only is the Western Australian Attorney General working with everybody else in Australia to try to solve this major problem -

Mr Omodei: What has changed? Labor Party members have never agreed from one end of the party to the other.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: Yes. I have been given a sign from the Leader of the House that time is moving on, so I will not take interjections. Everybody in the House must know that the Western Australian Attorney General opposes any suggested cuts by the Federal Government to legal aid. Like he, I also agree that if legal aid is cut in this State it will affect not only the battlers but also many other people. The way legal aid is organised needs to be changed so we do not give money to the high flyers, as has occurred, but direct it to the people most in need. Not only is the Western Australian Attorney General fighting the Federal Government but also all State Attorneys General have asked for a continuation of the current federal funding. The arrangements that will be signed on 1 July should be a renewal of the existing contract. States including Western Australia have been firm and said that they will not budge from their stance and will not accept any cuts. They strongly indicated to the Federal Government that they were not prepared even to negotiate or work with it if the Federal Government proposed massive cuts in this area. This is because of the care of all the States in Australia for the people who rely on and need legal aid. In this State, the Legal Aid Commission has been asked to review some of its practices and procedures to ensure that the money goes to the people who are most in need, and the Government is looking at the cost of administering the Legal Aid Commission.

Western Australia has special needs that some of the other States do not have; because of our geographic situation we need to place agencies and lawyers in remote areas. That means that the cost of legal aid is often higher per capita than is the case in other States. The Western Australian Attorney General has approached the federal Attorney General and asked that funding be allocated throughout Australia on a needs basis, and if this can be negotiated, which he is working hard to do, Western Australia will benefit from the changes. This is a state thrust. The state Attorney General refuses to accept that the cuts will take place and is working with the other Attorneys General.

The member for Kalgoorlie was wrong in her comment that nothing is being done to protect Western Australia. This Government fights for what it believes in. I sat in this place for four years when a federal Labor Government was in office and I never heard any member of the state Opposition stand up and speak against the Labor Prime Minister for taking this country into billions of dollars of debt. The Opposition praised the federal Labor Government, which was on its side of politics. This and every other current State Government has gone to the Federal Government with its point of view, regardless of its political persuasion. We are fighting for what we believe in. We are attempting to ensure that there are no cuts in this important area of legal aid; or, if there are cuts, that they cause minimal harm to those people in need. I oppose the amendment.

MS MacTIERNAN (Armadale) [10.41 pm]: The member for Swan Hills has succeeded in confusing me and all of us on this side! She has reached a conclusion that is not supported by the arguments that she put. She complained that the Opposition thought that money grew on trees; that is why we were complaining about these cuts. She then outlined why each of her Ministers had complained loudly about these cuts. It is difficult to understand on what the member based the criticism that she directed towards the Opposition.

The member for Swan Hills also misrepresented the position of the member for Kalgoorlie. The member for Kalgoorlie did not say that nothing is happening. We acknowledge that a lot of bleating is coming from the state Attorney General. The member for Kalgoorlie said that there is no effective lobbying. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. There has been no improvement in this State in any of those areas as a result of the representations of this Government. This is the reason that we moved this amendment. We could see that the Government was not being very successful in lobbying, and we thought that if it received a bit of help from this side, it might be enough to -

Mr Prince: Come on! Even you cannot believe that!

Ms MacTIERNAN: - at least put a bit of steel in its backbone so that it will take up the matter.

Mr Shave interjected.

Ms MacTIERNAN: The Minister is so smooth and laid back! It is good to see that he is awake. We are grateful for the interjections because we would hate to think that a Minister of the Crown is asleep.

The other rather ridiculous point made by the member for Swan Hills is that we on this side of the House have never jumped up and down and railed against the federal Labor Government. While that is probably an overstatement, it is true that while we and federal Labor were in government, there was never cause to make the statements that need to be made today. That federal Labor Government did not go about slashing and burning in the crucial areas that are set out in the amendment, such as legal aid, public housing, dental care, and disability services. The record of the Labor Government in these areas has been particularly strong. If I remember rightly, the Minister for Health acknowledged that yesterday during his little piece on the iniquity of his federal counterparts, and gave credit to the federal Labor Government for its dental care program.

There is no doubt that the federal Labor Government had a proud record, not only in legal aid. The member for Kalgoorlie made some excellent points about the other costs that are affecting access to justice. The federal Labor Government had developed a comprehensive program to enhance access to justice - a program abandoned totally by the mob that are in government federally, and a program that has gone backwards considerably with the introduction of these extraordinary fees that have been imposed, with little provision for distinguishing between a case run by John Elliott and a case run by a small punter who is trying to recover a small sum of money.

We have moved this amendment in order to assist the Government. I find much of the pontification of this State Government against the Federal Government rather hypocritical, because in its budgets it is doing precisely what the Federal Government has done. We are told by the Premier that this State is experiencing growth in excess of 6 per cent per annum, yet we are also told continually that we must cut expenditure. This is precisely the rhetoric that we are hearing from this Government's federal counterpart. They are cut from the same cloth, so that is not surprising.

I am interested to hear from the Government some logical reasons for its not being prepared to support the amendment. Each of the areas that has been nominated is an area on which the Government has taken its federal counterpart to task; as such, it is only rational, and consistency demands, that it support this amendment.

MR GRAHAM (Pilbara) [10.48 pm]: There are some great ironies in politics. One is that we had to sit here at question time and listen to the Minister for Health point out, in response to a question from the member for Kimberley, that we should support his and the Government's moves to take on the Federal Government about the reductions in funding to the dental scheme. That was fascinating. He called on us all to support him: "Please help us fight the horrible beasts in Canberra, because we cannot get the money." That is the effect of what he was saying. What did members hear when the Minister for Health spoke on the amendment? The amendment reads -

but regrets to advise Your Excellency that Western Australians on limited incomes are facing additional hardship as a result of cutbacks made by the Federal Coalition Government in areas such as legal aid, public housing, dental care and disabilities.

I remind the Minister that 40 000 people will miss out on dental care assistance. The Minister did not refer to what he said at question time - that is, the need for bipartisan support. Now that we have a chance to do provide that, what do we hear from the Minister? He said it was the federal Labor Government's fault because it messed up the economy, which led to these cuts. It is a load of absolute nonsense. If that is the case, why did he not say during the election campaign in December that there would be cuts to dental care? There was not one word from him at that time. Little Johnnie Howard was saying that there would be no cuts.

Several members interjected.

Mr Prince: It was the first time there was an absolute majority in every box.

Mr GRAHAM: It was not the first time for me.

Mr Prince: I know.

Mr GRAHAM: Perhaps the Minister is catching up in Albany.

Several members interjected.

Mr GRAHAM: The member for Kalgoorlie has never been more correct in her life when she says there has been no effective lobbying by this Government on these issues.

Mr Omodei: How do you know?

Mr GRAHAM: The Government has not fixed the situation, so it has not been very effective. The federal Attorney General said, "Your Attorney General is getting around like a ponce and is publicly posturing on it." He is taking this Government seriously! What has this Government done? Every one of this State's Liberal senators - except for the position which has not been filled because the Liberal Party cannot make up its mind - voted for these cuts. Not one of the heroes in the Liberal Party has enough clout to get one of their senators to change his mind on one budget

line item. They have voted in favour of every one of them. Even little Eggleston voted to cut funding to the Special Broadcasting Service, even though his campaign to get into the Senate was centred on retaining SBS. The member for Kalgoorlie was spot on, because there has not been one day of effective lobbying by the Liberal Party in this State.

I will go through some of the other issues which were not raised in December and refer to some of the things that this Government has not done. It is quite obvious from the speeches by members opposite that there will be no bipartisan support on this issue, support which the Opposition was asked to provide.

This Government, in its forward estimates for the next five years, will raise revenue in this State from \$6.9b to \$7.2b. It is not short of a quid. It is the biggest taxing government in Western Australia's history. Never before has a Government pulled in over \$7b in revenue.

Dr HAMES: When you are voted into government you will become the biggest taxing Government in this State's history.

Mr GRAHAM: I advise the Minister for Housing that members of his Government are running around in sack cloth and ashes saying it cannot provide funding in the areas to which I referred. It can, because it is the biggest taxing government in this State's history.

This Government knocked off the vitamin A program for dying people. Not one cracker is coming from the Government for that program. It is a simple program which gives dying people some comfort and allows them to deal with a terminal disease, but the scrooges opposite cannot afford to fund it. Where is their breast beating and effective lobbying on that issue? The only reason the Government cannot afford to fund this program is that members opposite will not make up their minds. They are doing to those dying people exactly what the Federal Government is doing to poor people with tooth decay. Under this Government, the public dentists who were in Paraburdoo have gone. There was no warning and no undertaking was given. The Government has \$7.2b in its kitty, but people who travelled 350 miles on gravel roads to the nearest town to visit the public dentist can no longer find one there. The Minister should not come breast beating to me that he wants bipartisan support on dental health care. He is as bad as the Federal Government. The only difference between this Government and the Federal Government is that this Government is denying the citizens of this State access to this sort of care.

This State once had a system of mobile school dentists in the north west, but members opposite cut their funding. The north west now has schools where there are no visiting dentists and that is not because of the Federal Government's cuts but because this Government made the cuts in its Budget. I repeat that it is doing exactly what it claims the Federal Government is doing to the people of this State.

In the nine years I have been in this place I have heard successive Health Ministers complain about the funding that comes out of the Federal Government for Western Australia. One Minister for Health, Carmen Lawrence, said that the coalition had taken \$167m in recurrent funding out of the health scheme. Members opposite said that it was not right and called Carmen fancy names and slagged her up hill and down dale. Then there was a change in government. The incoming federal Minister said that the coalition took \$167m out of the system. It was not Carmen's fault. It was a Liberal Minister who said that, but what happened? Did the coalition put the money back? No, it did not, unless it went to the Bunbury Regional Hospital or somewhere else.

One of the funny things about federal-state funding is that the debate has been going on for years. When the Labor Party was in Government I had to listen to members of the then Opposition bleat about the Federal Labor Government and how it tied grants. Members opposite would not accept that the State was getting tied grants and they argued within their party room and publicly that the grants should be untied and that the State should be allowed to do with them what it liked.

There is a great parallel between Australia and the United States of America because of the change to Congress. Some members watched with great interest the activities of young Newt Gingrich when he was among the born again Republicans. He was elected on the platform of untying grants to States. He said that if money was given to the States they could do with it as they liked and could improve services. It is the same rhetoric which the morons opposite come out with; that is, that the States are better at doing things than anybody else.

Withdrawal of Remark

Mr COWAN: That remark should be withdrawn because it is unparliamentary.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Ainsworth): Irrespective of whether it is factual, I consider it is unparliamentary and I ask the member to withdraw it.

Mr GRAHAM: I withdraw.

Debate Resumed

Mr GRAHAM: The debate in the United States which was led by Newt Gingrich was identical to the debate in Australia. We have had the benefit of seeing what happened when Congress changed in the United States. Gingrich promoted the compact with America to improve services. He released, through Congress, large sums of money to the States. The net effect of that was the money disappeared, although not improperly or fraudulently. It went into the consolidated revenue accounts of the States and never came out. It was used for some legitimate purposes within state government, but it was money that could have been allocated for building hospitals, schools or roads. It went into consolidated revenue and was used for something of importance to the State but not the national objectives.

What is the evidence in Australia of a similar arrangement when the Federal Government started freeing up funds, which the previous Labor Government started to do and the current Liberal Government has started to do? It is identical. In which side one believes is purely academic, because the argument is largely rhetorical. However, the federal Ministers in almost all portfolios put money across on state agreements - and this is the Liberal Party and it does not believe in tied grants - but the money never falls out of the state system to do what it was meant to do. The Federal Government is then under pressure to do the original job, be that in hospitals with waiting lists, in the legal aid arena where money is made available through the state system, or by commonwealth-state housing agreements, or for dentists. Every federal Minister, both Liberal and Labor, has told the current State Governments that they are not doing what they were given the money for. That begs the question, why should the States be given the money? It did not work in America. It has not worked in Australia, and that is simply because the priorities of the two Governments may be different.

Yesterday when we were debating taxes I said that one thing that amuses me about the Liberal Party is that when they meet in little cliques and covens, with their white sheets on and with their burning crosses, they are the biggest states' righters one could ever see. They say that they want to be able to do what they want to do because they are Western Australians and they are fundamentally different from all other Australians. They are states' righters! However, when it comes to a major issue they do not have the guts to say that they are states' righters and that they will not do certain things because they belong to the Western Australian Liberal Party, and they want to do it differently. They say, "It is the fault of the sods in Canberra, and if only they supplied the money we could do anything." That is the consistent line of this Government, except at election time.

We all remember the "Fix Australia, Fix the Roads" campaign. However, we received not one cent as a result of our Canberra bashing. From memory, we went backwards \$60m - even though it was a great campaign. Currently, the legal aid argument is going on. The Attorney General is arguing for retention of funding to legal aid, but we have gone backwards. The Minister for Health went to Canberra, cap in hand, arguing that we were going down the plug hole in the health area, and that we needed the bucks - but we went backwards. It was the same argument with housing. In the four key policy areas where this Government has "pulled on the Federal Government" to be tough in the interests of the State we have gone backwards. It reminds me of the old joke about the Irish union official who said to the troops during award negotiations, "I have some good news and some bad news. The bad news is that I have managed to get you a pay cut, and the good news is that it has been backdated." That is how this Government performs in its negotiations with the Federal Government. The Ministers are a bunch of losers. Yet when we are asked to give bipartisan support to Ministers, as we were today, in pursuing the Federal Government - and we do it - they speak against it. Not only do they do that, they also criticise the member for Kalgoorlie who has made a perfectly valid point that every time the Ministers collectively or individually tried to lobby the Federal Government for an increase in funding, they received a cut. That is not effective lobbying. Not one member of the Liberal Party or the National Party was able to convince one senator to speak out for extra funding, let alone vote against the Budget.

The indications are from the speeches that the Government will not support the amendment to the Address-in-Reply, and that is sad, given that it predominantly relates to a health matter and the matter raised during question time for which the Minister asked for our support.

MR MARLBOROUGH (Peel) [11.05 pm]: My colleague has adequately covered the concerns on this side of the House about the attitude of the Government. It does not seem to matter that we have taken the opportunity to genuinely point out to the Government what its federal counterparts are up to. Although, as my colleague said, we continually hear Ministers bleating, nothing seems to change the attitude of the Howard-led Federal Government.

The tragedy is that many services are now under threat in Western Australia and that will haunt the State every day. I recall saying to the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party and the Leader of the National Party in a speech last December, when they were seeking funding for the industrial complex at Henderson, that the Liberal Party was beginning to realise that the worst thing that has ever happened to Western Australia was the introduction of a Howard Government, because it has no industrial policies. The Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party was faced with a second reading speech today relating to the Kingstream development, south of Geraldton -

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Armadale, that is the second time you have done that tonight. I am sure that you were not allowed to do that in the other House. If you were, I would be surprised. In this House it is very unparliamentary, and it is discourteous to the Chair to walk between the Chair and the member on his feet. I think you should apologise. You must go the long way around.

Ms MacTiernan: I understand.

Mr MARLBOROUGH: Mr Deputy Speaker, the problem faced by the Government is that the Johnny Howard Government contains a group of accountants who are simply looking at figures in a ledger. They have no understanding of the real needs of people or the role of the Government. The initial problem faced by the State Government prior to the state election was that it was seeking from the Federal Government some \$180m for infrastructure at the Henderson industrial complex alone, which was necessary to get the project off the ground. That funding could have ensured that our shipbuilding industry was able to compete on the world stage, with any future opportunities. The Government knows that prior to the demise of the Keating Government it was extremely close to success, and certainly had a clear understanding, as did the shipping industry, that the money would be provided in stages for the major Henderson upgrade.

The Howard Government had no industry policy, and that was the first sign that Canberra had no understanding of States' needs - the first of which was industrial because we require major infrastructure to compete on the world market. We are the leading State in the provision of overseas export dollars and opportunities for Australia in the minerals area. In the lead up to the coming federal Budget we see the other hidden agenda that the Federal Government has spent the past 12 months working on. It is slashing and burning to get the balance sheet right. It considers its major priority is to reduce overseas debt regardless of the social costs. The effects of that attitude on the needs of Australians are now coming through at the state level. This State Government is not capable of articulating an argument that is worth consideration in Canberra, as is evidenced by a number of statements made by Ministers in the last week of this sitting; not least of which being today's statement by the Minister for Health and statements by the Minister for Disability Services. There has been any amount of crying from the government members about the Federal Government's attitude to its responsibility to look after the needs of Australians.

I went on at some length today to indicate how this Government, not only because of federal cutbacks but also its attitude and lack of understanding of its role in government to protect the community, is allowing proceedings against Mr Anastasis Papas to be stayed, because the Attorney General of this State refuses to fund a legal aid system that would put before the courts a person who should be facing charges. That refusal will keep Mr Papas out of court. Although Mr Papas deliberately set out to defraud families of up to \$4m, he is presently sitting outside the legal system, and he is being aided and abetted by the budget strategy of both federal and state Liberal Governments. The evidence is irrefutable. It is before our eyes. Simply put, if either the Federal Government or the State Government handed money to that legal aid system, Mr Papas would be before the court. Members on this side of the House believe that would be the appropriate step to take.

As I said in an earlier speech, the Government, in search of the holy grail of balanced figures, has forgotten the real role of government. The Government should try to look after its citizens in their fight for justice, health and housing. In its first year and possibly its first term a Government can, to some degree, get away with the balanced figures argument. Increasingly, those of us who have been in this political arena long enough and anybody who has any of understanding of politics knows and understands that that position cannot be retained the longer one is in government. The Government will come under greater scrutiny not only in its management of the Budget dollars, but also its use of those dollars to effectively look after and protect the community. We are starting to see glaring evidence that that is not taking place. At a state level this Government has danced hand in hand with its federal counterpart because ideologically it is locked into the same scheme of things.

At a state level, where the Government has tried to play around with the Budget, it is determined to get rid - in the new language of the nineties - non-core services of government. The definition of non-core services is now so broad there is not a service within the Government that has traditionally been looked upon as a service that should be provided by government that is not under threat of privatisation. That includes health care, public transport, education and housing. It is all under threat of being handed over to what we are led to believe is the more efficient private sector. One has only to pick up the business pages of *The West Australian* on any day of the week to get some understanding of how good is the private sector.

There is no rule that says the private sector can manage any better than government. It is an absolute fallacy. There may be some short term gains in balancing the Budget, but what is the social cost attached to the short term gains? How long do the short term gains stay in place? How quickly does that private sector approach go sour on the community? What happened with the attempt to privatise the Mandurah Hospital, and what happened with the privatisation of transport?

The classic example of privatisation gone wrong is State Print. I will have some time later in this parliamentary session to explore in more detail the horrific position that the then Minister for Services put us in with the sale of State Print. State Print had been put up for tender and the then Minister had four or five companies locked into a tender process. He admitted in this House that while they were locked into that process in 1995 he brought Coventry Print, a subsidiary of the Coventry Group Ltd, through the backdoor of the process. He physically delivered it to State Print in Wembley. It was not one of the final five tenderers. At the end of process when the tenderers asked the Minister where they stood in the process, under questioning in this House the Minister told us untruths about that process. Where is Coventry Print now - that standard bearer of the private sector? The Premier might like to take his seat and provide me with an answer. We will have the opportunity next week to go into more detail on this issue.

Point of Order

Mr BARNETT: I know that in the Address-in-Reply we can have fairly wide ranging debates, but this amendment relates to Federal Government cutbacks; it has nothing to do with State Print. Mr Deputy Speaker, I suggest you draw that to the attention of the member for Peel.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I ask the member for Peel to address the amendment that is before the House. It is fair comment to say that the member is beginning to stray into other areas.

Debate Resumed

Mr MARLBOROUGH: The Leader of the House does not like to be reminded of how poorly the Government has managed the economy. I know it hurts, particularly when his private sector mates let him down. That is what they have done with State Print. This issue is locked into federal money. Part of the rationale that members on this side of the House and the public had to endure when the Government was in full flight wanting to privatise everything was that the Federal Government was making State Governments become more efficient. The rationale was that as a result of cutbacks in federal funding we needed greater efficiency. The State Government had the ability to choose how its facilities would be run and managed. The Government chose to hand State Print to the private sector, because that suited its philosophy. The Government believes the private sector is better. I suggest that the Coventry Print episode will show that the Government is wrong.

That system was used to accommodate the Minister's industry mates, and it has now backfired because they are out of the printing industry. They sold the business under a month ago. This information was hidden away on the business pages of *The West Australian*. The Minister put up a deal which was supported by the Leader of the House and others. He told us that it was a great deal and how the State would benefit from the private sector getting hold of State Print. That mental attitude drives the psyche of this State Government and it cannot articulate a cohesive argument to overthrow the thinking of its federal colleagues because it believes in the same rhetoric. Earlier today the member for Albany stood in this House and mouthed platitudes. He asked those on this side of the House to assist him to claw back the money from Canberra. We know they are only platitudes. There is nothing in what he says. There is no real ability or will on the part of the Minister for Health to do anything about the matter, because he knows he cannot. Basically he agrees with that philosophy.

Ordinary Western Australians will suffer because of that. As members on this side indicated earlier, 40 000 people, most of whom are in the same age bracket as our mothers and fathers and our grandparents or are younger people in the welfare system, will not receive assistance under the dental care program. These people are the most in need. The least that could be said about the dental system was that it targeted the right area. We could not argue about the system having excess fat that needed to be cut. It did not. It was working very efficiently. The Minister for Health is indicating that that is correct. However, we have just had a philosophical push by a Government that says, "We do not care that it is targeted properly; we do not care that, by that definition, the money is well spent in the right area, supporting the community for which as a Government we are responsible; we do not care about that; we are cutting it; it has gone."

I want to know why that is. On the basis that the Minister for Health has indicated by his body language that the money to the dental program was targeted accurately and that there was no fat in the system and it was meant for, aimed at and provided services for those most needy, I want to hear an argument from this Government about why the Federal Government is cutting the funding from the program and the State Government is not willing to do anything about it. There is no sensible argument, unless the Government is locked into a philosophical approach about how the world should run. Of course, that is what those opposite are locked into - the survival of the fittest. We see it right across the board. It affects disability services; housing for people who do not have sufficient income to survive in the marketplace; educational requirements for the most needy - teachers and special aides in classrooms; and the health system. All of those special area needs are simply being pushed aside, and why? It is because those people are just numbers to the Government. In many areas they traditionally are not effective political lobby numbers

on their own. These people have too many problems on their plate just trying to get through their daily lives without having to concentrate on the larger game of playing politics, irrespective of whether it is federal or state.

However, these people normally rely on a democratic system. Its strength is the difference between a democratic system and any other system of government. These people rely on the fact that when they elect a Government, it will carry out its promises, particularly when a Government says that it is here to look after every Western Australian. Those people actually believe that. When it comes from the leader of the party which they are about to elect to government, they reckon they should believe it, that they should give that party a go. The Premier may feel some satisfaction that he is now getting a second term. He knows, more than most, having spent 10 years in opposition, that the Government's second term will be the real test. The Government has gone through its honeymoon period, when it can blame this side of the House for money matters arising out of WA Inc. That has become very much yesterday's argument.

Mr Court: The third term in opposition gets really bad.

Mr MARLBOROUGH: Absolutely. As the Premier has indicated, he knows in the second term people start to look at just what the Government is delivering. They start looking beyond the rhetoric, at what the Government is genuinely doing to help this society, to improve the community. It is not all about finding \$400m to underpin a steel mill south of Geraldton if at the same time the most needy people in the community are missing out. The Government will soon understand that that is not the way society should be run, that there is no benefit in putting \$400m into that enterprise if no direct benefit will flow to the community, to the areas of most need. If this Government is only about acquiring money for the greedy, rather than the needy, it will be found out during its second term. That is what is coming home to roost now. That is why the Premier is concerned about the coming Premiers' Conference. He knows the Federal Government, with which he is dealing, has the same ideology as he does. If a program does not add up to figures in the black on one side of the ledger, it must be cut, regardless of the social cost.

MS McHALE (Thornlie) [11.26 pm]: I heard members opposite ask my parliamentary colleague whether he knew what he was speaking about on this amendment. I observed people coming and going. I remind government members of the words in this amendment because I am at a loss to understand why it has any doubt or reservation in supporting it. Why is the Government unable to see its way clear to support this amendment? After all, as it has told us, it is the Government of the family. Were this amendment to be passed, it would strengthen the position of families on low incomes. It is after all the Government that is conscious of the importance of the family unit as an essential component of society, which must be encouraged and protected.

This amendment protects and encourages the family unit as an essential component of our society. If the cutbacks have not been made already, they are very likely to be made by the Federal Government, and they will affect the family unit - those families that are struggling on low incomes, that will find it very difficult to maintain dental care for their children, that are currently struggling to ensure they have quality public housing. In my electorate the suburb of Langford has a disproportionately high Homeswest housing area that at this stage requires significant maintenance. We do not yet know what the cuts will be to public housing, but it does not take a Rhodes Scholar or an Einstein to work out they will be in areas that significantly affect families.

Tomorrow's newspaper indicates that the Government's Budget on 10 April is likely to be the toughest Budget so far; yet the Government is unwilling to support the Opposition's amendment. The majority of sentiments expressed by members opposite have indicated support for our amendment. However, surprisingly they cannot bring themselves to take a bipartisan approach to those sentiments. I ask members opposite to think carefully about this amendment and what the federal budget cuts will mean to our families and to those on limited incomes.

Mr Barnett: We have heard them for the past four hours.

Ms McHALE: I have been speaking for only four minutes.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result -

Ayes (16)

Ms Anwyl
Mr Brown
Dr Constable
Dr Edwards
Mr Graham
Mr Grill

Ms MacTiernan
Mr Marlborough
Mr McGinty
Mr McGowan
Ms McHale

Mr Riebeling
Mr Ripper
Mr Thomas
Ms Warnock
Mr Cunningham (*Teller*)

Noes (26)

Mr Ainsworth	Mrs Holmes	Mr Prince
Mr Barnett	Mr House	Mr Shave
Mr Board	Mr MacLean	Mr Sullivan
Mr Court	Mr Masters	Mr Sweetman
Mr Cowan	Mr McNee	Mr Trenorden
Mr Day	Mr Minson	Dr Turnbull
Mrs Edwardes	Mr Omodei	Mrs van de Klashorst
Dr Hames	Mr Osborne	Mr Bloffwitch (<i>Teller</i>)
Mrs Hodson-Thomas	Mrs Parker	

Pairs

Mr Kobelke	Mr Bradshaw
Ms Roberts	Mr Marshall
Dr Gallop	Mr Nichollss

Amendment thus negatived

Debate (on motion, as amended) Resumed

MR RIEBELING (Burrup) [11.34 pm]: I convey my congratulations to the Speaker on his election to this place. I was somewhat disappointed that he decided to wear the wig for half the time he appears in this Chamber. I hoped he would take a more active role in reforming some of the traditions in this place.

I hope that the Government will provide resources to carry out some of the reforms urgently needed in this place and which were canvassed relatively extensively today. I reiterate the comments of previous speakers about the appalling lack of airconditioning in this place - about which the Speaker is aware; the substandard accommodation for members, the lack of access to computers by members in this place and the cramped office conditions exemplified by the fact that two other members of Parliament share a room with me.

In addition to congratulating all the new members in this House - I am sure all the new members will enjoy their four years in Parliament - I congratulate Eric Ripper, Ted Cunningham and Michelle Roberts on the anniversary of the by-elections which brought them into this place. It is pleasing to acknowledge those anniversaries.

Mr Barnett: It is a miracle they are still here.

Mr RIEBELING: My fifth anniversary is in a couple of weeks. As well as welcoming the new members to this place - over the past two weeks they will have observed how we operate - I refer to David Smith, the previous member for Mitchell, who left after serving in this Parliament admirably for many years. It was sad to see him leave Parliament.

Mr Trenorden: We will miss his midnight debates.

Mr RIEBELING: We will miss his ability to debate almost any clause of any Bill that he was handed. He could speak in a way that made sense. His contribution to this place will be remembered very fondly. Judyth Watson has also left us after being defeated in her seat. She was a Minister in the State Labor Government and contributed a great deal to this place. Yvonne Henderson decided not to contest the last state election. She will be sadly missed and I am sure her replacement will work hard to fill her shoes. Nick Catania, whom I class as one of my friends and who was defeated in the last election contributed to the party for many years. It is sad when people to whom we are close in this place depart. Mike Barnett, the previous member for Rockingham, who filled the role of Speaker for many years, decided not to contest the last election. His contribution over 20 years is a record that few will match.

Kevin Leahy was probably my closest associate in this place. I have known Kevin for the past 26 years, inside and outside the Parliament. Our careers ran parallel to each other in the court system. It is difficult to operate in this place when the people one has been associated with for the past five years are not here. No doubt they will read *Hansard* at bedtime. I hope they appreciate that we have not forgotten them. No doubt we will catch up with them again.

Kay Hallahan is also a dear friend of mine. She was a Minister for a number of years. She is a special person, especially in the Labor Party. She moved from the upper House to this place and won the seat of Armadale for the Labor Party under difficult conditions. She contributed greatly to the Labor Party's activities in government. She will be sadly missed, especially in the Labor Party - perhaps not so on the government side.

As most members have mentioned, elections are difficult to contest. It is particularly difficult to contest elections in country areas because the population is spread over a vast area. I do not know who came up with the word Burrup, the new name of my electorate.

Mr Board: It is named after an early English settler.

Mr RIEBELING: I know where the Burrup Peninsular is. It is an important part of Western Australia. However, whether the name of my seat should come from that small part of my electorate is another matter. Many people in my area believe that when they say they are from Burrup, it sounds as though they come from cane toad county. It is an unusual name. I think Ashburton was a more appropriate name. Apparently there is a seat of Ashburton in New Zealand. The plaque at the entrance of this place indicates the original seat of Ashburton. However, that is a thing of the past, and it is now the seat of Burrup. The seat now includes Tom Price and Paraburdoo, as well as the towns in the former seat of Ashburton, minus Onslow, which is in the new seat of Ningaloo.

Without the assistance of a large number of people it would be impossible to run a campaign successfully over such a vast area. I will make special mention of a number of people in recognition of the outstanding work they have done. I was fortunate in the six months prior to the election that a fellow by the name of Peter Porteous arrived in Karratha. He took over control as manager of the campaign. He put in a superhuman effort to ensure that the Labor Party retained the seat. Peter was willing to spend his own time and effort fixing whatever problems arose. Another fellow, Mick Clark, is a recent arrival in town and he also has greatly assisted the labour movement in my area.

A couple of groups of people are fantastic supporters of the Labor Party and of me; namely, the wharfies and seamen who assisted in the campaign. Nothing was too much trouble for those two groups of chaps, especially brothers Alan and Doug Rowe. They organised whatever was necessary to ensure that polling booths were manned and material was distributed.

Andrew and Julie Pheasant assisted greatly in the Karratha area. John Power organised the Wickham booth. I thank also Kevin and Bev Richards. Kevin is the Shire President of Roebourne and he and his wife are good friends of mine. Irene and Laurie McCarthy are also good friends of mine. They are about to leave town and head to Mandurah. I wish them all the best there. Whoever is organising the Mandurah campaign should look that pair up, because they are outstanding people and outstanding workers.

Mr Osborne: He would be wasting his time.

Mr RIEBELING: I do not think so. I thank Ross and Cheryl May, who were also in the Karratha area. Terry Nichols and his wife run the booth in Pannawonica for the Labor Party every year. They work in very trying conditions. They never complain and they are always available. Trevor Taylor worked in Roebourne.

One of the difficulties in the north is that elections are usually in February, which happens to be the hottest month of the year and conditions are very unpleasant. This year the Premier did the right thing and held the election in December. December was very hot this year and February was cool! The Premier got the equation right, but nature was not kind to us.

During the election campaign I received great assistance from the Assistant Secretary of the Labor Party, Lois Anderson, and overriding supervision of the campaign by Peter McKerrow, whose efforts were staggeringly good. Without his support the campaign would have been difficult to run.

During the election campaign both conservative parties ran against me and made a number of promises. Those promises had an impact on the election result. It is imperative that those promises of the Liberal and National Parties be honoured. I will run through those promises. The first I followed up was a promise by both the Liberal and National Party candidates that as soon as either of those people were elected, a government doctor would be placed at the Nickol Bay Hospital. That issue is important for the Karratha-Dampier area because four doctors have just left and the area has an acute shortage of doctors. The promise did not refer to some time during the next six months and people expected it to be honoured straight away. As soon as the election was over, I contacted the Minister for Health's office to see what plans were afoot to place a doctor in the hospital. To my disappointment and amazement - we all heard the Premier state that all promises were fully funded - the Minister's office advised me that it knew nothing about the promise. People in the Liberal and National Parties may say as some cute way of getting out of the promise that it is not part of the core promises, but the fact remains that a large number of people changed their votes away from the Labor Party as a result of that specific promise.

Mr Prince: Do you want the doctors' names - the ones to replace the four?

Mr RIEBELING: How many? The Minister is aware that three doctors are coming in May, but that is one short of the four. The commitment made was that a doctor would be placed at the Nickol Bay Hospital.

Dr Hames: Did you say in your earlier comments that the promise was that if the candidates won, they would have a doctor there?

Mr RIEBELING: I hate to tell the Minister this, but his side won.

Dr Hames: Are you not talking about your electorate?

Mr RIEBELING: I refer to people speaking on behalf of the Government.

Mr Bloffwitch: It was saying, "Give us a member here and this is what he will do."

Mr RIEBELING: That was not exactly explained. If that is the case, I am more than happy to tell people that this Government cares only about areas for which its members hold the seats. Is that what members opposite are saying?

Mr Prince: With the small majority you've got, I assure you we care!

Mr RIEBELING: The Minister should place a doctor in the hospital as his candidate promised. If he does, I will be the first to congratulate him.

The biggest promise of all was made by both coalition candidates in my electorate and was guaranteed by the Minister for Transport, who, supporting the National Party candidate, guaranteed on radio that a sealed road would run between Karratha and Tom Price within two years. The last time I spoke to the Ministry of Transport about that little promise, I was told that the project was worth \$170m. I am keen to find out whether that promise is funded, as the Minister for Transport said was the case. Is that another one of the promises that applied only if the seat fell to the National or Liberal Party?

Mr Trenorden: Did you not make the same promise?

Mr RIEBELING: Absolutely.

Mr Trenorden: But you have not been able to fulfil it.

Mr RIEBELING: Members opposite are in government - they keep missing that point - and they made the promise that the road would be constructed; a cast iron guarantee was provided by the Minister on radio.

Dr Hames: Are you telling us it will not be done?

Mr RIEBELING: I am asking whether it will be done.

Dr Hames: Why ask us? Ask the Minister.

Mr RIEBELING: The Premier is here and he is the man who said during the campaign that all promises were funded. I am very interested to discover whether that will turn out to be a funded promise during the next two years. I spoke to the department regarding that road about two months prior to the election, and it was not on its books as a priority within the next five years. It may be that the Premier, or the Minister for Transport, has adjusted the priorities and it might be built in the next two years. Bring it on - build the road; it is the biggest issue in Tom Price by a country mile, as I identified four months out from the election.

Mr Trenorden: It is not the biggest issue by a country mile; the health issue was a big issue up there.

Mr RIEBELING: The member might have missed what I said earlier.

Mr Trenorden: I doorknocked that area as well -

Mr RIEBELING: The member did not doorknock the whole area. He must have had an incredibly quick trip through Tom Price and Paraburdoo if he did! He gives the impression that he covered all of the area, but how many people did he doorknock? Was it more than can be counted on one hand?

Mr Trenorden: I did not count them all; it was more than 200 or 300. You will have to take your shoes off.

Mr RIEBELING: I doorknocked both towns, and the big issue by far was the road, followed by food costs which relate to the road access. Health was an issue. The health issues in Tom Price were not similar to the problem experienced at Karratha. The people are concerned about the health of their only doctor. She does a magnificent job in Tom Price but they fear she will burn out, which probably will occur unless the Health Department encourages more doctors to move there.

Mr Day: Are you happy with the new police station at Roebourne?

Mr RIEBELING: It is a reconstruction of the old station.

Dr Hames: Would you prefer the old one?

Mr RIEBELING: No. It is interesting that the Minister for Police raised that issue.

Mr Day: The reconstruction, then.

Mr RIEBELING: It was reconstructed to the shape and dimension of the original police station which was pulled down and rebuilt in the 1960s. It is a worthwhile project. The rebuilding of the quarters is probably more important than the police station itself.

Dr Hames: Did your vote go up or down in the towns you doorknocked?

Mr RIEBELING: Some of the results were not positive. The vote increased in Roebourne and I will not mention the other ones; however, at the end of the day, I won the seat.

Mr Trenorden: It was a long day though, wasn't it?

Mr RIEBELING: It was. It is interesting to see that the conservatives in this place and in my area are the happiest losers I have ever seen. They say, "We only got thrashed by 310 votes." Huge sums of money were spent trying to knock me off which they will not have next time, so I will still be here in four years.

Mr Barnett: But they have a whiff of success now in Burrup.

Mr RIEBELING: The good thing about representing a marginal seat is that we will obtain these projects if members opposite want to win the seat. Nothing is wrong with having a marginal seat as it guarantees that resources will be directed to the electorate. That is fine.

Several members interjected.

Mr RIEBELING: The member for Bunbury should not talk to me about pork-barrelling, as Bunbury is the most pork barrelled seat on earth.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! If fewer interjections were made on my right, the member may finish his speech a little sooner.

Mr RIEBELING: It will take about half an hour.

The Minister for Fisheries came up to my electorate during the campaign, and I am pleased that he will visit this Saturday to honour part of a commitment made prior to the election to examine problems created by the expansion of the pearling industry which created clashes of usage between the pearling industry and amateur fishermen. I am somewhat disappointed, as are the amateur fishermen, that the Minister has not taken the opportunity to take a tour organised by the amateur fishermen. They believe it is important that the Minister hear the views of the amateur fishermen without the industry representatives present during the tour, but apparently that will not happen. I hope the Minister reconsiders the structure of the tour.

The Governor's speech was interesting. It had a hint of *deja vu*. A number of the projects mentioned as being likely to go ahead are in my electorate. Although it is now in the electorate of Ningaloo, I still consider Onslow part of my electorate because I love the place. It was pleasing to hear the Onslow salt project mentioned. I understand that for the first time in at least five years of promises the project will be commenced following the commitment of about \$60m. That will be a huge benefit for Onslow in that it will generate between 60 and 80 jobs for the local community. That probably does not sound much to those living in Wanneroo, but the people of Onslow have been waiting for that news for at least five years.

Mr Sweetman: They were waiting for a Liberal member.

Mr RIEBELING: The member for Ningaloo is very quick. My constituents have been hearing about these projects for the past four years; they have seen dozens of press releases. Although I hope that all of these projects proceed, the AUSI steel project is the most likely to go ahead.

The problem in my electorate is that four years ago, after the hype from the Court Government about the boom that would hit the area, many small businesses geared up and spent a lot of money preparing for these projects. At the end of the day, other than the expansion of offshore activity associated with the oil and gas industry, none of those projects has commenced. That oil and gas expansion will generate projects through Woodside and the joint venturers, and I am sure that it will lead to a petrochemical operation after the establishment of the super train system, or whatever system is chosen. By the year 2000, or close to that date, the super trains will be in operation. As I understand it, the methanol plant and the petrochemical plant will then follow.

Mr Barnett: The petrochemical project is not dependent on the LNG expansion because LNG will not be used to supply the ethane.

Mr RIEBELING: But the methanol plant will be used as feed stock.

Mr Barnett: No, they are separate; the methanol plant will stand alone.

Mr RIEBELING: The problem I have with the Minister's announcement a week ago is that people seem to think that by the year 2000 we will have a petrochemical plant. I do not think that is the case, but I hope I am incorrect.

Once again, expectations have been built up in my electorate. I hope that in the next year or so the Government will start giving us realistic predictions of when projects are likely to commence in the area so that small businesses, which are vital to any area, can plan with some certainty. At the moment, every couple of weeks we hear supposedly new announcements about the same projects. It is time to reduce hype and give us the real dates.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Ripper.

House adjourned at 12.05 am (Thursday)

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

COMO FORESHORE RESERVE - UPGRADING

3. Mr PENDAL to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) In reference to the foreshore reserve in Como, opposite the Broadwater Resort, I received written advice from the Swan River Trust on 31 May 1996 that the Main Roads Department was currently undertaking the completion of shoreline protection and reserve replanting in that area, and ask what progress has been made on the proposed upgrading work?
- (2) When is the upgrading of the foreshore reserve due for completion?

Mr OMODEI replied:

The Minister for Transport has provided the following response -

- (1) The installation of limestone and timber protection walls has been completed. Optimum growth of wetland vegetation is dependent upon planting occurring in the best climatic seasons. The planting of the first species is due in May 1997, followed by subsequent planting of other species in October 1997.
- (2) The planting and maintenance of the trees, rushes and grasses in the foreshore area is programmed over a three year period commencing in May 1997.

MINISTER FOR FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES - PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITIES

31. Dr CONSTABLE to the Minister for Family and Children's Services; Seniors; Women's Interests:

What is the name of each committee, board, tribunal and all other similar bodies within the Minister's portfolios?

Mrs PARKER replied:

Women's Interests -

The Women's Advisory Council of Western Australia
Family and Domestic Violence Implementation Advisory Committee
Centenary of Women's Suffrage Committee.

Seniors -

Seniors Ministerial Advisory Committee.

Family and Children's Services -

Adoption Application Committee
Adoptions Legislative Review Committee
Adoptions Private Agency Licensing Committee
Child Care Services Board
Case Review Board
Family and Children's Advisory Council
Out of Home, Preventative and Alternative Care Planning and Coordination Committee
Supported Accommodation Assistance Program State Advisory Committee
Western Australian Taskforce on Poverty.

GOVERNMENT PROPERTY - SALE

53. Dr CONSTABLE to the Minister for Family and Children's Services; Seniors; Women's Interests:

- (1) In relation to all real estate (land and buildings) sold within the Minister's portfolios in the 1995-96 and 1996-97 financial years -
 - (a) where was the real estate situated (giving the actual address of the land and building);
 - (b) for what amount was the real estate sold;
 - (c) when, if ever, was the most recent valuation of the real estate conducted; and
 - (d) what was the value of the real estate according to the valuation?

(2) What real estate within the Minister's portfolios is currently for sale or in the process of being sold?

Mrs PARKER replied:

- (1) (a) 1995-96
- (i) Lot 687 Waxham Place, North Beach.
 - (ii) Swan Location 8182 corner Western Avenue and Villiers Street, Yokine.
- 1996-97
- (iii) 180 Lawley Street, Yokine.
 - (iv) 6 Beach Street, Cottesloe.
 - (v) 34 Constance Street, Yokine.
- (b)
- (i) \$201 000
 - (ii) \$173 000
 - (iii) \$220 000
 - (iv) \$675 000
 - (v) \$97 500
- (c)
- (i) 27 November 1995
 - (ii) 28 November 1995
 - (iii) 27 November 1995
 - (iv) 9 February 1996
 - (v) 21 November 1996
- (d)
- (i) \$175 000
 - (ii) \$170 000
 - (iii) \$220 000
 - (iv) \$675 000
 - (v) \$95 000
- (2) 447 Canning Highway, Melville.
39 Lawley Crescent, Mt Lawley.

GOVERNMENT PROPERTY - SALE

60. Dr CONSTABLE to the Minister representing the Minister for Finance:

- (1) In relation to all real estate (land and buildings) sold within the Minister's portfolio in the 1995-96 and 1996-97 financial years -
- (a) where was the real estate situated (giving the actual address of the land and building);
 - (b) for what amount was the real estate sold;
 - (c) when, if ever, was the most recent valuation of the real estate conducted; and
 - (d) what was the value of the real estate according to the valuation?

(2) What real estate within the Minister's portfolio is currently for sale or in the process of being sold?

Mr COURT replied:

The Minister for Finance has provided the following response -

- (1) (a) 16 Fargo Way, Welshpool
Westralia Square, 30 Mounts Bay Road, Perth
to SGIC who owned 70 per cent equity and desired, for more efficient and effective management, to own 100 per cent.
- (b) 16 Fargo Way, sold for \$965 000 on 12 April 1996
Westralia Square sold for \$33m on 29 December 1996
- (c) 16 Fargo Way - November 1995
Westralia Square - 30 September 1995
- (d) 16 Fargo Way - \$950 000 and \$800 000
Westralia Square - \$32.4m
- (2) Nil.

CRIME - PROCEEDS

71. Dr CONSTABLE to the Minister representing the Attorney General:

- (1) In each of the last five years in Western Australia -
 - (a) what was the estimated value of proceeds of crime earmarked for recovery;
 - (b) what was the total amount actually recovered from convicted criminals as proceeds of crime; and
 - (c) what was the total cost involved in recovering and attempting to recover the amounts in (a) and (b) above?
- (2) What is the estimated annual value of the Western Australian criminal economy?
- (3) Who or what body is responsible for recovering assets under proceeds of crime legislation?
- (4) Into what fund are proceeds of crime deposited?
- (5) What, if any, limitations or conditions apply to the use of proceeds of crime?

Mr PRINCE replied:

- (1)
 - (a) Not known.
 - (b) Since the formation of the Director of Public Prosecutions in 1992, the following sums have been paid to the State's Consolidated Revenue Fund -

1992-93	\$187 611
1993-94	\$168 004
1994-95	\$427 317
1995-96	\$209 905
1996-97	\$257 000 to 28 February 1997.
 - (c) Not known.
- (2) Not known.
- (3) Applications for confiscation orders are made by the DPP and, in certain cases, by the Police Service. Pursuant to section 16 of the Director of Public Prosecutions Act 1991, it is a function of the DPP to administer any scheme directed to the recovery or forfeiture of proceeds of, or benefits arising from, crime.
- (4) The Consolidated Revenue Fund.
- (5) Once paid into the Consolidated Revenue Fund, the proceeds of crime become part of the State's overall revenue collection.

TRAFFIC - NARROWS BRIDGE

Government Strategies

77. Mr PENDAL to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Does the Minister acknowledge that traffic travelling on the Narrows Bridge may become a chronic problem for the city within a decade?
- (2) If yes to (1) above, what strategies does the Government have to deal with the problem?
- (3) Is a tunnel joining Perth City and the Kwinana Freeway considered to be an option?

Mr OMODEI replied:

The Minister for Transport has provided the following response -

- (1)-(3) An overall improvement study for the Freeway System, including the Narrows Bridge, is currently in progress and I will make the results available when it has been finalised and assessed.

The Metropolitan Transport Strategy 1995-2029 outlines measures to minimise the growth in the number of vehicles using the Narrows Bridge by encouraging the use of public transport, increased vehicle occupancy and alternative forms of transport such as cycling and walking. Traffic flow on the Freeway in the vicinity of the bridge will be facilitated by the introduction of Intelligent Transport Systems, which

provide timely information to motorists on freeway conditions. This system is being installed now and will enable traffic operations to be monitored remotely and allow quick responses to incidents on the freeway.

TRANSPORT - BUSES

Private Operation

99. Mr GRILL to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) What are the names of the current private operators of the public bus service in the Perth metropolitan area?
- (2) In the case of each operator, how many buses are leased from the Government and how many buses are supplied by the operating company?
- (3) In the case of all operations, what provision is made for depreciation of funds for the buses?

Mr OMODEI replied:

The Minister for Transport has provided the following response -

- (1) The names of the current private operators of the public bus service in the Perth metropolitan area are Swan Transit Pty Ltd, PATH Transit Pty Ltd and Transport Management Group Pty Ltd trading as Southern Coast Transit.
- (2) The numbers of buses leased from the Government by the private operators Swan Transit Pty Ltd, PATH Transit Pty Ltd and Transport Management Group Pty Ltd trading as Southern Coast Transit are 160, 191 and 57 respectively. Swan Transit Pty Ltd operates one company-owned bus to Ellenbrook on charter.
- (3) The Department of Transport, as the fleet owner, depreciates those assets in accord with standard accounting practice and this is reflected in their accounts.

HOMOSEXUALITY - AGE OF CONSENT

National Uniform Laws - Criminal Codes

104. Ms WARNOCK to the Minister representing the Attorney General:

- (1) Does the Attorney General support moves by the States and Territories to ensure that criminal codes across the nation become uniform?
- (2) If yes to (1) above, why does the Attorney General support s. 322A of the Criminal Code Act Compilation Act 1913 relating to age of consent laws that are inconsistent with all other States and Territories?

Mr PRINCE replied:

The Attorney General has provided the following response -

- (1) No. Nor do certain other States.
- (2) Not applicable.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY ACT - DISCRIMINATION

Grounds

108. Ms WARNOCK to the Minister representing the Attorney General:

- (1) Does the Attorney General support those sections of the Equal Opportunity Act 1984, that uphold political affiliation and religious belief to be grounds for unlawful discrimination?
- (2) If no to (1) above, what action will the Attorney General take to repeal these sections of the Act?
- (3) Why did the Attorney General state that amending the Act to include sexuality as a ground for unlawful discrimination would force upon a person beliefs held by others?

Mr PRINCE replied:

The Attorney General has provided the following reply -

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Not applicable.

- (3) I suggest the member ask questions rather than attempt to engage in argument.

HOMOSEXUALITY - DISCRIMINATION

Civil Rights

110. Ms WARNOCK to the Minister representing the Attorney General:

- (1) Is the right for citizens to discriminate against homosexual people greater than the right of homosexual citizens to be protected from such discrimination?
- (2) If yes, why?

Mr PRINCE replied:

The Attorney General has provided the following reply -

- (1) This is a decision for Parliament.
- (2) Not applicable.

PRISONS - STAFF

Cross-cultural Training Courses

126. Ms WARNOCK to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Justice:

- (1) How many cross-cultural training courses aimed specifically at staff dealing with migrants and people with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds were there within the Western Australian prison system in -
- (a) 1993;
(b) 1994;
(c) 1995; and
(d) 1996?
- (2) How many are planned for 1997?

Mrs van de KLASHORST replied:

The Minister for Justice has provided the following answer -

- (1) In view of the composition of the prisoner population, cross-cultural training courses focus primarily on Aboriginal issues. The following Aboriginal Cross Cultural Awareness Training Programs were delivered primarily for prison staff -
- | | | |
|-----|------|-----------------------------------|
| (a) | 1993 | 60 x 2 days |
| (b) | 1994 | 7 x 2 days + 1 follow-up course |
| (c) | 1995 | 11 x 2 days + 6 follow-up courses |
| (d) | 1996 | 9 x 2 days + 1 follow-up course |
- (2) February to June 1997
- 32 x 2 day courses
10 x 1 follow-up courses.

HEALTH - PSYCHIATRIC SERVICES

Migrants - Review

128. Ms WARNOCK to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Has there been a review of psychiatric services which are aimed at meeting the specific needs of culturally and linguistically diverse background migrants since the closure of the Multicultural Psychiatric Services in 1993?
- (2) If a review has been conducted, when was this review undertaken and completed?
- (3) Which ethnic organisations were consulted during the review process?
- (4) What were the recommendations or outcome of this review?

- (5) If no review has taken place, will the Minister ensure that a review takes place immediately?
- (6) Will the Minister ensure that a wide consultation of interested community groups/organisations takes place?
- (7) When the review is completed, will the Minister release it for public comment?

Mr PRINCE replied:

- (1) Yes. [See paper No 297.]
- (2) A Multicultural Mental Health Steering Committee was established by the Minister for Health in June 1994 to make recommendations in relation to -

The development of a departmental policy for the provision of mental health services to ethnic communities;
The development of strategies to address deficiencies in multicultural mental health services.

The review was finished in September 1995 and the report was entitled "Multicultural Mental Health Care in Western Australia - Policy and Strategy Recommendations".
- (3) Multicultural Social Services Council
Office of Multicultural Interests
Ethnic Communities Council of WA
- (4) The recommendations have been incorporated into the State Mental Health Plan. The strategic directions and recommendations from the plan are attached. The new mental health division will soon be establishing a multicultural advisory group to advise on policy and assist in implementation of the plan.
- (5) Not applicable.
- (6) The mental health division will pursue wide community consultation in all areas of mental health policy.
- (7) The advisory group will be a standing group and its deliberations and the results of its advice will be made public.

TRAFFIC - SOUTH PERTH

130. Mr PENDAL to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) I refer to past representations over safety issues and traffic volumes at the Canning Highway and South Terrace intersection in South Perth, and ask whether the Minister and the department are aware that Perth-bound motorists intending to turn right into South Terrace find this both difficult and dangerous because of the volume of oncoming Fremantle-bound traffic on the highway?
- (2) Are the Minister and the department aware that many motorists are now circumventing this process by turning right from the highway into Hobbs Avenue and causing vastly increased traffic volumes to move down this quiet suburban street?
- (3) Is the Minister aware that the Collier Primary School is located in Birdwood Avenue and that increasing dangers are being caused to schoolchildren, local residents and business-houses alike?
- (4) Will the Minister undertake to institute a traffic count in the area as a prelude to initiating safer methods of turning at South Terrace?
- (5) If no to (4) above, why not?

Mr OMODEI replied:

The Minister for Transport has provided the following reply -

- (1) The difficulty of turning right at signalised intersections along Canning Highway in South Perth is acknowledged. Main Roads is looking at options to relieve this situation.
- (2) There are always motorists who will seek what they see as a more convenient route.
- (3) The member will be aware of this Government's road safety initiative of 40kmh school zones to be established at all schools in the State with primary schools given a high priority. School zones are planned for installation at Collier Primary School in April.
- (4)-(5) Traffic volumes and movements will be taken into account when the traffic management options are being developed.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN BUSINESSES - FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

138. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Commerce and Trade:

- (1) Did the Minister issue a media statement on 18 December 1996, advising that nearly 200 Western Australian businesses were helped to promote their products and services internationally in the first half of 1996?
- (2) What was the level of financial support provided to each business for airfares, exhibition and other costs?

Mr COWAN replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) See paper No 298.

SHIRE OF SWAN - LOCKRIDGE COMMUNITY CENTRE

154. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Family and Children's Services:

- (1) Has the Minister received a number of letters from Lockridge residents concerning a new community centre being provided for the area?
- (2) Is the Minister prepared to give consideration to capital funding being made available in the forthcoming Budget for the construction of a community centre?
- (3) Will the Government enter into discussions with the Shire of Swan and/or the Lotteries Commission about funding being provided for this purpose in addition to a State Government contribution?
- (4) If so, when?
- (5) If not, why not?

Mrs PARKER replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The 1997-98 allocation to the community centre building program is fully committed.
- (3) The local office of Family and Children's Services will provide support to the organisation in its discussions with the Lotteries Commission and the Shire of Swan.
- (4) As soon as possible.
- (5) Not applicable.

CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES - REGISTER

155. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Family and Children's Services:

- (1) How many names have been included on the Child Protection Services register?
- (2) Are the names recorded in separate categories?
- (3) If so, what categories?
- (4) How many names are recorded under each category?

Mrs PARKER replied:

- (1) 442.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) Physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect and persons who have been convicted of an offence against a child registered.
- (4)

Physical abuse	149
Emotional abuse	53
Sexual abuse	125
Neglect	110
Offence against a child	5
Total	442

CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES - INDEPENDENT STUDY

156. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Family and Children's Services:

(1) Does the Government intend to conduct an independent study into the "New Approach to Child Protection" implemented by the Department of Family and Children's Services?

(2) If so, when?

(3) If not, why not?

Mrs PARKER replied:

(1) The New Directions will be comprehensively evaluated. Decisions have yet to be finalised regarding the design and who will conduct the study.

(2) By December 1997.

(3) Not applicable.

PRISONS - WOOROLOO PRISON FARM

Superintendent Ted Farr

165. Mr BROWN to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Justice:

(1) What was the precise reason that former Wooroloo Prison Farm Superintendent, Ted Farr, was suspended from duty following the escape of prisoners from Wooroloo Prison Farm last year?

(2) Did the Ministry of Justice advise Mr Farr why he had been suspended?

(3) On what date was Mr Farr suspended?

(4) On what date did the ministry advise Mr Farr of the reason or reasons for his suspension?

(5) Why was the suspension lifted?

(6) Were any investigations carried out by the ministry prior to Mr Farr being suspended?

(7) What investigations were carried out?

(8) What did those investigations reveal?

(9) Were any investigations carried out after Mr Farr was suspended?

(10) Who carried out those investigations?

(11) What did the investigations reveal?

Mrs van de KLASHORST replied:

The Minister for Justice has provided the following response -

(1) Mr Farr was not suspended from duty. He was placed on special leave pending the outcome of negotiations relating to a transfer under section 65 of the Public Sector Management Act.

(2)-(11) Not applicable. See (1).

NORTHBRIDGE TUNNEL - SOIL CONTAMINATION

166. Mr BROWN to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

(1) Is the soil being (or already) removed to make way for the Northbridge tunnel contaminated in any way?

(2) Have any tests been carried out on the soil to determine if the soil is contaminated?

(3) What tests have been carried out?

(4) In what way is the soil contaminated?

(5) Where is the soil being removed from the Northbridge tunnel being dumped?

(6) What is the likely environmental effect on the area where the soil is being dumped?

Mr OMODEI replied:

The Minister for Transport has provided the following response -

- (1) Most of the soil is not contaminated but some contaminated soil has been removed.
- (2)-(4) Testing and removal of contaminated material is being carried out in accordance with a management plan agreed with the Department of Environmental Protection. Contaminants are predominantly remnants of lead and zinc from industry previously located in the area.
- (5) Contaminated soil is being removed to approved selected landfill sites under the management plan. Clean fill is removed to various development sites on a progressive basis. Some quantities of clean fill are stockpiled on site for later use on the project.
- (6) There is no detrimental environmental impact either at the source site or at the approved disposal sites.

PRISONS - PRIVATISATION

Consideration

187. Mr BROWN to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Justice:

- (1) Has the Government, Minister or Ministry of Justice given consideration to -
 - (a) establishing private prisons; and
 - (b) allocating work now performed by government employees in prisons to the private sector?
- (2) If so, exactly what changes are under consideration?

Mrs van de KLASHORST replied:

The Minister for Justice has provided the following answer -

- (1) (a)-(b) Yes.
- (2) Cabinet is yet to consider these issues and therefore no details are available at this time.

RAILWAYS - EAST PERTH TERMINAL

Sales Office - Privatisation

195. Mr BROWN to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Does the Government intend to privatise or contract out the work currently performed by the Westrail Sales Office at the East Perth terminal?
- (2) If so -
 - (a) why; and
 - (b) when?
- (3) What is the total cost of operating the office at present?
- (4) What is expected to be the total cost of operating the office if the work is -
 - (a) privatised; and
 - (b) contracted out?
- (5) How many employees are currently engaged in the office?
- (6) What is the total wages bill for the office?
- (7) What will be the expected total wages bill if the work performed is privatised or contracted out?
- (8) Will Westrail employees be offered a job with any contractor or private employer contracted to carry out the work of the office?
- (9) If not, why not?
- (10) Will Westrail employees be guaranteed an income, in terms of wages, employment and other conditions, equivalent to their current wages and employment conditions with any contractor or private employer that takes over the work of the office?

(11) If not, why not?

Mr OMODEI replied:

The Minister for Transport has provided the following response -

(1)-(2) I presume the member is referring to the booking/reservations office at the East Perth terminal and my answer is provided on that basis.

Westrail is currently looking at all the options available to improve efficiency and service at its booking/reservations office at East Perth. Outsourcing is an option under consideration; however, there is not any commitment at present to pursue that or any other option.

(3),(6) This is commercial information which I am not prepared to disclose, as to do so could jeopardise negotiations if it was decided to outsource the function of the booking/ reservations office in the future.

(4) (a)-(b) It would be speculative of me to endeavour to provide a response to these questions as it would require a knowledge of how a third party would intend to operate.

(5) Sixteen full time and 10 part time employees.

(7) It would be speculative of me to provide an answer to this question as it would require a knowledge of how a third party would intend to operate.

(8)-(9) This would be a matter for discussion with any prospective contractor.

(10)-(11)

I am unable to provide any guarantees with respect to the future employment of Westrail people with another employer. However, no employee will be forced to take up employment with any person or organisation awarded a contract with Westrail. Any Westrail employees displaced by the process of outsourcing services, who are unsuccessful in applying for vacancies existing within Westrail, will be treated in accordance with the Public Sector Management Act, which provides for redeployment within the public sector and the opportunity to participate in Westrail's voluntary severance scheme.

TRAFFIC - ACCIDENTS

Road Safety

204. Ms WARNOCK to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

(1) What proportion of road crash hospitalisations in Western Australia in -

- (a) 1995;
- (b) 1996,

were -

- (i) cyclists; and
- (ii) pedestrians?

(2) How many -

- (a) cyclists;
- (b) pedestrians,

were killed in -

- (i) 1995; and
- (ii) 1996?

(3) What proportion of black spot funding in -

- (a) 1995;
- (b) 1996,

was spent on -

- (i) bicycle safety projects; and
- (ii) pedestrian safety projects?

(4) Is there a representative of -

- (a) cyclists;
- (b) pedestrians; and
- (c) motorcyclists,

on the new Road Safety Council?

- (5) If not, why not?
- (6) Has the Government considered changing the name of the Transport portfolio to Transport and Road Safety?
- (7) If not, will it be considered?

Mr OMODEI replied:

The Minister for Transport has provided the following response -

- (1)-(2) The following information shows the numbers and percentages of pedestrians, cyclists and others hospitalised or killed during 1995 and 1996 as recorded on the Main Roads WA crash database -

Hospitalised:							
Year	Cyclist	%	Pedestrians	%	Other	%	Total
1995	123	4.26	287	9.93	2 480	85.81	2 890
1996	129	5.04	248	9.70	2 180	85.26	2 557

Killed:					
Year	Cyclists	Pedestrians	Others	Total	
1995	5	29	175	209	
1996	10	46	191	248	

- (3) The federal blackspot program did not operate in 1995 and 1996.
- (4)-(5) A person whose specific role is to represent the interests of road users is a member of the Road Safety Council. Mr Dick Stott from the RAC (WA) has been appointed to this position.
- (6)-(7) The new administrative arrangements at the government level for dealing with road safety is a partnership between the Ministers for Transport, Police, Education, Health and Local Government. These members comprise the Ministerial Council on Road Safety with the Minister for Transport the chairman. The need to add road safety to the title of the Minister for Transport will be considered after the effectiveness of existing arrangements have had time to be assessed.

JUSTICE, MINISTRY OF - COURT DOCUMENTS

Policy and Procedures

220. Mr BROWN to the Minister representing the Attorney General:

- (1) What, if any, new policies and procedures have been issued by the Ministry of Justice since June 1995 regarding court officers issuing or releasing court documents to the public?
- (2) What was the reason or reasons for issuing each new policy or procedure?
- (3) Are any new policies or procedures consistent with Crown Law advice of 12 February 1993 on the correct interpretation of s. 148 of the Justices Act 1902?
- (4) Is any new policy or procedure consistent with the answer provided to question on notice No 2133 of 1995?
- (5) If not, why not?
- (6) What is the reason for the inconsistency?

Mr PRINCE replied:

The Attorney General has provided the following response -

- (1) None, however, court officers are regularly reminded of existing practices and procedures in place regarding the issue or release of court documents to the public.
- (2)-(6) Not applicable.

TRAFFIC - PEDESTRIANS

Dual Use Pathways

227. Mr PENDAL to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is the Minister's department aware of an incident on 25 January 1997 on a dual use pathway, adjacent to the Swan River between Cale Street, Como, and Canning Bridge, in which a woman was knocked down and injured by one of a group of 30 to 40 cyclists, apparently in training?
- (2) What laws or regulations exist to protect pedestrians using such pathways?
- (3) Have police investigated this incident and, if so, with what result?
- (4) Will the Minister undertake to make to Parliament a statement on any proposals the Government has to protect pedestrians in these circumstances?
- (5) If not, why not?

Mr OMODEI replied:

The Minister for Transport has provided the following response -

- (1) Bikewest has been informed of the incident in question.
- (2) The Western Australian Road Traffic Code 1975 section 701A states that "a bicyclist who is on a dual use path shall give way to a pedestrian who is on, or is crossing, the dual use path". Section 702(1) adds that "a pedestrian shall keep to the left side when on a footway, marked crosswalk or pedestrian crossing".
- (3) It is understood that the incident has been investigated by the Police Cannington Crash Unit, with no action being taken due to conflicting evidence between parties.
- (4) A working party under the auspices of the Western Australian Bicycle Committee and the Office of Road Safety is currently being established to address the issue of conflicts on dual use paths.
- (5) Not applicable.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT - ACT

Petition - Poll of Voters

234. Dr EDWARDS to the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) What consideration has been given to amending the Local Government Act 1995 to ensure a poll of voters before a local government boundary is adjusted?
- (2) What is the timetable for -
 - (a) the deliberations currently being undertaken by the Local Government Advisory Board; and
 - (b) the steps following the Minister's receipt of the board's report?

Mr OMODEI replied:

- (1) The Local Government Act 1995 allows electors to petition for a poll in the event of the Local Government Advisory Board recommending the amalgamation of two or more councils. In the event of a turnout of more than 50 per cent and if a majority oppose the recommendation the poll is binding on the Minister and the proposal cannot be proceeded with. No provision exists for mandatory binding polls on partial amalgamation or boundary adjustments. The Act allows the Minister to call an indicative poll on a question. No amendment to the Local Government Act 1995 to give effect to the member's suggestion is contemplated.
- (2) The Local Government Advisory Board currently has references before it to assess the potential to split the Cities of Stirling and Wanneroo with a report due to be completed by the end of March 1997. The board also has a reference before it to assess the need for boundary changes to councils in the Mandurah, Bunbury, Albany, Narrogin, Northam and Geraldton districts. This report is due by the end of August 1997. In both references current inquiries are effectively feasibility studies. The Act requires that boundary changes can only result from a recommendation relating to a firm proposal. Once the board completes its inquiries, the Minister will determine what proposal, if any, should be assessed in detail. The Act requires council and

community consultation on a proposal. In the event that a formal proposal is put to the board in relation to the Cities of Stirling and Wanneroo I would expect a recommendation later this year. As Minister I can only accept or reject such a recommendation. I cannot vary it or otherwise force my will upon the board.

FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES - REPORTS

Interagency Development

244. Ms ANWYL to the Minister for Family and Children's Services:

- (1) Is it intended to implement proposals of the February 1997 Institute of Child Health Report in the Department for Family and Children's Services and, if so, what steps are being taken to do so?
- (2) What mechanisms are in place for interagency development and liaison between the Family and Children's Services Department and other relevant agencies?
- (3) What are the other relevant agencies?

Mrs PARKER replied:

- (1) The report on the Western Australian Child Health Survey Education, Health and Competence is currently being examined. Many of the findings from the previous two reports of the survey were incorporated in the report of the Western Australia Taskforce on Families and have already been implemented by Family and Children's Services.
- (2) Family and Children's Services participates on a number of interagency forums, including those at the local level dealing with issues relevant to families and children as the need arises.
- (3) Education Department, Health Department, Ministry of Justice, Police Service, Women's Policy Development Office and others as the need arises.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

MINING - GOLD ROYALTY

Minister for Mines and Backbench Opposition

63. Dr GALLOP to the Premier:

- (1) Is the Premier aware that his Minister for Mines, unlike his Deputy Premier, has stood up for regional interests and publicly opposed any imposition of a gold royalty?
- (2) Is he aware that his Minister says no decision has been made in support of a gold royalty, thereby implying the Premier's proposal to industry for a \$35m a year impost has no formal party support?
- (3) Is he aware that some of his own backbenchers believe that they have the numbers to roll him on this issue in the party room?

Mr COURT replied:

(1)-(3) I will not comment on the last part of the question.

Dr Gallop: Has it been to the party room?

Mr COURT: No. Does the member think it is appropriate that I take a Budget to the party room for approval?

It is no secret that the Minister for Mines has never been a supporter of the gold royalty. In discussions we have held, he has put forward strongly the side of the argument that one should not be introduced. I have been open. I said that the Government has this issue on its list of revenue measures for consideration. It has put proposals to the industry. As I said yesterday, the industry has been very constructive in wanting to work through this issue. There is nothing secret about it.

Mr Grill: Premier, they do not want it and you know it. I spoke to them this morning.

Mr COURT: We seem to have given the member for Eyre an issue that he is thoroughly enjoying. I will not get involved in the internal politics of the other side.

STATE FINANCE - FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS

*Reduction***64. Mr OSBORNE to the Premier:**

What are the main concerns that the State will be facing at this week's Premiers' Conference?

Mr COURT replied:

I thank the member for the question. The big issue to be addressed at Friday's Premiers' financial conference will be the level of specific purpose payments that the Federal Government will pay to the States. An agreement was reached that the financial assistance grants would be maintained as agreed at last year's conference; that is, that the overall cake would be increased on a real per capita basis. The problem we have, even with those financial assistance grants, is that our share has been cut yet again; in excess of \$200m will be cut from those grants this year because of the relativities that have come out of the Grants Commission. That means that, in four years, this State has lost more than half a billion dollars. The main area of concern for us now, when it is no secret that we have a very tight budget situation, is the outcome relating to the specific purpose payments.

Today, the Opposition asked for a briefing from the Treasury Department on the possible outcomes from the conference. I think that briefing has been arranged for this evening. It is important that all members understand what is happening at the federal level because we were highly critical of the previous Government, which gave a smaller and smaller percentage of the States' total revenues back to them. Unfortunately, that trend is continuing. We are not impressed with that. We will make sure that members opposite have a proper briefing on this matter.

TAXATION - GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

*National Party Policy***65. Dr GALLOP to the Deputy Premier:**

The question relates to National Party policy on taxation matters.

- (1) Is it National Party policy to support a state based goods and services tax?
- (2) Is the Leader of the National Party aware that a GST would devastate country areas, burdening local government and tourism through increased costs for domestic air fares, accommodation, restaurant meals and travel?

Mr COWAN replied:

- (1)-(2) I am pleased to inform the Leader of the Opposition and any member of this House who cares to listen that it is National Party policy to have taxation reform. Any reform of the taxation system that Australia adopts, whether it be federal, direct or indirect, will have to include the way in which there is a transfer of emphasis from direct taxation to indirect taxation. A goods and services tax is one of those ways, and many people advocate a goods and services tax on the clear understanding that rather than merely tax goods, we are also in a position to tax services. I do not think anyone disputes that.

Dr Gallop: Is this the Leader of the National Party speaking?

Mr COWAN: I am sure that 55 other members of Parliament could answer that question.

Dr Gallop: You are out of touch with your constituents.

Mr COWAN: I will not take much notice of that question about whether I am in touch with my constituency.

The National Party is an advocate of taxation reform, and it would be natural that in that reform process we examine all forms of taxation reform, which includes the application of a GST.

DEPARTMENT OF LAND ADMINISTRATION - NATIONAL TECHNOLOGY AWARDS

66. Mrs HODSON-THOMAS to the Minister for Lands:

I refer the Minister to the recent success of the Department of Land Administration in the National Technology in Government awards announced in Canberra last night. Can the Minister indicate which awards the Department of Land Administration won, and why?

Mr SHAVE replied:

I thank the member for the question. At the awards ceremony last night, the Department of Land Administration won two awards, one gold and one silver. The gold award was for a joint submission with the Bush Fires Board on the use of satellite technology to combat bushfires, which is an important area. The silver award was for the department's work in integrating its computer network. That task was undertaken with two private sector partners, UNISYS Australia Ltd and Cisco Systems, whose efforts were also recognised last night. These awards add to the department's already enviable record with these awards: Previously, the department has won two gold and three silver awards. This is another example of this Government leading the nation in this area.

REAL ESTATE TRANSACTIONS - SENG FAI CHAN

*Possible Breach of Fair Trading Act***67. Ms MacTIERNAN to the Minister for Fair Trading:**

When the officers of the Ministry of Fair Trading investigated the dealings of Frances Mary Chan for the Real Estate and Business Agents Supervisory Board, they were presented with information concerning the highly questionable role of solicitor Seng Fai Chan in the transactions that led to eight individuals and couples losing their homes and life savings. I ask -

- (1) What action did the Ministry take to have this conduct examined for breaches of sections 10, 11 and 12 of the Fair Trading Act - the misleading conduct and false representation provisions of that Act?
- (2) If no action was taken, why not?
- (3) Will the Government accept responsibility for any similar damage that other persons may suffer as a result of this conduct's continuing?

Mr SHAVE replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1)-(2) The Ministry's investigation has been aimed at ensuring that Frances Mary Chan does not conduct business as a licensed real estate agent.

Ms MacTiernan: The other information would have come to light during that investigation.

Mr SHAVE: The member has asked the question; she should be patient.

In addition, priority has been given to processing claims made by consumers against the fidelity fund. In the same context, the Ministry received a number of allegations concerning Seng Fai Chan and his relationship with Frances Mary Chan. However, the allegations were not supported with any information to suggest that Seng Fai Chan had breached the provisions of the Fair Trading Act. The Ministry's investigations are continuing, and I cannot pre-empt the outcome of those investigations.

- (3) The Government cannot accept responsibility for damage caused by a person making misleading or deceptive public statements.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS - UNREST

*Union Predictions***68. Mr JOHNSON to the Minister for Labour Relations:**

Some notice of this question has been given. Yesterday, in answer to a question from me, the Minister mentioned some of the predictions made by the unions and the Australian Labor Party prior to the 1993 state election. As some members of the Opposition expressed doubt as to the veracity of the Minister's claims, will he please table the material to which he was referring?

Ms MacTiernan: We dealt with this yesterday.

Mr KIERATH replied:

It is interesting the member for Armadale should interject. It was her comment that she did not believe what I said that caused the member to ask this question. I am happy to table an array of election material. [See paper No 296.]

Mr KIERATH: The Government is aware of that campaign by the ALP and some unions. I will demonstrate to the House that it was part of a desperate campaign by some people to frighten people into not voting for the coalition by referring to a couple of pamphlets which came to the coalition's notice. Members may remember the pamphlet titled "Sign or Resign!" which the Government outlawed by legislation. I refer to another document from the then Labor candidate for the seat of Riverton, Mr Dean Ellis, which has on it a photograph of him with "Madam Truth", as she was nicknamed. It said -

These policies would mean that wages would be forced down, there would be no real minimums and as employees you would have to sign or lose your job.

It is an outrageous statement. I also have a pamphlet which was distributed by the member for Bassendean when he was the ALP candidate for the then seat of Morley. The pamphlet states -

Awards will become a thing of the past under the Liberal Party's Industrial Relations Policy.

That is not true. It then states -

Will you take the risk of having your weekly income reduced?

The Labor Government's Accord held real wages down, but under this Government real wages have increased to benefit most working men and women in this State. The best pamphlet came from the Australian Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers Union which was a little braver than the member for Bassendean. It states that hospital workers will face a 30 per cent wage reduction.

The scare campaign conducted by the ALP and some unions did not work on either the first or second occasion. I wonder how long it will take members opposite, before we enter the next century, to embrace the modern trend in industrial relations and try to do something for the working men and women whom they claim to represent but have actually let down.

REAL ESTATE TRANSACTIONS - SETTLEMENT AGENTS

Conflict of Interest

69. Ms MacTIERNAN to the Minister for Fair Trading:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that in 10 cases where parties lost their homes and life savings as a result of dealings with deregistered real estate agent Frances Mary Chan, the one person acted for both vendors and purchasers in the real estate transactions?
- (2) Why has the Government failed to act on the 1993 recommendation by the Ministry of Fair Trading that the Government legislate to prevent settlement agents acting for both vendors and purchasers?
- (3) In light of the clear risks posed for consumers by this practice, will the Government put the interests of consumers before the vested industry interests and now proceed with the proposed legislative amendment?

Mr SHAVE replied:

- (1)-(3) I said in my answer to the member's previous question that the issues relating to Frances Mary Chan are under review and, with regard to Mr Chan, the solicitor, the ministry will continue to monitor the situation. If it is considered that legislation is required, it will be implemented.

EDUCATION - HIGH SCHOOL

Halls Head

70. Mr MARSHALL to the Minister for Education:

The proposed new high school for Halls Head has been put back from 1997 to 1999. Will the Minister give a reason for this change and also give information on what kind of high school will be built?

Mr BARNETT replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question. I know the member for Dawesville is intensely interested in secondary education in his electorate. I advise the member that the Education Department has never committed itself to constructing a new high school at Halls Head in 1997. However, the need for an expansion of secondary education is clearly recognised. A decision has not been made on whether it will be a conventional high school, starting at year 8 and progressively going through to years 9, 10 and 11, or whether there will be a change in the model of education

in the Peel area to include the development of a senior college and perhaps middle schools. It is a model which is attractive, but it should be determined in the local area.

Mr Ripper: Have you worked out which schools will be closed?

Mr BARNETT: We will not be closing any schools around Peel-Mandurah, an area which has a rapidly growing population.

Mr Ripper: In some other areas you would.

Mr BARNETT: We closed a school in the member's electorate with his support, and I thank him for that support. It was a good decision.

Dr Edwards interjected.

Mr BARNETT: If the member continues to make the same interjection, he will receive the same reply.

The Peel and Murray areas need secondary education. I hope that within the next couple of months the situation will be resolved. We are setting up local area planning in education. One of the key areas and highest priorities will be the Peel area simply because of the population growth and the need to do something better in the area. Critically it will depend on the relationship between Mandurah and Coodanup High Schools as to which way we go. However, the matter will be resolved shortly.

PRIVATE SECURITY COMPANIES - EMPLOYMENT BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Financial Assistance

71. Mr McGOWAN to the Minister for Police:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that local authorities in Wanneroo, Canning, South Perth, Armadale and Rockingham are seriously considering instituting their own community security programs using private security firms, similar to that at Bayswater?
- (2) Does the Government support these private security programs and is it prepared to assist councils financially with these programs?
- (3) Does the Government agree that councils are instituting these schemes because they have a lack of confidence in the number of police available and their distribution?

Mr DAY replied:

- (1)-(3) I am aware that some local authorities are giving consideration to the introduction of private security firms along the same lines as introduced by the City of Bayswater. I understand that the service provided within the City of Bayswater is working well. For example, in my electorate the Shire of Kalamunda has been approached by some of the local residents and business operators with a view to seeing whether such a service could be introduced.

Mrs Roberts: Isn't that the job of the police?

Mr DAY: It is of course the job of the police to assist in providing community security and enhancing public safety, but whichever Government is in office it is impossible for police to be located on every street corner. If any additional service can be provided in conjunction with the community, to act as eyes and ears for the Police Service, that will be a good thing. If other local authorities are considering introducing such a service, it would have the support of the Government and of most of the ratepayers within the local authorities.

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS

State and Federal Programs

72. Mr SWEETMAN to the Minister for Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs:

Will the Minister please advise the House of the outcomes of the ministerial council meeting on immigration and multicultural affairs held in Darwin last week?

Mr BOARD replied:

I thank the member for the question. It is the first question without notice that I have received. The meeting of the ministerial council last Friday was constructive and progressive. At the first meeting I attended I was most impressed with the way the state and federal Ministers conducted themselves. The meeting was attended also by the Minister for Immigration from New Zealand and representatives from the Australian Local Government Association.

One of the first issues that the States wanted to address was their support for the motion passed unanimously in Federal Parliament late last year, raised by the Prime Minister and the Federal Leader of the Opposition, to create greater community harmony in Australia. The States wanted to get right behind the motion and talk about the strength of cultural diversity and the way in which their programs could support federal initiatives. The Federal Government confirmed that \$10m would be spent by it on a federal program over two years, in which the States will be able to play a role in creating even stronger community harmony. I look forward to that program.

Another issue discussed was regional migration. There will be greater flexibility for state Ministers to consider the skills required in country regions where there is a shortage, and to have some flexibility to play a role in the regional migration program. To that extent the conference was a great success. We have issued some papers in that regard.

ALINTAGAS - KINGSTREAM PROJECT

Tender Stage

73. Mr THOMAS to the Minister for Energy:

Last night the Minister told the House that the AlintaGas bid to supply the Kingstream project was simply a ballpark response to calls for expressions of interest.

- (1) Is the Minister aware that the proponents of the Kingstream project have informed the Opposition that the selection process moved beyond expressions of interest to firm tenders last October?
- (2) Did the Minister mislead the House deliberately or was he kept in the dark by AlintaGas?
- (3) Does the Minister intend to read the Under Treasurer's advice on this transaction before he approves it, as required by section 34 of the Gas Corporation Act?

Mr BARNETT replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1)-(3) He needs to research this issue a little better. The member for Cockburn stated that Kingstream advised him that it entered into firm negotiations of tenders last October. If the member reads the media, he will discover that the Alinta-Epic bid was made in January this year. The member's claim does not seem to match with that. There was a later event where, initially, there were negotiations with AlintaGas.

Mr Thomas: The proposals in January were firm bids, not expressions of interest.

Mr BARNETT: As arranged under the agreement Act, Kingstream would negotiate with AlintaGas and if a commercial arrangement was reached, off they would go. That did not occur, and probably they will not reach a commercial understanding solely with AlintaGas. Following that, in January this year - perhaps even later - a proposal was submitted by Alinta-Epic. That was following the October date to which the member referred. As I said last night, and I will repeat today, I would want all bids to be available for the Kingstream project so they have the opportunity of choosing the most attractive and competitive gas supplier to their project. Equally, I would want AlintaGas or Alinta-Epic to compete. Why the member would want to restrict their ability to compete is beyond me, although that seems to be the tone of the question.

Should Kingstream and Alinta-Epic reach an agreement, that will require the approval of the Minister and Cabinet because of the size of the transaction. That is made clear in the Gas Corporation Act.

Mr Ripper: Is any offer made conditional on ministerial approval?

Mr BARNETT: It must be. The member for Belmont is familiar with the Gas Corporation Act.

Mr Thomas: What is occurring now is not simply a response to the call for expressions of interest, which is what the Minister said last night.

Mr BARNETT: Last night I compared it with a proposal akin to that. My words were quite deliberate.

Mr Thomas: The Minister is wrong. He misled the House.

Mr BARNETT: The member is fanciful. This is a farce.

ALINTAGAS - KINGSTREAM PROJECT

Treasury Advice

74. Mr THOMAS to the Minister for Energy:

Does the Minister consider that the Under Treasurer's advice that this proposed transaction could cost the taxpayer \$500m is a matter of significant public interest about which he should have been informed as prescribed by the Gas Corporation Act, or is the Minister happy to be kept in the dark on this as well?

Mr BARNETT replied: As I said last night, that is the Under Treasurer's opinion on the impact of this on taxpayers. I happen to disagree with it.

Mr Thomas: Are you happy to read about it in the newspaper rather than getting that information personally?

Mr BARNETT: I happened to read about it in a faxed copy of a newspaper article sent to me when I was in Taiwan. The fact that the advice was not given to me was the choice of the Under Treasurer.

Mr Thomas: What about your department?

Mr BARNETT: To my knowledge, the advice was not given to my department but to members of the gas steering committee handling the privatisation sale.

Mr Thomas: Which includes three members of your department, or are you happy to be kept in the dark?

Mr BARNETT: Unlike the member opposite, who is not covered in glory on issues of accountability, I happen to trust professional people to assess and to discuss issues professionally within a closed environment. I regret that was leaked to the media and appeared in the newspaper. I expect that steering committee to give me advice. The Under Treasurer expressed his view. I happen to disagree with it. As I said last night, members of the steering committee, including Alinta's board, also disagreed with him. Their advice, which I accept, was that it was proper for AlintaGas to make that proposal. I will state publicly and openly that the proposal by Alinta-Epic was for Epic Energy, a private company, to fund the expansion of the pipeline and therefore to have a right to carry gas. In no way were taxpayers involved in the funding of that. In no way was the board of AlintaGas involved. It was a private sector proposal.

Mr Thomas: The Under Treasurer sees it differently.

Mr BARNETT: He does, and in this case he is wrong.

HEALTH - ASBESTOS

Vitamin A Program - Funding

75. Mrs van de KLASHORST to the Minister for Health:

Several people in Swan Hills are on the asbestos disease research vitamin A program. They have written to me suggesting that this program is being phased out and cannot continue, thus putting their lives at risk. Will the Minister advise whether this program can continue to be funded?

Mr PRINCE replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question. This matter has been the subject of a considerable amount of public comment and debate and a great deal of correspondence to members of Parliament, of which I know, to me and to others.

Mr Brown: It was discussed in this House last week.

Mr PRINCE: The matter has also been mentioned in this House. The vitamin A program was started about five or six years ago in an effort to assess whether people who have been exposed to asbestos have a decreased prevalence of asbestos related disease. Initially funds came from WorkCover and the State Government Insurance Commission, but those funds ran out. When we were elected to government four years ago there was a commitment that extra money would be found. The Treasurer announced that \$1.4m would be allocated to asbestos disease research over the four years of our first term, in conjunction with \$540 000 from the State Government Insurance Commission.

The funds have been sent in installments to the Sir Charles Gardiner Hospital research foundation for distribution to researchers. I hope all members will agree that is an appropriate way of doing that, because members of

Parliament, Ministers and others should not be involved in deciding whether one scientific program or another should have money; it should be decided by people who know something about the science. That procedure was put in place. Of that commitment, at present \$350 000 remains. The commitment expires at 30 June 1997 and the money will go to the Sir Charles Gardiner Hospital research foundation. How it distributes the money is up to it.

For years Dr Musk and his co-workers who manage the vitamin A program have been studying the people who were exposed to asbestos at Wittenoom, comparing rates of disease and death between people receiving beta carotene and retinol, the precursors to vitamin A and others. It is a trial. There has been some suggestion that this program has a protective effect, especially with respect to mesothelioma. The problem has been that Dr Musk has been seeking extra money from a number of different sources including the National Health and Medical Research Council, which has refused him.

In recent times, because of further requests from Dr Musk, Dr de Klerk and others, Dr Musk and Dr de Klerk met with the Commissioner for Health and Dr Paul Psaila-Savona, the acting general manager of public health. At that meeting the commissioner was able to tell Drs Musk and de Klerk that three independent epidemiologists have been engaged to assess the program and to give advice and opinions. I understand that advice has been given to the commission, but I have not yet had it, and I certainly have no recommendation with respect to it. It would certainly seem that the beta-carotene trial should not be continued because in the past few years there has been better evidence out of Finland and America to show that it can have a carcinogenic effect. I do not think there will be a recommendation that that should be continued.

Mr Graham: How do you know that if you are not an expert?

Mr PRINCE: I am not an expert; I am simply repeating the expert evidence that has been given to me. There is a question of whether retinol is protective. If it is and if the scientists say it is protective, it must be looked at very seriously, and quickly, by the health authorities to see whether the program, which has been a trial to date, should transfer into a mainstream services program to protect people.

FUEL AND ENERGY - UNIFORM ELECTRICITY TARIFF

Government Commitment

76. Mr THOMAS to the Minister for Energy:

Is the Government still committed to the uniform electricity tariff policy for all customers, commercial and residential, no matter where they live in Western Australia, or has the National Party once again utterly failed to protect the interests of its bush constituency?

Mr BARNETT replied:

The Government has always made it clear that it supports, and will always continue to support, a uniform tariff for householders and small business operators throughout Western Australia. The question in the public arena relates to whether that subsidised tariff should extend to large businesses, including mining operations. That is being looked at by Government. The Leader of the National Party is quite capable of speaking for himself, as he has done previously on this issue. The real challenge is not to argue about uniform tariffs as such -

Dr Gallop: You are not going to make a commitment?

Mr BARNETT: I just did.

Dr Gallop: No, you didn't; you just said it was on the agenda; therefore, you are not ruling it out. You have broken another promise that the National Party gave people in non-metropolitan areas.

Mr BARNETT: I ask the Leader of the Opposition to concentrate very hard, and I will look into his eyes - unpleasant as that is - and inform him that the uniform tariff is not under threat. We will continue it for householders and small business.

Dr Gallop: What about bigger business?

Mr BARNETT: It is interesting that the Labor Party, the remnants of the social democratic party, is now arguing for subsidised tariffs for big business. That is what the Leader of the Opposition is arguing for. He has no credibility. The real issue about electricity costs in regional areas requires a real solution and that can be found in projects like the Ord hydro scheme. Hopefully the current proposals will be successful in seeing a tidal power station operating in the west Kimberley region. Equally in Esperance proposals are currently under examination.

Dr Gallop: You have just regenerated the issue, my friend, from what you have said. It is another broken promise from the National Party.

Mr BARNETT: I give up under this torrent of brilliant questioning.

HEALTH - COMMONWEALTH DENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM

Closure - Reconsideration

77. Mr BRIDGE to the Minister for Health:

Mr Speaker, in seeking your approval to ask this question, I am doing so on behalf of my party. All in my party agree that I should ask this question.

Mr Barnett: Your leadership is secure!

Mr BRIDGE: It was never in doubt. The safest position any man can have is the leadership of my party!

I refer to the ministerial statement by the Minister for Health yesterday in which he indicated the Commonwealth Government's decision to discontinue its dental health program in Western Australia. The Minister indicated the impact that decision will have on many Western Australians. In light of the Minister's concerns and the extent to which the problems will emerge, I ask whether there is a way in which we can collectively pursue this matter with the Commonwealth Government, first of all, indicating our strong opposition to the decision and, secondly, seeking from the Commonwealth some consideration to revisit that decision. The decision justifies this course of action, and I am sure that if the Minister could see his way clear to pursue our argument collectively, it would assist him considerably in this matter.

Mr PRINCE replied:

I thank the member for Kimberley on behalf of his party for the questions, and I am grateful for the offer of support from a person on the crossbench or anywhere else. It seems to me utterly indefensible that a program the Commonwealth put in place approximately four years ago, which subsumed a good program in this State and brought in better programs elsewhere, should be cut without notice and without consultation.

Mr Graham: It is the same as the vitamin A program. You said it was stopping, and it was stopped.

Mr PRINCE: It is not the same, for goodness sake. That is a trial.

Mr Graham: That is exactly what the Federal Government has done with this.

Mr PRINCE: This program deals with the oral health of people who are disadvantaged throughout this State and the rest of Australia. It was cut without consultation and without notice. In this State it will have an adverse effect on 40 000 people who hold pension health cards. If the member for Kimberley is prepared to support this Government and the other state governments around Australia, irrespective of their political colour, in going to the Federal Government and saying that it should not cut this funding because it is providing services to people who are disadvantaged, I welcome his support, and that of anybody else who wants to argue on a reasonable and rational ground. I thank the member for Kimberley and I ask him to support my proposal.

The SPEAKER: Order! That concludes questions without notice. Fourteen questions and one supplementary question were asked.
