



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

THIRTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT
SECOND SESSION
1998

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 11 August 1998

Legislative Assembly

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MEETING OF THE ASSEMBLY

The Legislative Assembly met at 11.00 am.

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

PROCLAMATION

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr P.J. McHugh) read the proclamation of His Excellency the Governor (Major General Philip Michael Jeffery, AC, MC) summoning the second session of the Thirty-fifth Parliament.

SUMMONS FROM THE GOVERNOR

The Speaker and members, in response to summons, proceeded to the Legislative Council Chamber and, having heard His Excellency deliver the opening speech (see Council report preceding), returned to the Legislative Assembly Chamber.

MINISTRY CHANGES

Statement by the Premier

MR COURT (Nedlands - Premier) [11.53 am]: I take the opportunity to briefly inform members of the following changes to the Ministry which came into effect on 28 July 1998: Hon Murray Criddle, Minister for Transport; Hon Cheryl Edwardes, Minister for the Environment, and Labor Relations; Hon Kevin Prince, Minister for Police, and Emergency Services; Hon Graham Kierath, Minister for Planning, Employment and Training, and Heritage; and Hon John Day, Minister for Health. In addition, Hon Mike Board was earlier today appointed Minister for Works, Services, Youth, and Citizenship and Multicultural Interests. For the information of members, I table Ministers' representation in the other House, and the allocation of portfolios list.

[See papers Nos 71 and 72.]

BILLS - RETURNED

1. Mining Amendment Bill.
 2. Appropriation (Consolidated Fund) Bill (No 1).
 3. Appropriation (Consolidated Fund) Bill (No 2).
- Bills returned from the Council without amendment.

BILLS - ASSENT

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

1. Racecourse Development Amendment Bill.
2. Western Australian Greyhound Racing Association Amendment Bill.
3. Acts Amendment (Gaming) Bill.
4. Revenue Laws Amendment (Taxation) Bill.
5. Advance Bank (Merger with St George Bank) Bill.
6. Advance Bank (Merger with St George Bank) (Taxing) Bill.
7. Revenue Laws Amendment (Assessment) Bill.
8. Western Australian Treasury Corporation Amendment Bill.
9. Lotteries Commission Amendment Bill.
10. WADC and WA Exim Corporation Repeal Bill.
11. Acts Amendment (Education Loan Scheme) Bill.
12. Bookmakers Betting Levy Amendment Bill.

13. Supreme Court Amendment Bill.
14. Appropriation (Consolidated Fund) Bill (No 1).
15. Appropriation (Consolidated Fund) Bill (No 2).
16. Rail Safety Bill.
17. Government Railways Amendment Bill.
18. Real Estate and Business Agents Amendment Bill.
19. Criminal Law Amendment Bill (No 2).
20. Mining Amendment Bill.

KEWDALE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Petition

Mr Ripper (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) presented the following petition bearing the signatures of 2 435 persons -

To the Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We the undersigned reject the decision of the Minister for Education to close Kewdale Senior High School. Kewdale is a small high school which offers excellent pastoral care and a good quality of education to its students. The school is an important part of the local community and must be retained for the future needs of the district. We call on the Legislative Assembly to persuade the Minister for Education to leave Kewdale Senior High School open.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

[See petition No 1.]

ARMADALE-KELMSCOTT MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

Petition

MS MacTIERNAN (Armadale) [11.54 am]: I present the following petition -

To the Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We the undersigned residents of the South East Metropolitan area demand that the Government immediately abandons both its plans to sell the Armadale Kelmscott Memorial Hospital and to privatise the management of the Armadale Health Service. We demand the Government recognises these facilities belong to our community and that they have no mandate to sell them. We call on the Government to allocate the money necessary to redevelop our hospital as a publicly owned and operated centre providing for people and not for profit.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

The petition bears 2 751 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly. I also have 2 111 signatures on a petition which does not conform to the standing orders.

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

[See petition No 2.]

SHIRE OF GREENOUGH

Petition

MR MINSON (Greenough) [11.55 am]: I present the following petition -

To the Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We the undersigned residents of the Shire of Greenough request the Minister for Local Government to allow postal votes in the event that a poll is called for by the residents of the shire on the question of the amalgamation of the Shire of Greenough and any other municipality which might be decided upon by the Minister.

We further request that the Minister make such alteration to the time schedule of the proposed amalgamation process as would make the postal vote both possible and valid.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

The petition bears 1 649 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly. I add that 1 649 residents of the Shire of Greenough represents a very significant percentage of those in the shire; I draw that point to the attention of the Minister.

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

[See petition No 3.]

ROCKINGHAM POLICE RESOURCES

Petition

Mr McGowan presented the following petition bearing the signatures of 382 persons -

To the Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We the undersigned respectfully request that the State Government base more Police Officers in the Rockingham area. Rockingham's population is growing extremely quickly, yet our Police numbers have not grown accordingly. Therefore, there is a dramatic need for additional Police resources to be directed into the Rockingham area.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

[See petition No 4.]

MOTOR VEHICLE REGISTRATION FEES

Petition

Mr Kobelke presented the following petition bearing the signatures of 57 persons -

To the Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We the undersigned citizens are totally opposed to the State Government's decision to impose a new tax on Western Australian motorists through massive increases in car registration fees.

Western Australian motorists already pay directly for the cost of roads through State and Federal fuel levies. The revenue received by the State Government from the fuel levy and from the sale of the gas pipeline provides the Government with resources to develop our transport infrastructure. This new tax is unfair and has a disproportionate impact on middle and lower income earners.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

[See petition No 5.]

CURTIN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY AMENDMENT BILL

Leave to Introduce

MR COURT (Nedlands - Premier) [12.07 pm]: In order to assert and maintain the undoubted rights and privileges of this House to initiate legislation, I move -

That leave be given to introduce a Bill to amend the Curtin University of Technology Act 1966.

Question put and passed; leave granted.

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Court (Premier), and read a first time.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH*Distribution of Copies*

THE SPEAKER (Mr Strickland): Accompanied by the honourable members of this Chamber, I attended His Excellency The Governor (Major General Philip Michael Jeffery, AC, MC) in the Legislative Council Chamber to hear the speech which His Excellency was pleased to deliver to members of both Houses of Parliament. For the sake of greater accuracy, I have caused printed copies of the speech to be distributed among members of this Chamber.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY*Motion*

MR BARRON-SULLIVAN (Mitchell) [12.08 pm]: I move -

That the following Address-in-Reply to His Excellency's speech be agreed to -

May it please Your Excellency -

We, the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of the State of Western Australia in Parliament assembled, beg to express loyalty to our most Gracious Sovereign, and to thank Your Excellency for the speech you have been pleased to address to Parliament.

Earlier this year I gave a speech detailing examples of the new policy directions taken by the Government and the benefits they meant for the people of my electorate of Mitchell; for example, the collocation of hospital facilities onto one comprehensive health campus which will enable a range of new health services to be provided locally in a way that could never have been achieved under traditional health care planning. Other reforms in the area include the decentralisation of agricultural services, the implementation of an extensive sewerage infill program through contracting out works, the introduction of innovative new schooling options, public housing reforms, and so forth.

My speech reflected an underlying mood of optimism in the community, stemming from a moderately buoyant economy and low unemployment, and referred to a range of services and facilities the State Government is helping to make a reality to ensure that the area continues to enjoy one of the highest standards of living anywhere.

After my speech, the member for Kimberley said, I hope not too tongue-in-cheek, that I had painted a picture of an electorate that has no parallels. He went on to say that, having heard the member for Mitchell's commentary for the past 30 minutes, he could not find the words to describe this electorate. That made me think: Had I been exaggerating? Is my electorate out of the ordinary? Had I indeed gilded the lily? No. Everything I relayed in that speech was quite true. My electorate, far from being out of the ordinary, is very representative of much of Western Australian society. Mitchell has a high proportion of young families, with many parents in their thirties with young children - rather like my family and I, I suppose. Mitchell is a growing haven for retirees, who are discovering the great lifestyle on offer by living near the estuary or within close proximity to an abundance of shops, health services and leisure facilities.

The south west's foremost tertiary education establishments are in Mitchell, a drawcard for many young people from throughout the region. The environment is in good shape, and American researchers have even found that the local climate, along with that of a coastal town in California, is actually the best in the world! It is no wonder then that last month, the Electoral Commission confirmed that Mitchell is now the fastest growing country electorate, second only in the whole State to Wanneroo, as no doubt the member for Wanneroo is aware. All in all, Mitchell just about sums up the best of life in Western Australia.

On the face of it, we have never had it so good. Why then is there an air of discontent among some? Why would anyone turn to new political idols? A number of politicians and commentators have said recently that the Government should respond to this phenomenon by taking its foot off the accelerator of reform, blaming the ongoing progress of reform for creeping feelings of insecurity and instability within the broader community. Indeed, it is almost as though the word "reform" has been struck out of the rapidly expanding pages of the dictionary of politically correct language. Also, it is difficult to resist the temptation, perhaps on the eve of a federal election and with current affairs utterly dominated by federal issues such as tax reform, Telstra, wool stockpiles, immigration and industry protection, to say that these feelings reflect the dominance of federal reform issues such as these. However, those explanations are not enough. To start with, for many people, federal and state politics are blurred into one. All too often there is a lack of distinction between the arms of federalism in this country. As state members, we only

need to consider the high proportion of inquiries that we receive from constituents with regard to federal or local government issues to demonstrate this.

Therefore, we cannot simply assume the answer lies at the federal level; and we would need to be looking through rose coloured glasses to deny that there will always be concerns about some areas of state responsibility. However, this does not mean that people are wary of reform per se. It is quite the opposite. They are crying out for reform in some ways, particularly with regard to the need for a fairer national tax system, for example. As a representative of a marginal seat, it is more important than ever for me to listen to people's concerns, and I often feel as though I am wired to my constituency, feeling its pain and enjoying its exuberance.

Without doubt, the most important state priority in many people's minds is the pressing need to meet community expectations with regard to law and order. The new Minister for Police certainly has his work cut out for him in further improving security and reducing the fear of crime within the community. However, I am confident that this can be achieved, and the Government certainly has the will to do it. Already we have seen a significant increase in resources for our Police Service, and if my electorate is anything to go by, there can be no doubt that the Government has made this a key priority, with additional operational staff, a new police station - one of 15, as the Governor alerted us to this morning - up and running in Australind, and budgeting this year to commence a new \$7m regional police centre. However, these resources on their own cannot alleviate the growing fear of crime. People everywhere are talking of the need for new strategies, saying that it is time to turn our backs on the approach of previous decades, which has failed to completely stem the insidious creep of antisocial behaviour and criminal activity.

Therefore, it is encouraging that the Premier has made it clear - the Governor again alluded to this in his speech this morning - that this Parliament will deal with a number of new laws to strengthen law enforcement and to make penalties better reflect the standards that are being demanded by our constituents. I was pleased to hear the announcement that the Premier and Deputy Premier will head up a specific cabinet subcommittee to tackle this matter head on. However, I put it on public record that any new laws must as fully as possible reflect the community's desires, including: The need to more fully embrace truth in sentencing so that a six year sentence for a serious crime cannot be reduced under any circumstances to a two year sentence; greater consideration of some form of mandatory or minimum sentencing, and removing discretion from any judges who may be out of touch with community standards and expectations; supporting home owners forced to protect their homes and families so that they do not need to fear that they may be branded as the criminals; and penalties which ensure that the low-lives who harm our grandparents get what they deserve.

Hopefully, no-one would advocate the creation of a ruthless society which does not provide rehabilitation and support for those in need, such as drug addicts or the homeless. After all, there is no point in confronting crime without also tackling its root causes. Furthermore, there may be room for new and innovative crime prevention measures, and it will be interesting to see what the Select Committee on Crime Prevention, under the chairmanship of the member for Mandurah, will report in this regard, in view of the success of some crime prevention programs elsewhere. However, there is no reason that these three approaches cannot go hand in hand, and I have the utmost confidence in the present Government to deliver the goods over its next two years in office.

The same applies to other areas of state responsibility, of course, particularly health care. It was tremendously encouraging to see the Premier on television the other night responding to community concerns and announcing a program to speed up the provision of hip joint and knee replacement procedures to the benefit of many people currently waiting in pain on hospital waiting lists. For too long now the State has been dependent upon the Commonwealth for funding in many areas, including health care, and the pending announcement by the Prime Minister on taxation reform will hopefully offer the opportunity to create a fairer and more certain system of commonwealth-state financial relations, which will go a long way towards preventing the sort of uncertainty we have witnessed over recent months with health funding.

However, while undoubtedly the Government deserves praise for turning around the State's parlous financial situation, and while there is every reason to have confidence in its ability to respond to community needs and concerns over the next two years, there is one matter about which the present Government deserves some scrutiny and perhaps a degree of self analysis. It is absolutely vital for any Government to communicate well with its people, but perhaps we have not always succeeded in properly enunciating a number of initiatives that have been carried out in recent times, in adequately explaining why these reforms were necessary, and in demonstrating clearly and succinctly how the community will benefit from them. While we can talk about taking the foot off the reform accelerator, it is a fact that any society is in a constant state of flux, but unless every effort is made to ensure that people understand what is happening around them, particularly when they or their families are directly involved, the potential will exist for a growing air of uncertainty or insecurity. Conversely, if we listen, respond, explain and communicate effectively, not only will people understand the process of change, but also they will be more likely to be moved to support and embrace it.

It is important to realise that the process of communication is about much more than a glitzy advertising campaign. Advertising is a one-way process, and people nowadays expect their Governments to engage in a more direct, two-way process of consultation. Although it is not really an issue high on the list of priorities for most families in my electorate, the manner in which the Premier went to the people to discuss constitutional reform is perhaps one of the better models we have seen of how to gauge opinion on matters of public policy. This entails getting out to the people, listening, and, wherever possible, ensuring that their feedback is taken into account.

The modern media are partially culpable for the spread of insecurity within society, and, at the expense of incurring the wrath of those hovering above us in the Press Gallery, let me relay one recent example.

The bipartisan Select Committee into Crime Prevention was established to find successful examples of crime prevention programs and, as part of the committee's work, some open hearings - and I stress open hearings - were held earlier this year. The media covered one open meeting at which one of the nation's foremost crime researchers stressed that the real level of crime has actually reduced over the years. That was a major theme of his discussions with the committee and he cited statistics and research verifying that trend.

The researcher was also asked, almost as an aside, whether smaller schools were preferable in terms of reducing crime. That was not the major focus of his advice to the committee but, you guessed it, when the hearing was reported there was not a word about the good news regarding lower real crime rates. The headline, which says it all, read "Schools, crime rate linked."

It is no wonder that a number of world-renowned crime researchers have openly blamed the media for unwittingly helping spread the fear of crime through sensationalist and selective reporting. It is ironic in a way that nowadays when we are bombarded with news and current affairs, and there are more forms of print and electronic media than ever before, community uncertainty can still exist regarding government reforms because of a lack of objective and relevant information in the media.

I am proud of the Government's performance over the past five years. Although it has not all been plain sailing, there have been some far reaching achievements and, of vital importance, the underlying financial and economic framework is now very solid. The State's finances, despite being hamstrung by an archaic taxation system, are now in much better shape, with debt firmly under control.

Perhaps it is appropriate to view today's opening of Parliament, although not quite half way through the present term of Government, as the crossroads at which we begin to break our ties with the past and set the scene over the next two years ready for the new millennium. Certainly, I am confident that the imminent release of one of the most significant federal policy initiatives since federation will help ensure that this week becomes a turning point in Australian history.

Although the task ahead is still onerous, many of the hard yards have been done and the next two years must see a concerted effort to recognise the patience, support and sacrifice given by Western Australians during the process of setting things straight after the excesses of the 1980s.

We must recognise that Western Australian families and small businesses have paid a price for the reforms necessary to bring debt under control and provide the infrastructure needed to cope with the strong growth arising from a vibrant economy. For example, as I said earlier, it is my earnest hope that taxation reform will reward those low and middle-income families who are the backbone of our society - especially the young families in my electorate to whom I referred earlier.

The Americans are renowned as past masters of the one liner. Perhaps one of the best examples was when former United States President, Ronald Reagan ran for office on the catchcry "Ask yourself whether you feel better off today than you were four years ago." In two years when I ask my constituents that same question, they must be able to reflect on the achievements of government in their local community through the provision of new schools, job opportunities for their children, new health care, better roads and a clean environment. They must feel safer and know that the days of the soft approach to those who shatter the peace and security of our lives or who harm our loved ones, whether at home or in public, are over. They must know that we have listened to them and delivered the goods in return for the personal sacrifices of previous years. There must be an air of confidence and optimism for our children's future and the sort of society we will leave them.

This Government has shown it is prepared to listen and to respond to concerns; to be innovative in tackling adversity and planning for the future. Indeed, I am confident that, when I ask that question in two years, people will say, "Yes, Dan, we are better off."

MR MASTERS (Vasse) [12.25 pm]: I formally second the motion.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Dr Gallop (Leader of the Opposition).

DEPUTY CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES

Appointment

THE SPEAKER (Mr Strickland): I wish to advise members that I nominate the following members as deputy chairmen of committees for the present session: The member for Bunbury (Mr Osborne), the member for Joondalup (Mr Baker), the member for Mitchell (Mr Barron-Sullivan), the member for Ningaloo (Mr Sweetman), the member for Southern River (Mrs Holmes) and the member for Thornlie (Ms McHale).

[Questions without notice taken.]

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE

On motion by Mr Barnett (Leader of the House), resolved -

That the House at its rising adjourn until Wednesday, 12 August at 11.00 am.

House adjourned at 12.45 pm

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

FEDERAL ELECTION PREFERENCES

1. Dr GALLOP to the Premier:

- (1) Does the Premier agree with his deputy, the member for Cottesloe, that the Liberal Party must put One Nation last at the next federal election on moral, economic and political grounds?
- (2) Is it not the case that his deputy has shown leadership on this issue and he has not?

Mr COURT replied:

- (1)-(2) I repeat that the decision of the Liberal Party is that it will make decisions about preferences for One Nation when it knows who are the candidates.

Mr McGowan: We know the candidates already.

Mr COURT: Does the member?

Mr McGowan: Yes, Lee Dawson and Kim Beazley. You tell us which one comes first?

Mr COURT: When the candidates are known, a decision will be made. I have said publicly that it is likely that One Nation will be put last for one main reason; that is, its immigration policies are totally unacceptable. When it comes to the Labor Party giving moral advice on this issue, it must be very careful. It is only two years ago at a federal election in Mr Beazley's seat that in his how to vote card, a copy of which I have here, he saw fit to put One Nation, a group that was against further immigration to this country - quite racist, I would have thought - well ahead of the Liberal Party.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members, we have had a short break and here we are again. I remind members that we do allow some interjection but we cannot have people interjecting at that level on both sides of the Chamber.

Mr COURT: Whether we like it or not, One Nation has attracted widespread support around the country. The issue that the major political parties must address is: Why has One Nation been attracting what I believe is largely a protest vote? As the Leader of the Western Australian Liberal Party, I have a responsibility to make sure we address the issues and concerns that are worrying people in the community. We have a responsibility to win back those people, to win back that protest vote. The Labor Party will be in exactly the same position. If members opposite think that those people do not exist, when it is said that in many electorates 20 per cent to 30 per cent support One Nation, they are living in a fool's paradise. I have analysed One Nation's policies as best I can get them. Its economic policies are very much a clone of the Labor Party's policies. Its immigration policies attack one of the great strengths of this country; that is, the fact that we have been able to accommodate some 200 different ethnic groups in our community. That we have been able to bring so many peoples together has become, without doubt, one of the world's success stories.

We announced today that we changed our portfolio to one called Citizenship and Multicultural Interests. We want to promote the positive things happening in our community, the positives of being a citizen of Australia, and our living in harmony strategy, which I am sure members opposite would agree has been a great success. It has helped to overcome a number of problems in the community and it has created greater tolerance. I believe we should fight any political organisation which tries to cause division and hatred in the community, as was mentioned in the Governor's speech. However, to be realistic, One Nation is more than that. People have expressed concerns, particularly in Western Australia and Queensland, about the central Government not properly taking into account their concerns. Political parties which do not learn the lessons from that will be judged accordingly at the next election.

FEDERAL ELECTION PREFERENCES

2. Dr GALLOP to the Premier:

Has the Premier, any members of his staff or any Liberal Party officials met with representatives from One Nation to discuss preferences at the forthcoming federal election?

Mr COURT replied:

I have not and I am not aware of anyone on my staff who has. Mr Speaker, in case you have not already heard earlier answers, I have nothing to do with the allocation of preferences. Our party organisation meets as soon as nominations are closed.

Dr Gallop: Have they met with One Nation?

Mr COURT: No. I am telling the Leader of the Opposition that as soon as nominations are closed, our state executive meets, and within a couple of hours it has made a decision. I have heard that people in the Labor Party have allowed negotiations to take place with One Nation candidates, and that at a number of national interviews, senior Labor Party people have tried to have two bob each way on the issue.

OAKFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL

3. Mrs HOLMES to the Minister for Education:

In view of the recent announcement to close the Oakford Primary School, can the Minister advise if any possibility exists of a primary school site being identified in the Oakford area which could be utilised if future development occurs which would warrant the provision of this facility?

Mr BARNETT replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question. I visited Oakford Primary School about six weeks before the decision was announced. In my view, the community had a broad acceptance that inevitably it would close. The facilities were inadequate, the site was subject to flooding and it was not very far from the excellent Marri Grove School, which has a capacity to absorb the majority of students. However, a view is held that urban subdivision may progress into that rural subdivision, and the population in the future may rise. With that in mind, the Education Department has held initial discussions with the Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale for the purpose of identifying a 4 hectare site which would be suitable for a school in the future. I stress that that is unlikely to happen in the near future; perhaps in the range of five to 10 years.

FEDERAL ELECTION PREFERENCES

4. Mr RIPPER to the Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests:

- (1) Is the Minister aware of concerns among Western Australia's ethnic communities about the Premier's refusal to commit to putting One Nation last on Liberal Party how to vote cards?
- (2) If so, has the Minister conveyed these concerns to the Premier?
- (3) Will the Minister now publicly call on the Liberal Party to put One Nation last in all seats, state and federal, and not just his own?

Mr BOARD replied:

- (1)-(3) I am sure the Premier is aware of concerns within the ethnic communities. I thought the Premier answered the previous question particularly well. For a long period Opposition and Government, whichever was in government, have worked cooperatively and in a bipartisan manner to build harmony and something constructive in our community. I believe we have worked as a team for this because we are all aware that nothing is more important in our community than people getting on and relating to each other. All members in this House are aware of the contributions made to this State by migrants. Some people in our community are seeking to divide our community. We should work together on this. We should be decisive, and not play short term politics, to build our community as one.

Ms MacTiernan interjected.

Mr RIPPER: I want to ask a supplementary question.

The SPEAKER: No. The member interjected while I was on my feet.

I remind the member for Armadale that I have had a very peaceful break and she is interjecting beyond what is acceptable. I do not think the Minister is quite finished. However, I am sure he will get to the point.

Mr BOARD: This is not just a job for me; I am passionate about this issue. I assure the member that the ethnic communities in this State know exactly where I stand and how I feel about -

Dr Gallop: No, they do not. Do it in this Parliament today.

Mr BOARD: Yes, they do. It is a matter of public record that I believe that One Nation's policies on migration and race are divisive in our community. It is not a matter of preferences; it is a matter of getting on and working together constructively. I challenge the Opposition to do something to build our communities.

FEDERAL ELECTION PREFERENCES

5. Mr RIPPER to the Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests:

Does the Minister's passionate support of multiculturalism extend to his undertaking to resign as Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests if the WA Liberal Party does not put One Nation last in all WA seats in the federal election?

Mr BOARD replied:

That is a ridiculous suggestion! It is absolute rubbish! Why does the Leader of the Opposition not do something to build our community? We have an opportunity right now at the start of this Parliament to do something. I have already indicated that I will put One Nation last in my seat.

Mr Ripper: What about in the other seats?

Mr BOARD: That is not my decision. If the member wants to continue this divisive short term politicking, he will only add to One Nation's divisive policies on race.

PEEL HEALTH CAMPUS

6. Mr MARSHALL to the Minister for Health:

The long awaited Mandurah hospital in my electorate appears to be near completion. When will the new 132 beds become functional and what extra services will become available to the Mandurah community?

Mr DAY replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question and the opportunity to advise the House of the progress of the development of the excellent new Peel Health Campus. The company which is providing the hospital and the services, Health Solutions, anticipates that all new public facilities at the Peel Health Campus will be functional from Monday, 17 August.

The final licensing inspection is to take place tomorrow, Wednesday, 12 August. The commissioning date cannot be confirmed until that inspection has been done, and no doubt that will be very soon.

The new campus will mean an overall annual increase of 4 000 public patients being treated locally and health spending in the region will increase by \$9m annually. This will greatly reduce the need for local patients to travel to Perth teaching hospitals for treatment.

The new facility will include the following public services: 25 surgical beds; 15 obstetrics beds; five high dependency beds; 27 medical services beds; 12 rehabilitation services beds; two palliative care beds; and four paediatric care beds, giving a total of 90 beds. All of the wards are designed to allow flexible bed utilisation. In addition, the day surgical unit will have 12 beds, the oncology area will have three beds or chairs and the renal area will have five beds or chairs, giving a total of 110 public beds. There will also be three delivery suites, four observation beds and 10 treatment bays in the emergency department. In addition to the 110 public beds, there will be 20 private beds and two labour-delivery suites.

The development of the Peel Health Campus is another excellent achievement by the Government designed to ensure that high standard health care facilities are provided close to where people live and particularly in areas of expanding population. The Government is very keen to ensure that world-class medical treatment is available to people throughout Western Australia within a reasonable period and it is getting on with the job.

CHILD MIGRANTS

*Apology***7. Ms ANWYL to the Minister for Family and Children's Services:**

- (1) Will the Minister support the motion foreshadowed today by the Leader of the Opposition calling on Parliament to apologise on behalf of all Western Australians to former child migrants for the policies that led to their forced migration and the subsequent maltreatment many of them experienced? If not, why not?
- (2) Why has the Minister been silent on this issue?

Mrs PARKER replied:

- (1)-(2) The child migration scheme has a very sad and traumatic history. Between 7 000 and 10 000 children came to Australia under this scheme. I met on two occasions with the House of Commons Health Committee

when it visited Western Australia and I have read its report and prepared a comprehensive response. The Government acknowledges the trauma involved. However, there appears to have been some local misrepresentation of the facts about the Government's response to the report. Members of the Opposition should be aware of the services provided to these people because when they were in government the then Department for Community Development established a family support tracing program involving psychologists and counselling. It is interesting that the House of Commons report commended the Western Australian Government and the department for the work that has been done.

Dr Gallop: Answer the question!

Mrs PARKER: I will very happily participate in the debate tomorrow and I hope we achieve a cooperative response -

Dr Gallop: Do you support the apology motion?

Mrs PARKER: I will be happy to look at the detail of the motion.

Dr Gallop: So you cannot say today that you support it.

Mrs PARKER: I have not seen the detail of the motion. However, the Government acknowledges the trauma involved. I hope that the Opposition will not try to play party politics with this issue. I have directed my department to contact the United Kingdom authorities and to support them in every way.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! Only six weeks ago we were working on members refraining from making inane interjections that have nothing to do with the question asked. It appears that over the six week break we have forgotten that work.

Mrs PARKER: The British Government has said that it will respond with urgency, and a response is due some time in October. The Government will liaise with and support the British authorities in any way it can.
