



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

THIRTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT
THIRD SESSION
1999

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Thursday, 12 August 1999

Legislative Council

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

STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATION

Criminal Law Amendment Bill (No 1) Recommendations - Motion

HON N.F. MOORE (Mining and Pastoral - Leader of the House) [11.02 am]: I move -

That the Legislation Committee have power to inquire into and report on those recommendations contained in the committee's report on the Criminal Law Amendment Bill (No 1) 1998, relating to the taking of forensic samples and stalking, that remain for consideration consequent upon the enactment of that Bill.

It is necessary for this motion to be agreed to by the House in order for the Legislation Committee to finalise some work it was doing prior to prorogation.

Question put and passed.

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES AND FUNDING COMMITMENTS

Motion

Resumed from 11 August on the following motion moved by Hon Tom Stephens (Leader of the Opposition) -

That this House -

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

HON TOM STEPHENS (Mining and Pastoral - Leader of the Opposition) [11.03 am]: This motion provides the opportunity for opposition members, other non-government members and, presumably, government members of this Chamber to contribute to this debate day in and day out - probably until the Parliament is next prorogued - with a litany of the sins of the Government. The Government has consistently and regularly misplaced its sense of priority and put an emphasis on funding commitments that do not meet the expectations of the Western Australian community. At the same time, the Government has been involved in budgetary processes that have allowed the budget to be out of control. The Government has showed no sign of delivering funds to those areas of government that are so desperately in need of financial support, such as health, education, police, and public transport, to name just a few. At the same time as the Government has engaged in a deliberate policy of increasing the tax take and the charges for the delivery of government services to the people of Western Australia, it has cut back those services and reduced their quality and standard. I am sure that other opposition members will follow me in this debate and will take the opportunity to identify specifics to illustrate the problems with which we are faced as a State at the hands of the current Government.

I made some reference to the proposed new maritime museum at Fremantle. Some people are of the view that it will provide an additional tourist attraction and the opportunity to house the America's Cup-winning yacht *Australia II* as a showcase for that museum. I am not an enthusiast of the proposal. The Premier has described this as the second project in the trifecta of icons which he combines with his beloved belltower and the Minister for Tourism's beloved convention centre. These projects fill me with considerable concern, particularly the fact that WA taxpayers will now foot the total \$35m estimated cost for the proposed maritime museum after the State Government failed in its attempt to secure \$25m from the Federal Government's \$1b federation fund. One would have thought that, in the face of that failed submission to the Federal Government, the Premier's enthusiasm for the project might diminish.

Hon B.M. Scott: How much did it cost for the Sydney Opera House or C.Y. O'Connor's pipeline?

Hon TOM STEPHENS: All I can say to Hon Barbara Scott is, "This project ain't no Opera House!" The Opera House is an absolute icon of the Australian community. This project will not have the same status as the Opera House. Premier Court ain't no Jörn Utzon.

Hon B.M. Scott: He has not designed it and does not pretend to have designed it.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: He seems to have had his mates designing the project; his boating companion is involved in it. It has been another example, it would appear to the commentators and to us, of simply facilitating jobs for the boys.

Hon N.F. Moore: Would you like to say that outside the House?

Hon TOM STEPHENS: It has been all over the front of the newspapers.

Hon N.F. Moore: You say it outside the House.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: "Court's business linked to job mate" has been all over the front of the papers. Premier Richard Court revealed that the man he picked -

Hon N.F. Moore: Say it outside the House.

Hon N.D. Griffiths: Are you threatening the Leader of the Opposition?

Hon N.F. Moore: I am asking him to say something outside.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Let us just have one member interjecting at a time and when members interject the Leader of the Opposition might like to be quiet so that we can have an orderly flow of interjections. Members know that we will not be able to run the debate properly if everybody interrupts and interjects. Let us hear the Leader of the Opposition now; other members can respond in due course.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I was referring to the Premier's involvement in this project and the comments about the Premier's business link to his mate who has scored the job of directing the project. There is no secret about this any longer. The Government may have wanted it to be secret; however, it was the subject of front page stories and editorials in the media of Western Australia.

Hon N.F. Moore: Which project are you talking about?

Hon B.M. Scott: You are not talking about the project; you are talking about the architect.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I am talking about the maritime museum project.

Hon N.F. Moore: You are talking about the design of the belltower. That is what I asked you to say outside the House.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: No, I am not. Has the minister been asleep?

Hon N.F. Moore: No, I have not been asleep.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: The Leader of the House was not listening to me because that was not what I was talking about. I am talking about this project.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Members, one reason for the confusion is the interjections. I do not know who is interjecting and who is making the lead speech at the moment. If the Leader of the Opposition will address the Chair, we will not have any confusion.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Mr President, I am critical of the way this Premier has pressed on with this project in the face of a failure to attract federal funding for it, particularly when there are other projects which could become real icon projects for this State which would be of real benefit to the Western Australian community and which could still have the chance of succeeding in attracting funds from the Federal Government to create projects which would benefit economic activity and regional development and provide potential tourism opportunities for this State. One instance that comes to mind is the Derby tidal power project, which I cannot really talk about at length as it is the subject of the next motion; however, I will take that opportunity when we reach that motion.

I am not aware of any explanation from the Premier of where the additional \$25m of funding will come from now that the Federal Government has indicated that it will not contribute any funds. Which other areas of state government expenditure will suffer as a result of the need to proceed with this project, so far as the Premier is concerned, in the absence of federal funding, particularly in relation to the \$25m budgeted for this year, when so many other core areas are still struggling? I hope when the Leader of the Government replies to this debate he will take the opportunity to answer in detail my concerns in that regard.

There was well publicised community concern in the Fremantle area about this museum project and about the safety issue.

Hon N.F. Moore: Do you support the museum?

Hon TOM STEPHENS: No, I do not.

Hon N.F. Moore: Dr Gallop does.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I have not asked Dr Gallop about his view.

Hon N.F. Moore: He does support it; he said so on radio the other day.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: He supports the maritime museum project?

Hon Ken Travers: No-one can afford it.

Hon N.F. Moore: Not with you guys in office. We are still paying back the debts you left us.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I will have the opportunity of discussing with Dr Gallop his support for that project.

Hon N.F. Moore: Perhaps there is a split in the Labor Party ranks.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I would be surprised about that.

Hon Ken Travers: There is in the coalition ranks.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I have no doubt that the local member will support it.

Hon Ken Travers: The member for Geraldton doesn't support anything.

Hon N.F. Moore: Perhaps there is a split in the Labor Party ranks for the maritime museum.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: The member for Fremantle probably does support the project; however, I have not had the opportunity of discussing it with him either. I personally do not support it.

Hon B.M. Scott: He has been most enthusiastic in the local area.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I would expect that of a hardworking local member of Parliament, as is the member for Fremantle, Jim McGinty.

Hon N.F. Moore: If the Labor Caucus decides to support it, will you support it?

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Of course, if Caucus decides to support it; I always go along with Caucus decisions. However, I will argue strongly in the Caucus room against supporting the maritime project, if it ever comes up for consideration in the Caucus. It is an unnecessary burden on the taxpayers of Western Australia in the absence of a contribution for it from the Federal Government.

Hon B.M. Scott: This is just like the criticism of the Sydney Opera House. Have you read what *Hansard* shows about that?

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Madam member, I say to you again that this ain't no opera house. This is a boat museum. I have said that there are other things which could be built -

Hon N.F. Moore: It is a maritime museum; that is what boats are about.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: There are many things for which the Government could build museums. We could showcase anachronistic Governments. Members opposite could put themselves in a museum. That would be a great museum with a real role. We could put the whole Government of Western Australia in a museum and I reckon we would get visitors from all around the world coming to see members as stuffed exhibits of an anachronistic, furtive, secretive, incompetent Government.

Hon N.F. Moore: A Government that actually paid off your debts! You were a disgrace as a Government.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: We could have a real government museum. I reckon I would support a museum that would display members opposite as stuffed exhibits. As I said yesterday, the Government could have a museum of forests. Because it is so rapidly destroying the forests, it might as well put the trees in a museum before it has finally eradicated trees from the south west.

Hon Barry House: You would put timber workers in there.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: That appears to be the Government's strategy. It could have a museum to honesty in government because the Government has made that an anachronism. It has demonstrated recently in this Parliament its failure to display accountability or to deliver answers to questions in the other place. It could have rendered as museum relics what once was required of Governments to be accountable through this Parliament to the people of this State. These are the things, by virtue of this Government's style, which would have a more appropriate place in a museum. The Government has succeeded in making the principles of accountability, honesty and integrity in government things to which it could build monuments and museums. Unfortunately, but in keeping with the way this Government treats its supposed commitment to openness and accountability, the Government has kept secret eight studies on the risks associated with the museum building until after the public comment period closes. The Government is even refusing to release them pursuant to a freedom of information request, which facility is supposed to encourage government to be open and accountable. That would be a better theme for a museum: The Government could create a museum constructed around the antiquated and historic principle of open and accountable government - allegedly one of the hallmarks of this Government.

The Government has made claims through the Premier that all the safety issues associated with the maritime museum have been identified and addressed. The question of why the eight risk studies have not been released still remains unanswered. Concerns still exist about issues such as having a part of the museum hanging out over the water. I do not know if that issue has been resolved; however, if it has not, it must be a source of concern for people who want to see a functioning port. I hope the Minister for Transport, who has responsibility for looking after the issues surrounding the Fremantle port, will ensure that this Premier's icon is not constructed in a way that does damage to that great port of Fremantle. The project will be located at a bend in the harbour and, therefore, there are risks associated with engine failure or other problems on ships in the tight turning entrance to the port. In addition, Fremantle is already a traffic gridlock on weekends and the museum may exacerbate that situation. I hope the Government will have been sensible enough to include these factors in any consideration of the issues involved. Of course, they may have been addressed in the risk assessments and have been satisfactorily resolved but no-one can be certain about that without the release of the assessments. I call on the Government, which is allegedly interested in principles of openness and accountability, to release those documents.

Hon B.M. Scott: Have you not read the report of the Fremantle Port Authority?

Hon TOM STEPHENS: What is the point of a public comment period when not all the relevant factors are available for the public to comment upon? It is yet another example of government secrecy. If Hon Barbara Scott can send them to me, I will be happy to take delivery of the eight secret reports that deal with safety risks in that area. I will be happy to take delivery of the secret designs indicating how the Government will handle the process for removing the project from the working area of the port. It may suit the Government to destroy that port, in order to set up another one for one of its mates farther down the coast.

Hon M.J. Criddle: There is no intention to do that.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Can the Minister for Transport be sure that the Premier is not trying to destroy the port?

Hon M.J. Criddle: There is no intention to do that by the Government.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: The risk is that the Premier may not tell the Minister for Transport what he intends to do. He may simply join with Mr Buckeridge in strategies aimed at destroying the port of Fremantle so that it cannot continue to function as a working port for the benefit of the people of Western Australia.

Hon M.J. Criddle: The problem is that you are not listening to what you are being told.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I am more than happy to not only listen to, but also be briefed upon, the studies associated with the risk of building this expensive project in that location in ways that could destroy the operations of that working port.

At this stage we have seen displays from a Government committed to the principles of secrecy in the operation of the project. It is time for the Premier, just for once, to live up to his claim that he would bring into the halls of government in this State principles of openness and accountability, and release the assessments of which I have spoken. Surely the Government should be on safe ground in relation to this issue, and I hope the Premier will not place himself and the Government at risk of setting up yet another project that does not stack up against the various important principles that must be taken into account in projects such as this.

The appointment of the Premier's mate, Bob Shields, as manager of this \$50m redevelopment of the Fremantle waterfront is another example of the mode of operation, secrecy and lack of accountability in this project. Mr Shields may be the best person to do this job but, because it was not advertised, we shall never know for sure. We are given to understand that Mr Shields was appointed because the Premier wanted him for the job, and no-one will ever know whether that demand of the Premier's should have been accommodated by the taxpayers of Western Australia. Mr Shields started his \$100 000 a year consultancy before the merit panel had even discussed the appointment, let alone endorsed it. The Premier relied on a half-truth when stating that the head of the Government Property Office, Ian Johnston appointed Mr Shields, given that the Premier had told Mr Johnston he wanted Mr Shields to get the job. The Premier also failed to mention, until forced to do so, that he used to be in business with Mr Shields.

The convention centre and the belltower are the clearest examples of the Government getting its priorities wrong. It is proposing to spend \$100m on the convention centre despite the fact that Burswood International Resort Casino already has convention facilities and recently announced that it would significantly expand its convention, exhibition, ballroom, hotel and parking facilities. Burswood plans to spend \$75m on expanding its convention facilities to accommodate 1 800 delegates. This appears to be sufficient to meet Western Australia's medium term requirements and, although it may be appropriate in 10 years' time to provide additional convention facilities, the priority today must be to provide sustainable industries, particularly outside the Perth central business district and metropolitan area, in locations which are experiencing the damage currently being inflicted by a Government that is not focusing on the needs of the community. The Government has not indicated where these funds will come from and, without doubt, there is a risk that other core areas will suffer from the Premier's need to stroke his ego and build monuments to himself and his Government.

The budget is not under control in many ways. Hon Nick Griffiths illustrated in question time on Tuesday and Wednesday that the Minister for Finance does not know who are the members of the Government's budget subcommittee. We are told that the subcommittee has six members, and the names of four of them have been provided. We also know that Hon Peter Foss is not a member of that subcommittee, but we are yet to be told who the other two members are. After questions have been asked two days in a row, it should be possible for the Minister for Finance to identify the members of that important subcommittee.

Hon N.D. Griffiths: He has probably been asleep with the Deputy Premier.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: That is a good interjection. We have it on record that the assessment of the Leader of the Government in this place is that the Deputy Premier and Leader of the National Party was probably asleep during the budget subcommittee meetings. We know that the Minister for Finance does not know the names of the members of that subcommittee; presumably he also was asleep. I do not know who was awake; perhaps none of them was and that is why the budget process is such an absolute shambles.

Hon N.F. Moore: Why is it a shambles? Give one example.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: The Leader of the House knows what happened in the last financial year with the budget blow-outs across various portfolio areas, and the budget documents tabled in this House had no resemblance to the final outcomes.

Hon Ken Travers: It was a \$600m deficit - the highest ever.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I expect to hear speech after speech from members on this side of the House illustrating all the points about which the Leader of the House has just asked.

Hon N.F. Moore: I am looking forward to it.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: The Leader of the House will get them, especially if he makes inane interjections such as that he just made. The Leader of the House has illustrated that he is not on top of the disastrous custodianship that his Government has put on display in its handling of the budget processes in this State.

Hon N.D. Griffiths: This Government is the highest taxing and highest spending Government in the State's history.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: That is a very telling interjection from the shadow Minister for Finance.

Hon N.F. Moore: Have a look at the debt level.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: We regularly see budgetary shortfalls on the part of this Government - Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! As members know, Hansard reporters are required to report what is being said and if 15 people speak at the same time, that makes it difficult. If members do not have respect for their fellow members, at least they should have some respect for those required to report the proceedings.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: The Government clearly needs to address the way in which it determines its priorities. It is heading for a budget shortfall because of softening revenue from mining royalties and payroll tax, and increased demands in the areas of health, education and the prison system, despite the fact that since coming to power this Government has enjoyed record revenue growth buoyed by Western Australia's traditionally strong economic activity. Some unfortunate emergencies, such as the Moora floods and the cyclones in the north west, have impacted on the public purse, as has the Government's agreement to top up redundancy payments to timber workers who have lost their jobs. The problem is that the people of Western Australia are not seeing any return from this high taxing State Government. If the Government is to have any hope of balancing its budget, it must review its spending priorities. It has not been honest about the state of its budget and the extent to which it is in deficit. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia stated that the Government had serious budget problems, and there have been three years of budget blow-outs. The Deputy Premier said that capital works spending in the south west must be brought forward to boost the local economy in that area. He was even quoted as saying that they could not wring their hands and say, "We have no money."

Hon N.D. Griffiths: They will ring the bells instead.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: He certainly indicated that they should not wring their hands and say that they have no money, but they have the money to ring the bells; that is, they are using taxpayers' funds to put in place this unwanted belltower. The Government's scarce financial resources should not be spent on things people might want but do not need. There are clear indications from the Health, Education, and Justice departments that the Government is facing budgetary overruns. Last year the Government tried to shift the blame for the crisis in our health system to the Federal Government. Clearly that is only a political tactic; it is only part of the story. There is some state government responsibility for the crisis in our public hospitals and the failure to meet the needs of our schools, police and public transport. The Government should inject more of its revenues into these areas. Doing so would give it moral and political strength when it argues with the Commonwealth about funding. Members can imagine what happens when this Government tries to get money out of the Federal Government. The Federal Government must just laugh at the State Government and say, "Look how you are misspending your money. You are wasting it on belltowers and convention centres. Why should we give your State any more money when you are an irresponsible Government which will spend money on maritime museums, belltowers and convention centres that do not stack up and have not attracted federal funding." It is no wonder that the Federal Government is laughing the State Government out of court and not giving it the allocation of financial resources that this State deserves. This State needs the collaboration which would come from the election of a Prime Minister Beazley and a Premier Gallop who would produce a winning combination of great benefit to all citizens of Western Australia. It is important to ensure that the Western Australian community gets a better deal than it receives currently from both state and federal Governments.

I turn briefly to the responsibilities of the Minister for Transport. He must explain what he has done to ensure that the \$44m from the fuel levy paid by Western Australian motorists, which the Premier promised would be spent on roads, has been spent on roads. The Premier has refused to give an adequate explanation as to why, through the transport trust fund, the money will not be spent on building and maintaining roads.

Hon M.J. Criddle: Who said that it will not?

Hon TOM STEPHENS: This is despite saying last month that money raised from the fuel levy would be spent on roads. The Premier said the Government made a conscious decision to increase the fuel tax by 4¢ a litre and to increase motor vehicle registration fees; and every cent of that money had gone into increased funding of the road program. Clearly that was inaccurate and incorrect, because the information provided to the estimates committee hearing in the other place stated that \$43.8m is scheduled to go into consolidated revenue. Is that right or is the Minister for Transport right?

Hon M.J. Criddle: I will explain that to you.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I look forward to that explanation. Regrettably, this Government puts questions like that on hold.

Hon M.J. Criddle: I said I would explain it to you.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I am happy to take the explanation by interjection.

Hon M.J. Criddle: If I start interjecting, you will take it out of context and you will not understand it.

Hon N.D. Griffiths: When do you intend to explain it?

Hon M.J. Criddle: When I get the information.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: At the conclusion of the first hour, we would be happy to accommodate the Minister for Transport's giving a brief ministerial statement that would enable him to put on the record how I am wrong.

Hon M.J. Criddle: You will not run Transport, I will.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: The Minister for Transport is a nice bloke and I like him, but regrettably, he is not in control of his portfolio area. Unfortunately, according to his bureaucrats, funds that should be spent by his transport trust fund are not landing in that trust fund as supposedly committed by the Premier and the minister. Those funds are going into consolidated revenue. I want the minister to explain how the department has got it wrong or why I am wrong.

Hon N.D. Griffiths: He should explain why the Minister for Finance is wrong.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Indeed.

Hon M.J. Criddle: I will explain it to you when I get all the information so you can understand it.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I look forward to that. Twelve o'clock would be an ideal opportunity.

Hon M.J. Criddle: I will not let you run Transport. I will decide when I will explain that.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: I just want someone to run Transport in the interests of the Western Australian community. In the absence of the Minister for Transport's doing that -

Hon M.J. Criddle: Transport's financial position is well and truly known. I will clarify the issues for you.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: The failure to allocate this money to the transport trust fund is even more damning given that Main Roads' debt is estimated to blow out this year to more than \$200m because of the Transform WA road building program, which has not been funded appropriately. As the Premier has failed to provide a proper explanation, it is time for the minister to explain these discrepancies and to explain why Western Australian motorists are being ripped off by the Government after paying an extra levy on their fuel purchases.

In the process of this debate, there will be many contributions from my colleagues on this side of the House, who will spell out in chapter and verse why this disgraceful Government should mend its ways, re-establish some sense of priority about its budgetary process and get on top of the budget delivered to the State; that is, a budget from which the various departments and agencies can work through the current financial year. Clearly there is a need for the Premier to recognise that it is time to scrap the previously delivered budget papers and bring down a new mini- budget which accurately assesses the income and expenditure of the State's various departments and agencies. Even the banana republics are doing a better job of presenting the budgetary processes through their Houses of Parliament than is this crowd in Government. I call upon the Premier and his government team to take the opportunity to present to this House a budget paper that reflects the income prospects of this State Government and the revenue expenditure of its departments and agencies, and do it in double-quick time to provide the Parliament and, through the Parliament, the people of Western Australia with some indication of what the Government is up to and what it proposes to be up to over the next 12 months.

HON KIM CHANCE (Agricultural) [11.37 am]: It was suggested to me by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Hon Nick Griffiths, that I should start my contribution to this debate by saying that this is chapter 1, and that is an appropriate way to start. We are now in a position to review the Government's performance, which is not coming up well. In this chapter 1 of that revelation -

Hon Bob Thomas: They do not know what they stand for.

Hon N.F. Moore: We stand for getting rid of the huge debts you have left.

Hon Bob Thomas: All you are doing is selling assets.

Hon N.F. Moore: You have forgotten that you just blew huge amounts of dollars looking after your mates.

The PRESIDENT: Order, members! Hon Kim Chance has not had two minutes to make his introductory comments before two members have tried to take over his role as speaker. Every member will have an opportunity to speak. The Leader of the Opposition has already predicted that we will be on this debate until the House is next prorogued. That will leave us a fair amount of time. We must let one person speak at a time. The Hansard reporter cannot discern 15 interjections if they are made at the same time, so members will not get their names in *Hansard*. If members want their names in *Hansard*, they should speak when I give them the call. I was listening to Hon Kim Chance and I will continue to listen.

Hon KIM CHANCE: I appreciate that, Mr President. I am sure that at the appropriate time when the Leader of the House and Hon Bob Thomas make their contributions to this speech, they will do so far more eloquently than I. Nonetheless, I have an issue to raise and if this motion has a deficiency, it is that it could have widened its scope somewhat in its examples.

Certainly the belltower has become somewhat iconic in people's dissatisfaction with this Government and its Mussoliniesque devotion to public monuments. The fact is that the motion is clear and concise; it concentrates on an issue which is of great importance. Members who were listening to ABC radio this morning may have heard an issue in Liam Bartlett's program which had to do with the announcement by a medical head in Royal Perth Hospital, I think the Shenton Park annexe, who had withdrawn his employment and a program on the basis that it was not being funded and sufficient resources were not being allocated to that important work and that he had been subject in his department to a continual attack on his funding for years and years. The Minister for Health, for whom incidentally I have some time, obviously stoutly defended the Government's position. He made the point that, although that might be true of that particular doctor's department, it was not true of the overall situation. The fact remains that the waiting lists in Western Australia continue to grow. We have those issues which I mentioned in my speech during the Address-in-Reply debate last night concerning the waste in the Health

Department through its continual process of reinvention. However, even that could be deemed to be constructive. There is no benefit whatsoever arising from these monuments that are being constructed. All the while the Government is ignoring the call that the public is sending to parliamentarians for a greater expenditure of funds in those core areas which people have every right to look to the Government to provide.

I received some information this morning by way of an answer to a question on notice, which I will reveal to members in a moment. It is an indication that it is not only in those areas of public monuments that we are making stupid and extremely expensive mistakes, but also in the areas of industry protection. Members will know that I have raised in this place, some might say ad nauseam, the issues surrounding the Narrikup abattoir. I believe that in this issue we have one of the greatest single scandals that has ever been perpetrated by this Government. I make no apology whatever for the contentious nature of that statement. I will briefly summarise why it is a scandal. We had an export abattoir industry that was suffering from oversupply. We had too much abattoir space and too few sheep to process through it. The existing operators in the abattoir industry were hurting, and hurting badly.

Hon M.J. Criddle: The greenfield site will surely be of an advantage to the producers because it gets more back.

Hon KIM CHANCE: There has been no advantage evident yet. The minister is leading me off the track. I need to explain to members the history.

When the Government closed the Robb Jetty abattoir, it did so without a great deal of support from us because we felt at the time that, although it might have been in the wrong place, it was quite a high technology abattoir notwithstanding its appearance from outside. It was as good as any in Australia, plus it was providing some very high quality training and a lot of employment in an employment stressed area. However, Robbs was closed. The message was sent out to the smaller abattoir operators throughout Western Australia that there was an opportunity there for them, if they chose to invest, to move into a broader area by adopting a common abattoir standard and moving into the area of possibly limited export participation. I supported that component because I have those abattoirs scattered all the way through my electorate in the Great Southern and one or two even in the wheatbelt. What happened though? After those abattoir operators spent the money and after one by one they went to government for some kind of assistance, sometimes quite modest - one example was a request for the Government to give a hand to pay out stamp duty - in every case I can determine bar one, where assistance was given for a road which I think was for the Beaufort River abattoir, the abattoir operators were told that it is not the Government's role to assist private industry. Those people went ahead and made investments ranging from \$1m to \$3m. These are not big businesses but they made that commitment. What did the Government do then? It cut them off at the knees by importing the Fletcher Group from Dubbo in New South Wales and by pumping huge amounts of public money into the Fletcher Group. There was \$5.7m in one lump, something like \$2.5m before that and another \$2.5m for the road infrastructure. We are talking about a major investment - two large primary schools in that investment alone.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: Do you mean that there were two primary schools in the abattoir or that it was the equivalent?

Hon KIM CHANCE: One would not put two large primary schools in the abattoir but be inclined to put them where children were.

Hon Barry House: Carey Park was \$4.6m.

Hon KIM CHANCE: In fact I got the figures from that story. The Carey Park school is unusually expensive because of site limitations and the need to go to two storeys. Even with Carey Park at \$6.4m, it is \$12.8m for two Carey Parks. The cost of Narrikup is not far short of that and is attributable directly to the Western Australian taxpayer. If we take the Australian taxpayer into the equation as well it becomes a lot more. The Fletcher Group is not only bleeding the Western Australian Government for money but also taking it from the Commonwealth Government. I have yet to ascertain some of those figures but Senator Jim McKiernan has undertaken to ask a question or two on my behalf in the Senate at the next opportunity.

Today, as I have said, I received an answer to a question on notice. In this case the answer has come from the Minister for Employment and Training, Hon Graham Kierath. I asked a six-part question. The first part of the question asked what amount of state and commonwealth funds have so far been made available to training programs which are in place at the Narrikup abattoir. The minister could not answer part (b) about commonwealth funds; I thought he might have known, but that is fine. I take it that the answer in respect of the state component of training funds which have gone to the abattoir refers to the period July 1998 to May 1999, because that is a date used later in the question - but it is less than a year. The amount of state training funds which have been pumped into the Fletcher Group so far is \$556 710. Those are state funds alone. This is an outrage. We are paying not only to establish the abattoir and put in road infrastructure which is for no other purpose than to serve the needs of this abattoir, but also its wages bill. It is an outrage that a local abattoir operator cannot even get a bit of relief for his stamp duty, yet we build this guy's abattoir and road infrastructure and then pay his wages bill.

I will be extremely interested to receive the answer to the equivalent question which will be asked in the Senate next week, because my information is that significant funds, of a scale which might put this to shame, are coming out of the Commonwealth. I do not know that yet and I do not know that the information will be easy to get, because the source of the commonwealth funds is somewhat confused. However, I can inform the House that the answer that was provided to me by the Minister for Employment and Training and which arrived on my desk today states that in less than a year the State has pumped more than \$500 000 of recurrent funding into this abattoir group to pay its wages.

There are components of this question which have not yet been answered but which I will be pursuing. It has been alleged to me that the Narrikup abattoir is hiring a qualified slaughterman as a trainee boner, and a qualified boner as a trainee slaughterman. Therefore, both of these people are trained tradesmen, both are hired as trainees, but the trainee boner never sees the boning floor because he goes on to the chain and trains the other trainee slaughtermen, even though he is still being

paid trainee wages, and the trainee slaughterman never goes on to the chain because he is a trained boner, and he goes in and trains the boners and slicers.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: How reliable is the source of your information?

Hon KIM CHANCE: It is reliable enough. My source of information is the Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union. It cannot be too reliable because it does not have a single member in that place, and I suspect that is the reason for what is happening in respect of the Government's huge assistance to this operator; it wants a non-union shop.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: However, if there are no union members there, does that mean that the union is working on hearsay only?

Hon KIM CHANCE: The union is working on what it can glean, yes, and it needs to be qualified by that.

Hon Greg Smith: Would you be happy to say that outside?

Hon KIM CHANCE: I am quite happy to say that outside, but I would quote my source. That is what the union told me; that is what it said publicly. It is certainly not frightened to say it outside, nor am I. I will very rarely say a thing in this place that I will not say outside.

I wanted, through this process of questioning, to try to give some credibility to what I had been told. That is the process of Parliament.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: Did you ask what the \$500 000 was used for?

Hon KIM CHANCE: It was specifically for training.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: Yes, but that is not specific at all.

Hon KIM CHANCE: Okay. It was a six-part question and it was quite detailed. For example, in part (4) of the question I asked -

How many trainees were employed at the Narrikup Abattoir at the end of each month during the months of July 1998 through to May 1999?

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: What was the answer?

Hon KIM CHANCE: The answer was -

The Department of Training does not have accurate figures on the number of trainees employed at the end of each month. The most accurate information available is the number of commencements for each month which are provided below . . .

They are from July 1998 to May 1999. The range of numbers varies from a high of 51 - at a rough guess, an average of about 26 or 27 - down to a low of zero. I will not read all the figures, but I am happy to make them available. Therefore, there has been this flow of about one person per working day coming on board.

There is another important component of the question. To try to give some credibility to the allegation that had been made by the Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union, I also asked in part (6) of the question -

Does the ratio of employees to trainees meet the Ministry of Training's usual criteria?

That very much goes to the point of the allegation. The answer to that really stunned me. The answer was -

The Narrikup Abattoir was identified as a greenfield site and its early stage of operation was effectively in a training mode. As a consequence it was granted a twelve-month exemption from the usual supervision ratios.

Hon Tom Helm: Is this a private abattoir?

Hon KIM CHANCE: Yes. It was granted an exemption from the ratios. I was not told what the ratios were, but we know that the abattoir was granted an exemption from the ratios that are normally required. Therefore, there has been a \$500 000 investment but we are not looking at how it is being operated, and we are overlooking the fact that the training ratios might be outside the normal guidelines.

I also asked how many employees, including trainees, were employed at the Narrikup abattoir, and I was told that the minister did not have access to the total number of employees at the abattoir. I wonder why not.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: Do you know?

Hon KIM CHANCE: No. It is a variable figure. However, I thought the minister may have been able to tell me that there were, at the end of any month, X employees, of whom Y employees were trainees. Unfortunately, that information has not been provided, but possibly it will come in the answer to the question that Senator Jim McKiernan will put to the commonwealth minister.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: You know the number of trainees.

Hon KIM CHANCE: No, I do not.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: You have the information.

Hon KIM CHANCE: No, the information provided to me was the number of commencements for each month, not the number of employees.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: Yes, but you know that is what it said. You know the number of trainees.

Hon KIM CHANCE: No, I do not know the number of trainees, because the abattoir has an extraordinarily high turnover of staff. Fifty one people might come on in one month, but 30 of them will leave in the same month.

Hon M.D. Nixon: As I understand it, the employment force is nearly all trainees, because it is a new abattoir and I do not think there were any trained people in the district. Therefore, slaughtermen from somewhere else would move to that area, but most of the people were trainees.

Hon KIM CHANCE: I think Hon Murray Nixon is quite right, because a large number of former Thomas Borthwick and Sons (Australia) Pty Ltd employees from Albany have gone to Narrikup to work. Similarly, people who were out of work in Katanning are going to Narrikup. It is true that there is a big pool of skilled abattoir labour in that region. Therefore, why are we putting more than \$550 000 of training funds into that abattoir in less than a year? It simply supports my contention that we are paying the wage bill. That is what this is about. It is an unsupervised device, as we now know from that answer, because there is no oversight of what is going on. We know from an earlier question I asked on this matter that the people who keep the records and the people who do the acquittal of the funds are the abattoir group itself; it is the registered training provider. That information is provided in part (3) of the answer. In part (3) of the question I asked -

What is the name/s of the training body or bodies who receive these funds?

Part (3) of the answer stated -

Fletchers International is the Registered Training Organisation.

Therefore, it is doing its own supervision. It is a scandal on top of a scandal that was built on a scandal.

Hon Tom Helm: Would the skilled workers be union people? Is that one of the reasons that there are unskilled people?

Hon KIM CHANCE: No. I think Hon Murray Nixon is probably right. A number of unemployed people had those skills, and they would have chiefly been former Borthwicks' employees.

Hon M.D. Nixon: I am saying that there were people who did not have those skills, but there may well have been people from elsewhere who were skilled. However, I believe a very large proportion of the work force needed to be trained.

Hon KIM CHANCE: That is probably true. I do not necessarily want to get into that matter because it goes beyond the nonsense of this whole operation. It is an export abattoir which, although it gave a commitment to establish a cattle chain some time in the future, now seems to have completely walked away from that commitment. It is purely a sheep export abattoir. What exists just up the road in Katanning? A huge sheep export abattoir is at Katanning.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

COMMITTEE REPORTS - CONSIDERATION

Committee

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

Select Committee on Immunisation and Vaccination Rates in Children - Report

Hon B.M. SCOTT: I move -

That the report be noted.

Members may recall that this Parliament approved the establishment of the Select Committee on Immunisation and Vaccination Rates in Children in June 1997 on my motion. I will give the House a snapshot of the committee's work, which is documented in a comprehensive report. It is not possible to go through all the work undertaken, but I will make some comments.

As chairman of the select committee, I very much appreciate the opportunity given by this Chamber to undertake this inquiry. Not only is the report comprehensive, but it also has some compelling implications for this State and the nation. The committee's findings and recommendations are already creating a great deal of interest across the medical world, for parents and others.

I commend the work done by my colleagues Hon Muriel Patterson and Hon Ken Travers. I appreciate their participation in the inquiry because I have been passionately concerned about this issue. All three of us trod a path that we did not realise would open up so many fields of interesting work. I think I speak for all the committee members in saying that.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the very sound research work and writing done by Michael Smyth, the Advisory/Research Officer to the committee. Michael did an outstanding job for the committee. His work has made the report very creditable and has given it the ability to stand in the public arena, here, nationally and internationally. It will be scrutinised by health professionals and policy makers for some time. The committee has already received very positive remarks about it. In fact, this week the committee received a letter from Professor Fiona Stanley, and a number of others will be received from other medical professionals. The letter is dated 2 August 1999 and states -

Dear Barbara and colleagues,

I would like to congratulate you on your excellent report on immunization in children. It is a tour de force and we look forward to its recommendations being implemented.

Such work for the community should be lauded. We acknowledge what you all have done to ensure the future health of our children.

That is not only a compliment to the work of the committee members but also to this Parliament and its staff.

I will give a very brief overview and snapshot of why the committee's inquiry was deemed necessary, the executive summary, the major findings and some of the major recommendations. The report is the result of extensive work and I hope the Parliament will find it interesting.

When I moved that the Parliament inquire into this issue, Western Australia and Australia had a 52 per cent immunisation rate, which is very low. In fact, it is an appalling rate for a western nation. Our rate was eighth in the world and we needed to establish the reason for that. Children were dying from common early childhood diseases for which there was a very effective vaccine. David Salisbury, the principal medical officer in the United Kingdom, is quoted in the report as saying -

Australia is in the grip of the largest epidemic of pertussis -

which is whooping cough -

- since 1994: 4,271 cases of pertussis were notified compared with 1,808 over the same period last year. Six babies have died so far, none of these babies had been immunised against pertussis because they were all either too young, or had not been vaccinated at the allocated time. In WA there were 1,112 cases in 1997 compared with 183 in 1996 with one death.

Those figures were the impetus for my moving for the establishment of this committee.

I have had a long involvement in teaching children with learning difficulties. It was evident to me that many of the children whom I taught in my special reading or special education classes were there because they were suffering from various complaints. However, some were there because they had suffered early childhood diseases such as measles, whooping cough and so on that had caused simple ear, nose and throat problems which then delayed their learning.

My major concerns are the high number of deaths, the apathy prevalent among parents and the view that I have consistently put in this Parliament that unless we promote our policies, which are driven by sound research, they will never be appropriate. For that reason, I have been a strong supporter of the TVW Telethon Institute for Child Health Research lead by Professor Fiona Stanley. I have said more than once that public policy should be driven by sound research. This committee has produced a soundly-researched document that will stand in the public arena to be scrutinised by all who have an interest in this area.

The inquiry found encouraging evidence of an increasing level of immunisation since 1997. That had risen in Western Australia; however, the coverage level still remained lower than what is necessary for total prevention of a common disease. It would not block the disease being transmitted. We reached about a 75 to 80 per cent rate of fully immunised children. For total immunity to block the transmission of diseases, between 92 per cent and 95 per cent is required. In medical terms that is called herd immunity. Since the establishment of the committee, that figure has risen.

We had an opportunity to review a range of incentives and measures that have been introduced at both the state and national levels to motivate parents, doctors and providers to lift the immunisation rate and coverage. Of critical interest to the committee was the development of the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register. The ACIR has the potential to be an effective immunisation tracking system, but a lot of work must still be done on it.

We took our cause into the community and had public hearings in a number areas, including Rockingham, Joondalup and Albany, so we could get a broad spectrum of parents, community organisations, doctors and other health providers reporting to us. That proved to us to be very interesting and worthwhile, and the community appreciated the opportunity to have that input. We found the public was usually well informed by health providers about the risks of the side effects of immunisation, but less informed about the benefits. I refer to another quote in our report, which some members may have had the opportunity to scan, from David Salisbury, who has done so much good work in England. He said -

If parents have no fear of vaccine, but fear of disease, the argument in favour of vaccination is clear-cut. If they have no fear of vaccine, but also no fear of disease, there may be inertia. When they have no fear of disease, but fear of vaccines, parents are likely to refuse immunisations.

In itself, that scenario was a challenge for the committee to confront. For people to fear a vaccine more than a disease is worrying. We looked at why parents were not vaccinating their children. One of the main reasons is apathy, but inertia is part of that; another is the fear of the vaccine over the fear of the disease.

Since the establishment of the committee, we have had the opportunity to look at measures that have been put in place. As laypeople in this area, we were able to unearth a lot of detailed information about the incentives being given to general practitioners to link with and report to the ACIR, and the funding incentives not only to report vaccination rates, but to give vaccinations. We looked very closely at that three-year federal initiative which ends in 2000. We were concerned that if most of the vaccination moved to general practitioners - there has been a strong move in that direction - the other providers in the field might disappear in the interim and might not be encouraged back.

We also looked at a whole range of strategies used in other countries to increase the rates of vaccination, and at relevant legislation in the United Kingdom and the United States of America. In America, where vaccination is compulsory, a compensation system is in place. In the United Kingdom it is not compulsory, and in the 1970s it had a very low rate of vaccination. The United Kingdom looked at a range of issues and strategies to raise the level of vaccinations, one of which was a scheme to compensate parents whose children had suffered an adverse event from a vaccine, and I will talk about that later. In the summary, I think these words are relevant: It is said that immunisation is not only the right thing to do, but an obligation for society; it is unacceptable to have the capacity to save lives and not to use it.

In Australia we were suffering deaths and injury from pertussis, or whooping cough, and side effects from measles. Polio has been almost eradicated, and small pox and diphtheria have virtually disappeared. The committee saw a low level of vaccination and decided it needed to address that issue. It did that and came up with a number of recommendations. First, I will refer to the executive summary, which says that the two most important public health interventions have been attributed to clean water and vaccines. If those things are available, why not use them? The ultimate triumph of vaccines is disease eradication. During the past decade the percentage of the world's infants who have received the basic vaccines under the expanded programs of the World Health Organisation has risen from 40 per cent to 80 per cent. The World Health Organisation gives some very interesting and compelling statistics. In the past 10 years, three million lives have been saved by the expansive vaccination program that has been put in place. There is clear evidence that vaccines have proved to be robust and efficient, and continue to be the workhorse of the global immunisation programs. Many members will be familiar with the polio-plus program supported by Rotary International. Polio is very much on the decline.

We were concerned about raising the profile of immunisation, so that it became an accepted health strategy. We were also concerned there should be an annual report to provide a national overview. We felt that unless there was a reporting mechanism to assess what was happening in each state of Australia, contributing to a national overview, we would not be doing justice to our young children. We agreed that there should be an evaluation mechanism. The Australian Child Immunisation Charter has set goals for 2000. At the moment we are unable to reach them in Western Australia or Australia, and that is of concern to the committee, even though a range of strategies has been put in place to raise the level of immunisation. The level was so low, Australia being listed at No 8 in the world in 1997, that we must do a lot to improve it. There must be an effective mechanism to track immunisations. One hundred children under the age of five years may all have had a vaccination, but whether they are age-appropriately vaccinated is the critical question. That means that at six, 12 and 18 months, and at three, five, 11 and 13 years, they have received all the vaccinations which appropriately vaccinate them against those diseases. There is a national schedule for doctors and nurses to follow to achieve age-appropriate cover.

We needed an evaluation mechanism to determine how and where children were being vaccinated and whether the national and state targets were being met. To achieve this we needed an effective tracking mechanism. The reporting systems of some of our providers were not as efficient as they should be. General practitioners have busy practices and we found filling out these forms was not always a priority for them. The committee agreed there should be a national program of immunisation. At the moment, there is a lack of nationally consistent methodology in measuring immunisation coverage which makes comparisons between studies of immunisation very difficult. If one does not feed in the correct information, it is difficult to devise a national database to establish what our national immunisation levels are. We also recognised that there needs to be a single body in Western Australia to draw together all of the providers - the major providers at present are general practitioners, local government and community health nurses - and to coordinate the programs of the various immunisation providers. A body designated with that responsibility could be held accountable for the national immunisation goals.

We recognise there needs to be further training and information for health providers. The "Immunise Australia" advertising program has been very good but information and materials need to be presented in a more novel way using videos, audio or tape and better use could be made of the Internet. That way the training and further information for health care providers would be relevant, up-to-date, accurate and simple enough for all parents to understand. Every time parents presented at providers, they could then expect to receive accurate information about the vaccine and any side effects their children might experience, such as irritability, swelling, a headache or whatever. Parents could then be confident that they were receiving accurate information.

The committee looked at compensation for adverse effects following immunisation. We recommended that urgent consideration be given to the introduction of a limited compensation scheme without proof or fault. The committee met with the Vaccination Awareness Group which opposes vaccination for a number of reasons. Many of these people believe they are well informed. However, when we looked at their sources of information on the Internet and the documents they detailed, we found that their arguments did not stack up scientifically. I am not criticising those parents, they feel they have good information but they need to be aware that their information is not always sound or scientific. The committee recommended a compensation scheme based on the United Kingdom experience. In 1979 the British Government introduced the Vaccine Damages Payments Act. It was a retrospective Act and covered severe damage as a result of vaccinations. In the UK if parents feel a vaccine has caused their child to suffer a serious adverse effect, they go through their medical records and present their case to the medical forum. No lawyers are involved in the process. Some people were very pleased to hear that when I made media statements along these lines. The British Government set a level of compensation payment in the vicinity of \$A100 000. Parents know that if their case stands up when presented to the medical board, they will receive that compensation. The scheme was introduced in England when the country had a low rate of immunisation and it was one part of a strategy to inform and educate parents about the risks of the various diseases. It has given parents the comfort of knowing that a compensation scheme is available if they have their child vaccinated. Our committee has strongly recommended that the Minister for Health consider that scheme.

Some of the committee's major findings were of immense interest to members. They are all in the report and I will not go

right through them. However, it is important for me to give a thumbnail sketch of them. The level of vaccination in Western Australia does not vary greatly across the State or from that in other States. The rate of immunisation at one year of age is now between 75 and 85 per cent and most of the major vaccinations are given in the first year of life. We found that our vaccination rates will not reach the national goals and do not provide full immunity coverage. Our herd immunity level needs to be higher. If someone with measles or whooping cough comes in on an aeroplane, a vaccination rate of 75 per cent will allow an outbreak of the disease. The failure of age appropriate immunisation in children allows that gap.

We looked at the demographics of unprotected children and at why they were unprotected and found some interesting things. There was a similar apathy among low socioeconomic and high socioeconomic families and well and poorly educated parents; there was no single mean line. There was a higher risk among Aboriginal children, children in single-parent families and in large families which may surprise members. However, when one thinks about it, the higher a child is in the birth order in a family, the less likely he is to be fully vaccinated or immunised. That is fairly natural. Being the fourth child in a large family I understand this higher birth order priority and as a mother of four children I understand that although all one's children are precious, one does everything by the book with the first child, with the second child one can become a little less enthusiastic and even less with the third.

Hon Ken Travers: But the fourth one always turns out the best.

Hon B.M. SCOTT: I am sure that is so.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: I am the fourth one.

Hon B.M. SCOTT: The issue of the higher birth order applies across the economic spectrum and was one of the interesting facts which came out of our research. The age of parents is another factor - very young parents were less likely to have their children fully vaccinated - employment status, education level and socioeconomic status have all been reported as factors which affect the immunisation uptake. When the committee looked at the Aboriginal demographics and factors, it found that remote and rural Aboriginal communities were highly vaccinated. The suburban or fringe-dwelling Aborigines were less well covered. Parents' attitudes to vaccination, their beliefs and prior knowledge is a big influence and a cause of apathy.

The committee recommended that literature be provided in appropriate languages. The Chamber may find interesting the low level of vaccination among new migrants of certain backgrounds. A contributing factor may be that immunisation information was not made available in Asian or other newer languages, whereas provision is made for the more traditional ethnic groups.

Parents gave evidence that standardised vaccination cards should apply across Australia because of the mobility of families. Better access to clinics and after-hours services is needed, and better training is required for all vaccination providers. Also, further research is needed to identify target groups, and then efforts should be made to target these groups. A consistent national methodology is necessary to measure vaccination coverage. A big gap which was new to committee members was that reporting mechanisms did not allow an accurate measuring scheme. That aspect is important. We need to improve reporting to the Australian child immunisation register, and to address the apathy of parents. The committee identified reasons for the apathy. A most common reason for parents not having children immunised is that parents have forgotten about polio, and are not aware of smallpox and diphtheria. Also, many people believe if they protect their children well enough, they will not contract whooping cough and measles, and other diseases will not worry them. Fortunately, we live in a country without huge epidemics of these conditions. However, we do not have sufficiently high levels of appropriately aged immunised children to prevent an epidemic breaking out if one were to arrive. An epidemic of measles occurred last year in New Zealand, and the Health Department took quick and effective measures to prevent its outbreak here.

A major consideration is the coverage of children, and how best to reach those children without necessarily directing all work through general practitioners, which the federal incentive funding scheme tends to do. The committee found that community health nurses in Western Australia are unable to administer a vaccine unless a doctor is on the premises. Western Australia is out of kilter with the other major States on that issue. The committee has recommended an urgent review of the Poisons Act 1964.

Finally, the use of community health nurses is recognised as a very good early intervention strategy, not only for taking immunisation information to the community and parents, but also in intervention programs. Community health nurses assist with parenting, diet and better living conditions, and can promote immunisation in this process. Dr Fiona Stanley implemented a wonderful project, to which I have referred before in the Chamber, in Kalgoorlie working with Aboriginal parents and their children. She identified the high value of community nurses entering homes, and not only Aboriginal homes. The Kalgoorlie project has been very successful. The committee made a number of compelling points for consideration by all state Health Ministers and the federal system.

The committee's report is significant for this Parliament, which was the first Legislature in Australia to look at immunisation in detail. Thanks to my colleagues and Michael Smythe, the document will withstand the scrutiny of medicos around Australia and, possibly, the international arena. Some of the comments I have received are as follows: "These are the things about which we are concerned." "You have done our work for us, and it is now a matter of Government implementing that work."

Much more can be said about our findings and recommendations, but I will leave some time for my colleagues to speak. I hope to have an opportunity to speak on this matter in this place at another time.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: I will breach tradition slightly and pay tribute to committee staff before my colleagues. I am sure

my colleagues will agree that the work conducted and the assistance given by the committee staff on this report was exceptional. The hours they devoted and the effort they made must be acknowledged in this place. Hon Barbara Scott has already done so, but I was amazed at the work carried out by staff. I pay tribute to Andrew Mason, the original officer, and Michael Smythe, who was responsible during most of the committee's work, for their exceptional contributions. I also thank Jan Paniperis, the committee's clerk. I pay tribute to both Hon Barbara Scott and Hon Muriel Patterson for their work with me on the committee. Hon Barbara Scott moved the motion which created the committee, which was useful for the community of Western Australia.

I hope that in due course the Government - if not the current Government, members on this side when they sit on those benches - will implement the report's recommendations, many of which will lead to a better system for the administration of vaccination to children in Western Australia and, potentially, throughout Australia.

One of the more contentious issues which arose from the report concerned the risk of vaccine. The committee received a number of submissions expressing great concern about the risks involved with vaccination. This aspect caused me immense concern in trying to rationalise whether vaccination was a good thing, and whether the risk was sufficient to reconsider the direction pursued. I felt that the Legislative Council, in establishing the committee, sent a message that members generally supported the concept of vaccination as a public health measure. Also, submissions received from both sides of the debate were overwhelming. It was not the primary focus of the committee, but it had to be dealt with. Ultimately, after much anguish and thought on the matter, I came to the realisation, and all committee members agreed, that the risk of adverse event from a vaccination is far less than the risk of disease from not using this public health measure.

However, the long-term genetic implications of vaccination need continued research. Undoubtedly, vaccinations have worthwhile health benefits in the short or medium term, but the long-term effects on the system need to be monitored and researched.

I was pleased that the committee took the opportunity of travelling to regional areas and outer-metropolitan areas of Perth to hear the views of parents and health providers on their own turf. I am sure it was no accident that Rockingham, Joondalup and Albany were chosen as the venues for those hearings. We also went to Northam. It is very beneficial to have a committee of the Parliament go out to the people -

Hon B.K. Donaldson: Why did you not go to Koorda?

Hon KEN TRAVERS: It was too far away. I would have loved to go to more areas, and I urge committees to go into the community, because it presents in a good light the Parliament and all parliamentarians, rather than just individual members of Parliament or political parties. When we as parliamentarians go into the community as a group and talk to people in the places in which they feel comfortable, we get a positive response. The committee also got a positive response from the local governments to which we talked, because in most cases we held our hearings in facilities that were provided by local government.

I will not go through all the recommendations, because obviously members can read the report; and Labor members will have a test on it next week in Caucus! However, I will make some broad statements about the general direction of immunisation and vaccination, which the committee has tried to pick up. The Federal Government's response to the crisis that Australia was facing with low immunisation levels was to go down the path of using general practitioners to administer the vaccines. The Federal Government poured a lot of money into that program, and that money will potentially run out in one year. I have some concerns about that, because the general view is that GPs are a fairly expensive method of delivering vaccines, and that the incentives provided to GPs are quite generous. A number of cheaper alternatives are available, as outlined in the committee's report. One alternative is to use community health nurses to deliver the vaccines, because in many cases the training of community health nurses in that specialist field is superior to that of general practitioners, and they have a greater understanding of the issues and of the concerns of parents and are better able to deal with them.

To be honest, I was quite disappointed with the attitude of the Australian Medical Association and general practitioners. Places such as Princess Margaret Hospital for Children, and people like Professor Fiona Stanley and the community health nurses, were very supportive of the work of the committee. However, the AMA seemed to want to take the money from the incentives package and then run. I urge members to look at page 120 of the committee's report, which quotes from an AMA journal - I can show members the full article if they want to see it - which states that GPs must -

"Be meticulous in completing those silly ACIR forms so that the immunisation services can be counted accurately."

The AMA was fairly dismissive of the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register, which is extremely important, because if we are to improve vaccination rates, we must first establish the current level of vaccination, which was one of the problems faced by the committee. If the ACIR is done properly, and if some of the recommendations that we have made to improve it are taken up, we will be able to establish the current level of vaccination and have a good system for dealing with vaccination. A comment such as that from the leadership of medical practitioners does GPs a great disservice, particularly when they have received a significant amount of federal government funding to try to increase the level of vaccination. I hope that once vaccination rates return to a more acceptable level, we will return to using community health nurses and to using doctors only as a short-term solution.

Hon MURIEL PATTERSON: Immunisation is something that we have all taken for granted in Australia, but after having been on this select committee, I have found it a great deal more interesting and have realised how grateful we should be for immunisation. It has been said that immunisation is not only the right thing to do but also an obligation for society, and it is unacceptable to have the capacity to save lives and not use it. As one Perth doctor said, immunisation is such an emotive issue, and there is no problem that we do not possess a vaccine that is 100 per cent safe or 100 per cent effective. He said

also that the evidence in support of vaccination in the reduction of death and disability is absolutely overwhelming; nevertheless, the sober truth is when evidence of disease is not visible, people tend to focus on the risk of the intervention rather than the risk of doing nothing.

Immunisation and vaccination are not new and their value has been established beyond reasonable doubt, yet one tends to take their benefits for granted, as I have. Smallpox has been eradicated since the 1970s. Edward Jenner attempted to prevent this disease in the 1790s by conducting his famous vaccination experiment on a young boy who was subsequently challenged by smallpox but was shown to be protected. This experiment marked the beginning of the scientific era of vaccination. From the 1870s to the 1880s, Louis Pasteur provided evidence from systematic animal experiments and again assured us that this was a way of preventing disease. The dates for the introduction of vaccines for use by humans go back to 1798 for smallpox, 1885 for rabies, 1897 for plague, 1923 for diphtheria, 1926 for pertussis or whooping cough, 1927 for tuberculosis and tetanus, and 1935 for yellow fever; and after World War II, to 1955 for the polio vaccine, to 1962 for the oral polio vaccine, and to 1964 for measles, 1967 for mumps, 1970 for rubella and 1971 for hepatitis. This list is not exhaustive, but it indicates some diseases that are unheard of today, thanks to the vaccination that took place in the past. Non-visible disease and effect can make today's parents less aware of the real dangers of such diseases to their children. Just prior to the development of a vaccine for diphtheria, my mother contracted the disease, so as children we were well informed of the horrors of this now preventable disease. I have seen a four-week-old baby with whooping cough, and I will say no more about that. During a measles epidemic, a father and son both died within a few days of each other from complications. We rarely hear of that in today's society.

I expect that most of us have seen the effects of a baby born deaf, dumb or blind as a result of the mother being infected with rubella during pregnancy. I recall in the 1950s the utter fear felt by the community during the polio epidemic when many affected people tragically suffered paralysis. People were too frightened to go out into the community because of their fear of contracting this dreadful disease. Even today I know of a patient in the Shenton Park Hospital who can live only with the help of an iron lung. It is difficult to imagine living for more than 30 years in an iron lung.

Page 35 of the committee's report refers to World Health Organisation statistics that indicate that almost 2 million children still die each year from vaccine preventable diseases and almost 14 million cases of measles occur worldwide annually. Each year more than 90 000 children fall victim to poliomyelitis, a disease that can be prevented at low cost by vaccine. Ninety thousand children suffering with poliomyelitis does not bear thinking about.

During our research I was surprised to find comments by the World Bank on the cost of vaccines. Paragraph 3.4.1 of the select committee report reads -

The World Bank has stated that immunisation should be among the first public-health initiatives in which governments around the world invest. Vaccines are considered to be the most cost-beneficial health intervention and one of the few that systematically demonstrates more benefits than costs by far.

That was an extremely strong recommendation from such an organisation. Although the statistics have been informative, we were rather frustrated in our research owing to the lack of uniformity in collecting statistical data. We hope that due to this issue being highlighted, particularly to the Minister for Health, something will be done about it. I could say much more about vaccination and immunisation. However, we have a very comprehensive report which I urge members to read. It is interesting and well written. At the end of the day I am grateful that we in Australia have the ability to prevent so many of these diseases affecting our children and grandchildren.

I thank the Chamber for the opportunity of working on this committee and I support the report.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: It is important that a national register be established that has an effective form of monitoring so that we can work out what is the true level of immunisation to see whether the community is reaching herd immunity levels. We then must work out the best way of delivering the services. I think that will fall to community health nurses and others. I was concerned to discover during the committee's research that a number of local governments, which have been traditional providers of immunisation, are moving out of the area perhaps too rapidly. Whether the use of general practitioners is financially sustainable in the long term must be debated. I commented earlier on whether they have taken to delivering vaccinations in a positive manner or whether, as indicated from their leadership, they are keener on the money they earn from it than on anything else.

We also recommended in the report the possibility of using pharmacies to facilitate the delivery of vaccination services within our community. Most of us have had good relationships with our local pharmacists. I support the concept of community pharmacies and this could be another service they can take on as providers alongside community health nurses.

Hon B.M. Scott: With trained nurses.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Yes; the pharmacists would be the point of reference for broader health care provision. There is certainly great potential in that area for the betterment of the community, which no doubt will be reasonably economical.

It is also important that we maintain the best available vaccines. When the select committee was established Hon Kim Chance spoke with great passion and depth about the return to the use of the A-cellular vaccine which was clearly a better vaccine for whooping cough or pertussis. However, due to lack of funding we subsequently reverted to the whole cellular vaccine. I am pleased to know that since the committee was established the A-cellular vaccine has again become available free to parents. It is important those issues be considered. When a vaccine is being used that is seen to have more minor adverse reactions it leads to a dent in public confidence. I am sure Hon Kim Chance will be pleased to know that has occurred. I cannot say the committee can claim credit for it; nonetheless, it is good to know it has occurred.

I urge members with an interest in this field to examine the report. I also urge our Minister for Health and his department as well as the federal Minister for Health to seriously consider the recommendations. If they are adopted they will go a long way to improving the situation and vaccination in Australia will reach the levels that will give us herd immunity. In the long term that will only be good for the health of children.

I thank my colleagues for the assistance they gave me on the first committee I have served on in this place in a real way, and the committee staff for their assistance.

Question put and passed.

Report

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 to 2.00 pm

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Amendment to Motion

Resumed from 11 August, after the following amendment had been moved by Hon J.A. Cowdell -

That the following words be added to the Address-in-Reply -

And further, this House recommends that his Excellency summon a Western Australian Constitutional Convention to involve the people in important deliberations to consider -

The republican issue and the parliamentary selection or popular election of a State Governor.
 Assent to legislation.
 A Bill of rights.
 Electoral rights.
 Initiation of constitutional amendment/citizen initiated referendum.
 A new preamble.
 The power of Parliament to recall Parliament.
 Prorogation.
 The recognition of Aboriginal peoples.
 The resolution of parliamentary deadlocks.
 The role of local government.
 The role of political parties.
 The size of the Ministry.

HON J.A. COWDELL (South West) [2.00 pm]: Last evening I referred to the lack of action by the Government on the constitutional front and the inadequacy of its initiatives as outlined in the Governor's speech. I was not referring to the Federal Government in this regard, as we have action at a national level.

Hon Murray Montgomery: That is a change.

Hon J.A. COWDELL: I will, if that is what Hon Murray Montgomery wants.

We are in the middle of the republic debate. In the wake of that debate we have a discussion about a suitable preamble, which would not be occurring without the principal debate. We have some popular say and involvement. By comparison, we have complete inaction at the state level.

Hon Murray Montgomery: Is the member suggesting that the confusion that reigns would be reduced if we had another say on what we should do with the state constitution?

Hon Peter Foss: Did you see the national action as progress or regress?

Hon J.A. COWDELL: It will depend on the result. It is progress.

If we refer to the Governor's speech, we see we have the prospect of a follow-up to the November referendum, and I welcome that. At least we are not going to the ditch to hold out for the monarchy in Western Australia if at the federal level there is a republican result.

Hon Peter Foss: We might be. Some people see it as being regressive.

Hon J.A. COWDELL: Obviously there is dissension in the government ranks in this regard. The Governor's speech gave us a bit of history. We were told that forums had been held to educate the populace, the Constitutional Centre operates over the road and there was a need for reflection. All this is good. However, we need action. We have no proposal to consolidate the WA Constitution and remove the archaic and offensive sections. We have no proposal to address the direct constitutional amendments proposed by the Commission on Government to define the essential elements of government in the Constitution, particularly the role of the Premier, Cabinet, ministers and the Governor. We have no proposal to define and safeguard the role of the judiciary and to upgrade the role of the Ombudsman, the Auditor General and the Anti-Corruption Commission in constitutional terms, as suggested by the Commission on Government, nor for the removal of the shield of the Crown. More importantly, we do not have any public consultation through a people's convention. The people are being left out. We need to consult the people about an appropriate republican model for Western Australia. Presumably we would adopt an indirect model if the national referendum were carried; that is, election of the head of state by Parliament - in our case the Governor.

Hon Mark Nevill: Imagine a politician gaining the support of two-thirds of this Parliament to become the next Governor. It would be impossible.

Hon J.A. COWDELL: Indeed. We have the direct model, which we might need to look at if the indirect model is defeated in the coming referendum. We need a debate to define the criteria for selection and dismissal, and codification of the reserve powers. If we do not carry the model contained in the referendum that will be put nationally on 6 November, I propose to this House that we should have greater involvement in the selection of the next Governor. The Premier should nominate the Governor, having consulted the Leader of the Opposition, and the nomination should be ratified by a joint sitting of both Houses of Parliament in the manner of our elevation of Senator Lightfoot to the purple in previous happy times.

We should look to a people's convention and seek public involvement in our own preamble - as we are discussing the terms of the commonwealth preamble at the moment. We need to have a popular say in the constitutional amendments as outlined in the amendment I moved to the Address-in-Reply. It is now three years since the Government's October 1996 promise to act in this regard. I was disappointed that there was no indication of action in the Governor's speech. We must convene a people's convention in accord with the Government's promise. This should be a forum for general discussion and a majority of its members should be chosen by popular vote.

I conclude by commending the Government on one item of capital expenditure. There has been much debate about various items of capital expenditure. This item involves the expenditure of \$520 000 to save John Curtin's house in Cottesloe.

Hon N.F. Moore interjected.

Hon J.A. COWDELL: If the minister wants to show me where we can buy a new school for \$520 000, I will order a dozen.

There was obviously a danger of private sale and at least a lack of public access to the Curtin residence, or at worst its demolition. It is appropriate that this residence should be vested in the University of Technology, that there should be public access to the site and it should remain in situ and not be dismantled and hauled out to the Curtin University campus. It is appropriate that the Commonwealth has spent at least the modest amount of \$260 000 from the centenary of federation billion dollar fund on something that is appropriate to commemorate a significant piece of our parliamentary and political history. The significance of the house has been recorded by Curtin's occupancy of it; it was, of course, where the funeral cortege stopped in 1945. It has a great deal of significance.

Recently I had an exchange of letters on this matter with a retired naval gentleman who said in the pages of the popular press that Curtin was not deserving of recognition on the basis that he had been a pacifist in the First World War, had not served his country in the field and had then introduced conscription in the Second World War. I believe the term used was that he had been convicted of sedition. My comment was who, under Billy Hughes, had not been convicted of sedition, as Billy Hughes was apt to put anyone into prison who opposed his legislation or war regulations. On one remarkable occasion, when his opponents used debates in State Parliament, he ordered the army to raid the Government Printer in Brisbane and seize all copies of state *Hansard* which were critical of his particular acts. Of course, the next time the State reprinted *Hansard*, it put the police outside the printing works and waited for Billy to send the army around again. I am happy to say that the High Court found in favour of the State of Queensland on that occasion against the little digger.

However, these were the circumstances and Curtin was consistent in his attitude and in Labor Party policy. It was Labor policy to have conscription, but that was for compulsory military training for home defence. The issue in both wars was about sending conscripts overseas, not compulsory military training. In both wars the policies of both Curtin and Labor were consistent in this regard. The Australian Labor Party opposed sending conscripts overseas in the First World War and the people endorsed that view in two plebiscites; we must thank Curtin for his role in that. Nothing would have been added to the war effort by providing another 60 000 young Australians to be butchered on the western front under the generalship of those gross incompetents who were there in charge - Sir John French and First Earl Douglas Haig - who should have been put up against the wall and shot for their efforts in the First World War rather than being given 20 000 quid and a seat in the House of Lords. I therefore think we owe Curtin for his role in the First World War. In the Second World War he agonised about what to do with conscripts. In the end, he pushed the definition that conscripts could be used for home defence and he defined home defence as not only the federal territories, including Papua New Guinea, but also the islands of the Pacific south of the Equator. Clearly, we owe Prime Minister Curtin for his far more independent foreign policy and certainly for countermanding Churchill's order for Australian troops to be diverted to Rangoon to defend Burma without any air cover and without any weapons. Many Australian diggers would be at the bottom of Rangoon Harbour were it not for Curtin's insistence on the priority of Australian policy and Australian interests.

I therefore welcome the commemoration of our wartime Prime Minister by the preservation of his house and I acknowledge and commend the Government for this item of capital expenditure. However, we need a more proactive program from the Government in terms of state constitutional debate and certainly for the Government to undertake its pledge at the last election to convene a people's convention.

Debate adjourned until a later stage, on motion by Hon Muriel Patterson.

[Continued on page 136.]

NATIONAL RAIL CORPORATION AGREEMENT REPEAL BILL 1999

Second Reading

HON M.J. CRIDDLE (Agricultural - Minister for Transport) [2.16 pm]: I move -

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The National Rail Corporation Agreement Act 1992 was enacted to approve and ratify a shareholders agreement between Western Australia, the Commonwealth and other States relating to the establishment of National Rail and to make provisions necessary for it to engage in rail transport services in the State.

In preparation for the sale of the National Rail Corporation, the Commonwealth Government sought the States' assistance to remove from National Rail a number of benefits and obligations arising under the National Rail shareholders agreement that are not applicable to other corporations, in order that competitive neutrality would apply. Termination of the agreement at the time National Rail is sold was also sought by the Commonwealth. The State has agreed to these changes. Members may recall that the third National Rail amending agreement to effect these changes was tabled in Parliament on 20 April 1999.

With the State's agreement to terminate the shareholders agreement on the date National Rail is sold, the National Rail Corporation Agreement Act 1992 will no longer be required. The National Rail Corporation Agreement Act 1992 and thereby the shareholders agreement in Western Australia will be terminated. The National Rail Corporation Agreement Repeal Bill 1999 will be proclaimed on the day the National Rail Corporation is sold. This is likely to occur early next year.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Hon Bob Thomas.

LAPSED BILLS - RESTORATION TO NOTICE PAPER

Assembly's Message - Consideration

Message from the Assembly now considered requesting that consideration of the following Bills be resumed -

1. School Education Bill 1997.
2. Sentence Administration Bill 1998.
3. Sentencing Legislation Amendment and Repeal Bill 1998.
4. Court Security and Custodial Services Bill 1998.
5. Court Security and Custodial Services (Consequential Provisions) Bill 1998.
6. Government Financial Responsibility Bill 1998.
7. Transport Co-ordination Amendment Bill 1998.
8. Water Services Coordination Amendment Bill 1999.
9. State Trading Concerns Amendment Bill 1999.
10. Child Welfare Amendment Bill 1998.
11. Planning Legislation Amendment Bill 1998.
12. Hospitals and Health Services Amendment Bill 1998.
13. Trust Removal (Mount Claremont Land) Bill 1998.
14. Rail Freight System Bill 1999.

And that the Council reconsider Assembly Message No 139 of 1998 which refers to the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Amendment Bill 1997.

HON N.F. MOORE (Mining and Pastoral - Leader of the House) [2.19 pm]: I move -

That the Legislative Council agrees to the request of the Legislative Assembly.

By way of explanation, these Bills passed through the Assembly in the previous session and were on the Notice Paper in the Legislative Council at the time of prorogation. The Government has requested that these Bills be restored to the Legislative Council Notice Paper so that the Legislative Council can continue to debate them.

In the final part of the message the Council is requested to reconsider Assembly message No 139 of 1998 which relates to the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Amendment Bill. I seek the approval of the House for that to be done to ensure that the Bill can be re-assessed by this House.

Question put and passed; and a message accordingly returned to the Assembly.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Amendment to Motion

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

The PRESIDENT: I remind members that if they speak to the amendment, they are deemed to have spoken to the original motion. That is no different from the standing orders at any other time, but I thought I should make that point to members.

HON LJILJANNA RAVLICH (East Metropolitan) [2.21 pm]: I welcome the opportunity to speak to the Address-in-Reply to the speech of His Excellency Major General Michael Jeffery. As Opposition spokesperson on public sector management, I found his speech somewhat disappointing, specifically because of the lack of foresight by the Government with regard to its intentions in the area of public administration. On many occasions I have brought my concerns about matters of public administration to this place. One of the key areas of concern to me is the deficiencies in the Public Sector Management Act 1994. No amendments to that legislation were foreshadowed by the Governor when he said -

Other legislation relevant to public sector administration will include a new Housing Bill to create a single authority, the Western Australian Housing Authority, to consider all aspects of housing.

He continued -

In addition, the Government will pursue enhanced accountability and public scrutiny in financial management through the Government Financial Responsibility Bill 1998, which will be reinstated on the Notice Paper.

No mention was made in the Governor's speech of the need to address the deficiencies of the Public Sector Management Act. We know that time and again matters are raised in this place with regard to the difficulty the Commissioner for Public Sector Standards has, given the limitations of the Public Sector Management Act. We also know he has conducted a wide range of inquiries and has delivered numerous recommendations in line with his findings and the investigations he has conducted through his office.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I point out to the House that any member who speaks on the amendment should be speaking to the amendment, and not just to the original question. It seems that Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich is speaking only to the original question. The standing orders are framed such that when an amendment has been moved, members must speak to that amendment but are then deemed to have spoken to the original question. At some stage, I hope Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich will mention the amendment to the motion because technically she is supposed to firstly be speaking to the amendment. If she had not intended to speak to the amendment, in my view it would have been better for her to wait to speak to the original question because her comments appear to be fairly wide-ranging. However, I have read the amendment very closely and, with some difficulty, I am able to accommodate her comments. However, it would help me if she mentioned the amendment occasionally.

Point of Order

Hon N.D. GRIFFITHS: Am I correct in taking your words, Mr President, to mean that when the debate on the amendment has been concluded, that question will be put, and we will then move to the substantive question?

The PRESIDENT: Very much so. When the amendment is dealt with, the question will be put that the amendment moved by Hon John Cowdell be added to the motion. If that is carried, debate will continue on the motion as amended, and other members will be able to speak to both the original question and the additional words. I raised this with Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich because I have a feeling she is dealing with matters consistent with the original question and not the amendment. She can help me if she refers to the amendment occasionally, so that I know she means to talk to the amendment. I make that comment so that other members do not get caught by not speaking to the amendment so that I have to bring them into line, and then their not being able to speak to the original question. I understand where Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich is going.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: I seek some clarification. I understand that in making a wide-ranging speech it would not matter whether I spoke to the original motion or the amendment. It was my intention to speak not to the amendment, but rather to the substantive motion. Can I undo my speech so far so that I do not lose my right to speak to the original motion?

The PRESIDENT: This is a serious matter and I raised it in the first place to protect members. Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich cannot undo her speech so far. I said previously that I have listened carefully to her comments so far and, by stretching the imagination, the Chair recognises that her comments relate to the amendment and I assume she is talking to that amendment. However, if any other members speak on the amendment but do not refer to the amendment, I will bring them to order. A decision must be made on the amendment and then we will be in open country. There is no need for Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich to undo her speech so far, if she mentions the word "amendment" occasionally.

Debate Resumed

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: I support the amendment moved by Hon John Cowdell that this House recommends that the people be involved in important deliberations to consider various matters, and specifically the size of the Ministry. My earlier comments have a bearing on the size of the Ministry and the effectiveness with which tasks can be performed within government. Also there are implications from not ensuring the size of the Ministry is such that it will enable the effective operation of government. I thank you, Mr President, for that clarification.

It is a very important amendment and it does not take anything away from the substantive motion because it is an addition to it. It is not proposed to amend the original motion in any manner that would detract from it. The amendment signals to the Governor that this House further recommends that His Excellency undertake some tasks. With my knowledge of my colleague Hon John Cowdell and his thoroughness in dealing with these matters, I support the amendment.

There are concerns with the size and effectiveness of the Ministry, and I make my comments within that context. As I have already indicated, a number of reports have been undertaken by the Commissioner for Public Sector Standards. He is obviously linked to the Ministry, and I am concerned that nothing happens as a result of the work of the commissioner. Time and again, reports are handed down and clearly there are breaches of standards. Those breaches do not go anywhere because the current legislation does not enable the Commissioner for Public Sector Standards to take any concrete action. We have

seen this with recent investigations, including the investigation into Agriculture Western Australia which found breaches of standards against the offices of the Premier and the Minister for Primary Industry. We have also seen breaches of standards in the Martin complaint in which Homeswest gave sensitive information to the media. Most recently we have seen the appointment of Mr Bruce Sutherland to head the Jervoise Bay project for an annual salary of \$144 000. The commissioner has also had his hands tied because his work does not allow him to investigate government's increasing use of consultants. This is a growing trend across the public sector. We, on this side of the House, rightly could have expected that there would be some major amendments to the Public Sector Management Act. I am disappointed that we have not been in a position to see those changes occur. It is high time the Premier, as Minister for Public Sector Management, stops hiding behind bad law and endeavours to fix the deficiencies which everyone knows exist. There has been no preparedness by this Government to change this law while it serves to shield the Government. It is negligent of the Premier not to have done something about the Public Sector Management Act. I was disappointed that no reference was made to proposed changes to that Act, which would bring it more into line with the public's need for accountability.

It appears there is a growing divide throughout the state public sector and that two classes of workers are emerging: One class consists of the Premier's mates and then there is the other class. We know all about the hardworking public servants who keep their heads down. They are diligent workers who are going through a particularly hard time given that, in many cases, they do not know whether they will have jobs. Many of them are used as scapegoats. They are blamed when things go wrong. They are rarely praised and many hold the view that they are caught between a rock and a hard place. Mr President, if you look at the Government's policy in terms of leave liability, you would know to what I am alluding. It is a bit of a no-win situation for many public servants. Obviously the size and operations of the Ministry have a bearing on what part of accrued long service leave and annual leave can be taken by public servants.

I take this opportunity to discuss the lives of other public servants within the state public sector. I call those public servants the Premier's mates. I want to use this opportunity to bring to the attention of the House information surrounding the appointment of the Premier's chief of staff in 1993 and his resignation on 9 March 1999. Members would be aware that Mr Fletcher was appointed in August 1993 and his contract at that point was worth \$148 425 per annum. The salary component of that was \$121 685. In addition, when Mr Fletcher was headhunted, certain costs were associated with his transfer to Western Australia, and the State picked up a tab of \$16 826 for the reimbursement of relocation costs. Evidence suggests that the sort of reimbursement cost to which he was entitled was out of the ordinary. In fact, he was given some preferential treatment for those costs; for example, a letter dated 2 August from the then Director General, Mr Digby Blight, to Mr Ian Fletcher outlined that he had been appointed to the position of chief of staff. Mr Blight advised Mr Fletcher that, during that calendar year, he was entitled to return business class flights to visit members of his family who remained in Tasmania. Some unusual and preferential treatment was given to Mr Fletcher at that time. Mr Fletcher managed to be reimbursed for the sale of his residence and for stamp duty and registration fees on the transfer of land on the purchase of property in Western Australia. He was also reimbursed the transfer fee for his motor vehicle licence and was even paid \$20 for the relocation of his dog. In encouraging him to come here, he was looked after. There was some concern whether the Premier had been overly generous to Mr Fletcher. I refer to a letter dated 26 July 1993 from Mr Mal Wauchope, Director General of the Ministry of the Premier and Cabinet, to Mr Richard Elliott, about whom there is another story. He was then a consultant to the Premier. On property expenses, it states -

Mr Fletcher has raised with me the question of reimbursement of the costs of "selling" and "buying" residences as a consequence of his move to Western Australia to take up the position of Chief of Staff, Premier's Office.

He goes on to say -

The Public Service Award does provide for similar compensation for officers who are transferred from one locality to another. However, this provision is worded in such a way that it appears to apply to officers already in the State Public Service - not in respect of recruitment of officers from interstate.

Quite clearly special provisions were made. We need to ask why were such provisions made for Mr Ian Ross Fletcher. Mr Wauchope went on to say -

However, I am aware that some costs may have been met in the recruitment of at least one senior officer from interstate in recent years.

It would be interesting to know who it was, although having obtained some information on the former Director General of Education, it may be possible that the reference was to Ms Vardon.

Hon N.D. Griffiths: You may be right. What about Mr Falconer?

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: It could have been the former Commissioner of Police, Mr Falconer. As a Parliament, we need to know who has received from the Court Government favourable provisions which lie outside the public service award. We also need to know why these people were given special provisions. The State was also picking up costs for a transfer allowance which amounted to \$5 233. So it goes on. Quite clearly Mr Fletcher was looked after very well. I am limited for time today so I must use my time carefully.

Mr Fletcher served the Premier until 9 March 1999, when a deed of severance was signed. There is evidence that Mr Fletcher was given a very nice golden handshake by the Premier. We need to know the full details of what this package entailed. Fundamental to this issue is whether Mr Fletcher had an entitlement to a redundancy payment. It is clear from the information I have before me that Mr Fletcher was given a redundancy payment when he left on 9 March 1999. That redundancy payment included some very interesting calculations. The redundancy payment was calculated on 2 November 1998, which is about five months or so prior to Mr Fletcher's resignation. Why one would calculate a redundancy payment

for somebody one is happy with five months before the person leaves I have no idea. I would love for somebody who is closer to the Premier than I to answer that question for me.

A number of assumptions were made on 2 November 1998. Calculations were provided by G. Bell and verified by C. Sullivan. The first assumption was that the redundancy payment calculation was to be considered a bona fide redundancy calculation and therefore to be taxed at a rate of 31.5¢ in the dollar rather than the usual rate of 48.5¢ in the dollar. That is interesting in itself. We need to get to the bottom of whether the whole package of about \$150 000 was taxed at that rate of 31.5¢ in the dollar or whether that applied only to the special redundancy component of \$43 000. Was the whole package, as opposed to only the redundancy component, taxed at the lesser rate? On my reading of the information before me, the whole package was taxed at the lower rate. I am very concerned because on the face of it, unless somebody can prove to the contrary, I must accept that the information before me is technically correct.

Another issue that arises is that on 2 November 1998, some five months or so before Mr Fletcher resigned, quite clearly listed under assumptions is that the last day of his employment is expected to be 9 March 1999. Who would believe that Mr Fletcher went of his own accord? It is hard to expect the Western Australian public to believe that Mr Fletcher left of his own accord given that as at 2 November 1998 somebody had been involved in calculating his redundancy and effectively listing the day on which he was to be made redundant. That is interesting in itself. Other assumptions were that no further leave was to be taken at 2 November 1998, leave loading maximum was a certain amount for 20 days and a public service holiday in lieu of 2 January 1999 was not taken. It refers to fortnightly salary, including contract allowance, and the amount has been scrubbed out.

In the light of the so-called voluntary resignation of Mr Ian Fletcher from his position as chief of staff in the Premier's office, we need to ask why Mr Fletcher was given a redundancy payment of \$43 000 given that he resigned voluntarily. That is a fairly simple question. Any other public servant in this State who resigns voluntarily simply leaves. They do not get a golden handshake. They probably get their long service pro rata leave to which they are entitled and they might get pro rata annual leave to which they are entitled; they certainly do not walk away with a \$43 000 redundancy package. Yet Mr Fletcher was able to do that.

We also need to know why his total payout of approximately \$150 000 was considered to be a bona fide redundancy payment and therefore taxed at a lower rate of 31.5¢ in the dollar. We also need to know what motivated the Premier suddenly to want to restructure his office. It seems odd that on 2 November 1998 a redundancy was calculated for Mr Ian Fletcher. The last day in the redundancy calculation was 9 March 1999. In the meantime the Premier restructured his office so that the chief of staff position was no longer a special 6 level but a special 3 level effective from 10 March 1999.

We also need to know whether, when the Premier was calculating the payment as a bona fide redundancy payment to be taxed at a lower rate, the Premier was unintentionally defrauding the Australian Taxation Office. If the calculation was carried out properly and if Mr Fletcher quit of his own accord, as is alleged by the Government, the bottom line is that he would not have been entitled to a redundancy payment. Following on from that, any money that he took with him for outstanding leave would have been taxed at the rate of 48.5¢ in the dollar. We need to know whether the Premier knew what were the implications that would result from the claim that Mr Fletcher was leaving of his own accord and the subsequent action of giving him a golden handshake and handing over some taxpayers' money to make his journey all the lighter. I would be happy for somebody from the other side to provide some explanation - any explanation - but I do not think it will be forthcoming.

I am not sure why the Premier decided, as I said, to restructure his office. However, I suspect that one of the reasons might have been to facilitate that \$43 000 redundancy payment. I refer to a letter from Mr Mal Wauchope, the Director General of the Ministry of the Premier and Cabinet, to the Premier regarding the chief of staff's position. This is a letter dated 26 February 1999 and it states -

I refer to our discussions regarding the changing role of the Chief of Staff in your office. When the current Special 6 position was created, there was a particular need for a highly experienced adviser with broad strategic government experience, particularly given that the public sector support mechanisms did not adequately meet the Government's requirements.

As many of these support mechanisms have now been put in place, particularly with the restructures that have taken place in both the Treasury Department and the Ministry of the Premier and Cabinet, much of the expertise you previously required is now available through myself, the Deputy Director General and the Under Treasurer. There is therefore no longer a requirement for a Chief of Staff at the current Special 6 level in your office.

The amazing thing about that, in terms of the substantive motion and the size of the ministry, is that those key players were there even before Mr Fletcher was appointed in 1993. Therefore, the fact that the deputy director general, the Under Treasurer and the director general himself were already there should not have made any difference. On the face of it, it looks as though the director general, probably in cahoots with the Premier, was trying to justify the reduction in status of that position purely and simply so that they could come up with the money to give Mr Fletcher his golden handshake.

In addition to that, the redundancy payment period was calculated from 15 July 1991 to 9 March 1999. That is a little odd, because Mr Fletcher did not take up his appointment until 1993. He was transferred from Tasmania, and I wonder whether the Tasmanian Government picked up its proportion of any liability for that redundancy payment. Obviously it did not. However, if somebody on the other side can tell me that that is what happened, I would be interested.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: I will tell you if you tell me what this has to do with constitutional change.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: If Hon Derrick Tomlinson reads the amendment, he will see that it states, "And further, this House recommends".

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: "And further, this House recommends" what?

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: I am speaking to the original question and not the "And further". However, I am making comments on the size of the ministry.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I do not intend to answer the question that was just raised, but I intend to make a comment about the procedure. I asked Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich earlier on to make mention of the amendment because she is speaking to the amendment. Obviously, I wanted that to be recognised. She did that, and that certainly satisfied me. Under the rules of our House, when members speak to an amendment they are deemed to be speaking also to the original question. Therefore, in the process of speaking during the time allotted to members, if they have other matters they want to raise, it is appropriate that those matters be raised at that time because members will not get another shot at the original question, so to speak.

What Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich is doing is absolutely within the standing orders. The only reason I mentioned it earlier was that she failed to mention that she was speaking to the amendment when she first stood and launched straight into matters that could be considered not relevant to the amendment. I do not have any beef at all with Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich. If Hon Derrick Tomlinson does, I am sure he will take that up with her outside the House.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: I have plenty of beefs.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: I am at a loss to understand how the redundancy payment could be calculated from 15 July 1991 when the appointment occurred in 1993. This reference to 1991 was obviously two years before Mr Fletcher took up the appointment, and he had been working for the Tasmanian Government at the same time. The Australian Taxation Office ruling on this matter states that in order to qualify for a lower rate the dismissal, such as in Mr Fletcher's case, must have been involuntary on the employee's part or have arisen from a situation in which the employee had little option but to tender his or her resignation.

This is the crux of the issue. The question really is: Did Mr Fletcher leave of his own accord or was he pushed? If he left of his own accord, I am somewhat dismayed that there is no letter of resignation from Mr Fletcher to the Premier. I find that very interesting. If he went of his own accord, I have already stated that there should have been no redundancy component allowed for. There is no question about that. If he was pushed, a similar scenario follows, because if at the end of the day his skills were deemed to be inappropriate or if he was mucking up - I do not know what he might have got up to - and he was pushed, there would have been a course of action under the Public Sector Management Act by way of a warning or whatever. Alternatively, if that did not happen, the bottom line is that if he was pushed because of incompetence, he still would not have been entitled to receive a redundancy package.

Given that Mr Fletcher left of his own accord, he certainly was not entitled to a redundancy payment. If he left of his own accord, we basically need to ask why he left, and if he was pushed, we need to ask the Premier why he was pushed. At the end of the day I do not think it can be a win for the Government either way. Clearly, we need to get to the bottom of the matter, and the Premier should come clean on this issue.

I guess the question of where to from here then follows, because it is clear from the information that I have that Mr Fletcher had set up a business consultancy with another former public servant by the name of Mr Peter William Rowe. That consultancy was registered on 8 February 1999. It is interesting that that consultancy was set up a month before Mr Fletcher left. However, we still do not know the circumstances under which he left. Clearly, if he set up a consultancy, it would indicate that he possibly intended to leave to take up a position in his consultancy.

On 6 February an article appeared in *The West Australian* which indicates that perhaps he left of his own accord, because the article states under the heading "Court's senior aide to quit" -

Premier Richard Court is about to lose his most senior adviser.

Mr Court's chief-of-staff Ian Fletcher has told the Premier he intends to move to the private sector soon, but has yet to resign formally.

This is all very odd given that his redundancy payment had been calculated in November and that a termination date of 9 March 1999 had been specified. The day after he left, his S6 position became an S3 position. It was reported in the newspaper that he intended to move to the private sector, but that he had yet to resign formally. Resigning formally involves doing something definite, perhaps handing over a letter of resignation. The Opposition has asked the Premier why he will not table that letter of resignation. The response will be telling in itself.

The fact that it was splashed all over the newspaper on 6 February that he would leave his position makes a joke of the redundancy package that was paid, according to the Premier, in lieu of notice. How much notice does he want? People in government knew he was leaving five months before he did. That makes a mockery of the payment.

As I have already stated, Fletcher Rowe & Associates was a registered business name on 8 February 1999. Mr Fletcher left the Premier's office on 9 March, and FRA Pty Ltd was established on 22 January 1999. One of the company's two shareholders is Peter William Rowe, who I understand worked for the Minister for Lands and the Minister for Planning. He became a shareholder on 22 January 1999, and Mr Ian Ross Fletcher became a shareholder on 1 July 1999.

It is interesting that the paths of these two gentlemen should cross given they were both working for senior members of this Government. I am advised that both gentlemen are currently undertaking consultancy work for Pangea Resources Australia.

I do not know the extent of their involvement, but clearly, since leaving government employment, Mr Rowe has undertaken a range of consultancies. The consultancy report published by the Government indicates that, for the six months to June 1998, Mr Rowe was paid \$51 564. The Opposition needs some answers to these fundamental questions. It needs to know the extent to which both key former government officers are now involved in providing consultancy services to the Government.

It is interesting how there appears to be two sets of rules for public servants in this State. The other day I had a call from a level six public servant who stated that he was afraid that he might have to leave the Public Service. If so, he wanted to go with some sort of redundancy payment. I asked what was the problem and he replied that if he left having accepted a redundancy payment he would be required to sign an agreement that he would not undertake any consultancy work for the Government for two years. It appears that people such as Mr Fletcher and Mr Rowe, and possibly Mr Gilleece, have not signed a document limiting their ability to work as a consultant or otherwise to the Government for two years. It seems very unfair for this Government to have different rules for different people.

The Opposition needs to know the extent of the work currently being undertaken by Mr Fletcher and Mr Rowe. I am aware that when Mr Fletcher had already established his business he was working in the Premier's office. I am confident that discussions about the Pangea project were happening at that time. We must get to the bottom of this issue. Far too many private sector employees are engaged within government. They can gather valuable intelligence and take it to the private sector and commercialise it. That is clearly the situation in this case. It is high time the Opposition received some answers to these fundamental questions.

I do not know Mr Fletcher from Adam; I have never met him. He may well be a very nice man; I have no idea. However, I have heard some awful things about him. I do not care to know him. This Government crows about accountability and the Premier continually takes the high moral ground. That is rich from the Premier, who, after having established the Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Standards, used it as a smokescreen for incompetence and bad practices within the state public sector. This is a hopeless situation. The fact that the Premier will not table the resignation letter of a man who allegedly left of his own accord is hopeless. I have no idea why he will not table that information, or any information about the departure of other senior advisers such as Mr Gilleece. Mr Gilleece's final payment was borne by the State; it did not come out of the Premier's pocket. The Opposition wants to know whether Mr Fletcher went of his own accord or whether he was pushed. I have stumbled across the purchasing habits of Mr Fletcher. Having looked at the way Mr Fletcher used his corporate card from the Westpac Banking Corporation, I think it raises questions about the way in which he spent his time.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: Are you talking about his personal card?

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: No. I am talking about the card issued to the staff in the Ministry of the Premier and Cabinet. There is no way Hon Derrick Tomlinson would have been to the WA Club (Inc) to the extent this gentleman had been.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: I do not have a card issued by the Premier.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: That also raises the issue of the extent to which these cards may be abused by not only senior bureaucrats, but those in the public sector generally. I have a statement of charges based on the use of this card showing that Mr Fletcher was at the WA Club on 20 May 1997, 27 May 1997, 4 June 1997 and 10 July 1997. On 20 May he incurred charges of \$67 and on 10 July, \$60. The list goes on and on. This stack of documents is very thick. This gentlemen must have spent half of his life grazing at the WA Club. I wonder whether he was starting to cost the Government too much in what he was spending there.

To return to my original concern: We must know whether Mr Fletcher went of his own accord, or whether he was pushed. In some ways it is a little irrelevant because in either case, he would not have been entitled to the redundancy; however, for the public record, it is important to have the matter aired and to get to the bottom of it. We must also know why his redundancy was calculated at a special reduced tax rate six months before he left. Was the Premier aware of the implications that this might have in terms of the relations between the Ministry of the Premier and Cabinet and the Australian Taxation Office? At the same time we should ask some questions about how much was paid to Mr Gilleece when he resigned, whether there was a redundancy component to his payout figure, and, if so, how much it was. If not, we also should find out whether any component of his total departure package, or whatever he left with, was taxed at the rate of 31.5¢ in the dollar, rather than 48.5¢.

In my view we should also be asking questions about Mr Rowe who moved from the term-of-government contract to a consultancy contract in 1997. We should also have information about whether compensation or redundancy was paid to him when he terminated his contract, and how soon after terminating the contract he started to pick up consultancies. I will bet my bottom dollar that it was not two years, as is the case with any other public servant. We should also know whether the consultancies were widely advertised. In relation to the consultancy between Mr Rowe and the Ministry of the Premier and Cabinet, when did the consultancies commence, over what period was the consultancy service provided, what services were provided by Mr Rowe, and what was the total remuneration paid to Mr Rowe for his services? In my view, perhaps this practice is a little more widespread than it appears on the surface, and perhaps the Premier has been overly generous in the way he has looked after certain people within his office and possibly even people within ministers' offices. The sooner the Government and the Premier, in particular, come clean on this matter, the sooner we can put it to bed.

I have already written to the Commissioner for Public Sector Standards, albeit that I am not confident that the commissioner - I hate to say this - will necessarily do a very good job. He is hamstrung by the fact that there are limitations to the Public Sector Management Act. Nevertheless as a first step I have taken the opportunity to write to him, enclosing key documents

and requesting that he conduct an investigation into the operation of the Premier's office, particularly as it applies to the granting of the redundancy payments and the calculation of the termination payment for Mr Ian Fletcher. That has been done as a first pass. I and many other members here eagerly await the response of the commissioner in that regard. Yesterday afternoon, when the Commissioner for Public Sector Standards was contacted by a member of the media, he was not sure whether an inquiry would be undertaken. I am advised today, albeit informally, that he will undertake to do the inquiry. I have some grave concerns because the commissioner is somewhat limited in what he can do; however, other options are available.

In the interests of good public sector management, practices such as the one I have brought before this place today must be stamped out. It is all well and good for the Premier to crow about accountability, about his doing the right thing and being absolutely up-front and open and all the rest of it; however, for my money we would have to question all those claims in view of the fact that the Opposition can get nowhere near the truth on some very fundamental questions about the handling by the Premier and his officers of the resignation of the two individuals, Mr Jack Gilleece and Mr Ian Fletcher. Some questions must be answered, particularly about Mr Ian Fletcher, and I look forward to the response from both the Premier and the Government in regard to the questions I have brought before this place.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result -

Ayes (15)

Hon Kim Chance
Hon J.A. Cowdell
Hon Cheryl Davenport
Hon E.R.J. Dermer

Hon N.D. Griffiths
Hon John Halden
Hon Helen Hodgson
Hon Norm Kelly

Hon Mark Nevill
Hon Ljiljana Ravlich
Hon J.A. Scott
Hon Tom Stephens

Hon Ken Travers
Hon Giz Watson
Hon Bob Thomas (*Teller*)

Noes (14)

Hon M.J. Criddle
Hon B.K. Donaldson
Hon Max Evans
Hon Peter Foss

Hon Ray Halligan
Hon Barry House
Hon Murray Montgomery
Hon N.F. Moore

Hon M.D. Nixon
Hon B.M. Scott
Hon Greg Smith

Hon W.N. Stretch
Hon Derrick Tomlinson
Hon Muriel Patterson (*Teller*)

Pairs

Hon Christine Sharp
Hon Tom Helm

Hon Simon O'Brien
Hon Dexter Davies

Amendment thus passed.

Motion, as Amended

HON J.A. SCOTT (South Metropolitan) [3.22 pm]: I support the amended motion. However, I am worried about one matter. While I was pleased to see the Department of Transport put forward the idea of some changes and advances in private transport technologies for the future, that department is one of the few tackling the serious problem of greenhouse gas emission reduction in this State. Members will be aware that recently the Greenhouse Coordination Council has been meeting to formulate some sort of policy for Western Australia. The Government is not taking this issue as seriously as it should. This issue is already biting us here in Western Australia in that we are losing some of the important reef systems in the north west of the State through global warming. The Western Australian Government is not on its own in not taking this issue as seriously as it should. Worldwide there is a tendency to put it on the backburner despite the Kyoto agreements which were set up a long time ago. A recent conference, the Fourth Conference of the Parties of the Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Buenos Aires, was a dud. I will quote from an article titled "The International Politics of Climate Change" by Charlie Kronick. This article appeared in *The Ecologist*, volume 29, No 2, March-April 1999. Speaking of the achievements of the Buenos Aires conference, Mr Kronick said -

The Buenos Aires Action Plan is in fact a promise to agree some time in the future. An agreement emerged to establish a timetable to further refine, by the year 2000, the mechanisms agreed to meet the requirements agreed at Kyoto in 1997 for reductions by 2012. But no hard decisions were taken; little progress was made either in realising the reductions already agreed in Kyoto or in reaching the far more dramatic reductions that will be necessary to limit damage to the climate in the future.

The article continues -

It took greenhouse gas *concentrations* around 150 years to increase in the atmosphere by approximately 30%, largely as a result of the burning of fossil fuels. The majority of that increase has taken place in the last 50 years. It will take nearly another 13 years of negotiations to reduce *emissions* of greenhouse gases by around 5 per cent. Concentrations will still continue to rise into the next century. Can this be characterised as success?

Mr Kronick further states -

In truth the political process to protect the climate is becoming increasingly arcane, not just because all global negotiations are complex, but because they are now based on an increasingly complex set of assumptions. Initially, these assumptions were simple opposites: "global warming" was "real" or it was an unproven theory, supported by ecological extremists who wanted to disrupt the global economic system. Now the gradations of belief are

beginning to rival those of the medieval church. In addition to the nay-sayers, there are those who have turned to "voodoo economics". For them it doesn't matter if climate change is real, it is simply "too expensive" to reduce emissions. This group is largely located in the industrialised north - principally North America - and is committed to maintaining the global industrial and economic status quo. In the parlance of the poll tax riots in the UK in the late 1980s: "Can't act, won't act".

We have a similar attitude in Australia. We saw it at the federal level when Robert Hill was preparing to attend the Kyoto conference. The Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics drew up an economic model which suggested the sky would fall on our economy if we adhered in any way to the levels of greenhouse reduction that we should have been striving to meet. However, that modelling was severely criticised by practically every economist in the country. It was shown to be a total sham and it turned out it had been largely funded by the coal industry in Australia. That modelling has been totally and utterly discredited.

Are we really in a serious position? Will climate change really occur because of the CO₂ we are pumping into the atmosphere, particularly hydrocarbons, from a number of areas? These include methane and a number of other types of CO₂. Some greenhouse gases are more long lasting than others. For example, CFCs have a very strong greenhouse effect, but do not last as long as carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide or methane. Carbon dioxide is the most serious gas. Western Australia is looking down the barrel of not an 8 per cent, but a 240 per cent, increase by 2012. It is not good enough. We need a whole-of-government approach to deal with this problem. It is not only a problem of the Department of Transport, although transport is a significant part of that equation.

Notable people in Western Australia, such as Brian O'Brien, have pooh-pooed claims of a problem. They say that this is probably just a variation which occurs because of what is happening at the solar level; that is, more heat is coming from the sun. Recent research has shown that not to be the case. In fact, it would seem that we have a slightly cooler effect from the sun. Perhaps global warming from CO₂ is worse than we thought it was, and we would be far worse off if the sun returned to its former heat generation.

Hon M.D. Nixon: Ice caps are growing, not shrinking.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: Ice caps are not growing. Modelling supporting that claim has been shown to be incorrect and based on a fallacy. Satellite technology was used which measured global warming as though satellites never move. They recalculated the findings and the results matched everybody else's. Those stories were incorrect. Brian O'Brien was a consultant for a coal company and a few other such people trot around the world trying to play down the effects of global warming.

Official confirmation was outlined in an article headed "We're Changing Our Climate! Who Can Doubt It?" by Simon Retallack and Peter Bunyard, as appeared in *The Ecologist* of March-April 1999. It read -

Official confirmation came in 1995, when the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) - the official scientific body established in 1988 by the UN to investigate climate change - published its Second Assessment Report, written and reviewed by some 2,000 scientists. It stated that "the balance of evidence suggests there is a discernible human influence on global climate".

Consensus now undeniably exists. The article then quotes James McCarthy, the Chairman of the Scientific Committee for International Biosphere Programme, who declares -

"There is no debate among the statured scientists [i.e. those currently engaged in relevant research and whose work has been published in the refereed scientific journals] about what is happening."

The relationship between greenhouse gases and climate that has now been established is supported by evidence from isotopic studies of ice-core material from both Antarctica and Greenland. The evidence shows that every period of global cooling has gone hand-in-hand with a drop in both carbon dioxide and methane in the atmosphere, and every time the planet has thawed, a surge has taken place in those same gases. . . .

Rising temperatures are already the clearest sign of climate change. So far, according to the IPCC, the global average temperatures have risen 0.6°C above the pre-industrial average. Nine of the hottest years on record have occurred since 1988; six of the first eight months of 1988 were the warmest since records began in 1866; and July 1998 was the hottest month ever. According to the IPCC's latest ocean-atmosphere models, if emissions continued to rise on current trends, greenhouse gas concentrations would reach double pre-industrial levels - higher than for several million years - by 2080. Were this so, we could see a global average increase of 2.5°C, with perhaps 4°C over land masses, particularly in the northern high latitudes, 3°C to 4°C over parts of the Arctic or Antarctic, and possibly substantial regional variations from the global average. If the increases in temperature seem modest, it should be noted that a 3°C cooling brought on the most recent ice age. What is more, the climatologists of the IPCC predict that if emissions continue to rise on current trends, a second doubling of pre-industrial levels of CO₂ could lead to a catastrophic rise of around 10°C. Even these predictions may understate the speed and scale of change.

It then refers to the misreading of the models. I gathered a copy of the "misreading of the models" document, which was the editorial in the same issue of *The Ecologist*. It is very frightening information. I hope the Minister for Transport will take note. If we do not deal with this issue, we will be in very serious trouble. The article reads -

According to eminent astrophysicist, Alberto di Fazio, of the Astronomical Observatory of Rome and the Global Dynamics Institute, if we follow the trends of the current emissions of greenhouse gases, we find they will bring

about at least a quadrupling of the total carbon dioxide concentrations in the atmosphere compared to pre-industrial levels within a century from now. Policymakers, however, do not seem to be taking this disquieting fact into account. On the contrary, almost all the governmental delegations to the international negotiations on climate change tend to behave as if a business-as-usual emission scenario will lead in a century's time to no more than a doubling of atmospheric carbon dioxide, as implied in some of the IPCC's intermediate emission rates. We are therefore heading for disaster 'full steam ahead' while kidding ourselves that the reading on the speedometer is about half of what it actually is.

Hon M.J. Criddle: We have gone through the process of the report. We are monitoring the different forms of fuel in public transport, and we are moving forward into fuel cell buses.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: I acknowledge that the minister's department is moving slowly in the right direction, for which I commend it. However, we need a whole-of-government approach on this issue. The ramifications of this matter are spelt out by this article, which continues -

... unless drastic action is taken now to reduce emissions, CO₂ levels in the atmosphere will double every 27 years. That is a very different scenario from a doubling of CO₂ - around 560 ppmv- by 2080, on which most policymakers are basing their understanding of what the future holds in store.

The implications are enormous. On the basis of its models of the consequences of CO₂ concentrations in the atmosphere stabilising at 560 ppmv, the IPCC predicts a best estimate increase in global surface temperature of approximately 2.5°C. But, as di Fazio emphasises, if we go on as we are - and the longer we delay the more drastic the action required - average temperatures across the planet will rise by at least 10°C and as much as 14°C.

Hon M.J. Criddle: You have pointed out all the problems. What solution do you put forward to solve those problems in terms of fuel and so forth?

Hon J.A. SCOTT: I will get to that eventually. I want to make people think about what that means. That means that our grandchildren will not live a full life.

Hon M.J. Criddle: We need to think about the answers, not the problems.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: But we must be aware of what we are dealing with. We cannot go along thinking it is only a quarter of what is actually happening. If we think we can get away with and probably survive 2.5 degrees Celsius, we will not place enough emphasis on solving the problem of global warming, and, as pointed out in the other article about Buenos Aires, we will not see any real action for 13 years.

Hon M.J. Criddle: Work is being done, and I have just had a look at the work that is being done. We need to encourage that work.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: Work is certainly being done, but it is not enough. Western Australia is also trying to get out of its obligations by pleading to the Federal Government that because we are a resource-based State, we should receive special treatment.

Hon M.J. Criddle: We need to do that in conjunction with the world's going on. Life must go on.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: Indeed we do, but that does not mean that we can continue to do business as usual and keep promoting industries in this State that have high energy use and low efficiency. Amory Lovins has done some calculations on the efficiency of industry in the United States and has said that only 1 per cent of the energy that is put into the products that are produced by industry in the United States ends up in those products two weeks after they are in the hands of the customers. In other words, 99 per cent of that energy is wasted. He pointed out that light bulbs contain only 3 per cent of the energy that is used to produce light. Our industries are very inefficient, and we have a long way to go. Those are the areas in which the opportunities lie, and that is where this Government is failing.

Hon Greg Smith: Do you mean they use 3 per cent of the energy to produce light?

Hon J.A. SCOTT: Only 3 per cent of the energy that goes into light bulbs becomes light; the remainder is wasted.

Hon M.D. Nixon: Are you talking about fluorescent globes?

Hon J.A. SCOTT: There are various levels. Some light globes are more efficient than others, and the new technology globes are better. Fifteen years ago, a company in the United States that produced energy had the innovative idea that rather than rush off and build a new power station, it would give each of its customers an energy-saving light bulb. Its customers were not charged for those globes in a lump sum but had the cost put on their bill. That was a win-win situation for everyone, because the company saved money by not having to build a new power station, and the customers got a light bulb which lasted for eight years rather than two months, or for however long a light bulb lasts these days. I have noticed that some of them seem to last for less and less time.

Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.00 pm

[Questions without notice taken.]

Hon J.A. SCOTT: The modelling used by the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change vastly underestimated the real levels of change to be experienced given the current projections of CO₂ emissions and the growth in greenhouse gas

emissions. One of the scariest statistics was that we could end up with temperature rises in the next century of between 10 and 14 degrees Celsius. That would be the end of the story for the human race.

Hon Greg Smith: Who is saying that?

Hon J.A. SCOTT: About 2 000 of the people who work in that field, whom I have quoted for the record so that the member can have a look.

Hon Greg Smith: Some of them are saying it is cooling down.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: Some scientists are saying it is cooling down, but those scientists have been working on incorrect modelling and have been using data which is flawed and has been found to be incorrect. Virtually no scientist in the world today would say that we are not experiencing global warming. Global warming has taken place, and the world is now 0.6 degrees Celsius warmer than it was prior to the introduction of greenhouse gases. Another concern, apart from the massive increase that we are talking about and the fact that Governments are failing to address this problem in a real way, is that there appears to be an understanding that the current greenhouse levels and the temperature are exactly related. However, the greenhouse levels that we have today relate to greenhouse emissions that occurred 50 to 80 years ago. The effects of the current levels of greenhouse gases will not be experienced for at least 30 years, and the maximum impact will be experienced in 80 years. We are greatly underestimating what greenhouse gases will be produced by the current levels of CO₂.

Hon B.K. Donaldson: Which countries are ahead of us? Which countries do you believe are role models that we can follow?

Hon J.A. SCOTT: There are a number of countries. One country is moving in the right direction, but most countries are not, and that is the problem.

Hon B.K. Donaldson: So we are in front?

Hon J.A. SCOTT: We are not in front at all. Per capita, Australia is one of the worst greenhouse gas producers in the world. The only reason we have been allowed to have that 8 per cent increase is that our population is rather small compared with the rest of the world, and although our output per capita is very high, our total output is not highly significant on the world stage at this time. However, if we continue to increase at the rate of 240 per cent -

Hon Greg Smith interjected.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: Strangely enough, some countries have decreased their output of greenhouse gas emissions and will continue to do so over most of the next decade. However, unfortunately these are countries like Russia, which has experienced a reduction in industrial capacity because its economy is doing so badly.

Hon B.K. Donaldson: Russia has been terrible.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: Yes, but it is currently experiencing a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

Hon B.K. Donaldson: It had a low benchmark to start off with.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: One of the problems is that the road that we are going down at the moment and that most of the big industrial countries like the United States are pushing is the trading of emissions. The weakness is that while in countries like Russia whose economies are currently basket cases there has been a reduction in the amount of greenhouse gas output and they have been given targets that are way above what they will use, countries like the United States are moving in to buy that excess capacity, so rather than get a win because of the winding down of the inefficient coal-burning factories in Russia, there will be no gain at all, because Governments around the world have failed to grasp the nettle and introduce carbon taxes, which is one of the real ways to reduce greenhouse gas production. One of the current debates in this State has seen the Parliament ringed by logging trucks. One of the other big problems is that worldwide, including in Australia, there is a failure to prevent the destruction of old-growth forests.

Hon B.K. Donaldson: For every tree we cut down, we plant two.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: We keep hearing nice fallacious arguments, but the fallacious arguments are simply explained. The old-growth forests have vast stores of CO₂ - far more than the new trees - and when they are cut down, that store is released.

Hon Greg Smith: It all runs out the trunk!

Hon J.A. SCOTT: In effect, it does. It has been shown that some members in this place have yet to grasp the significance of what they are doing. That is a real problem. I agree we should plant a lot more trees, but we should not knock down -

Hon Greg Smith interjected.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: On a day by day basis, a tiny plant does not do that at all. Once it gets to a certain size, yes, a large, newly planted tree will store more carbon than an old-growth tree, but an old-growth tree has already stored vast amounts of CO₂ at this point in time, and as soon as we cut down those old-growth forests, we release those stores into the atmosphere.

Hon Greg Smith: How?

Hon J.A. SCOTT: I will explain that later; I want to talk about a few more things and do not want to go through the whole of nature for the member just yet.

Hon Cheryl Davenport: Tell him to go back to school and learn!

Hon J.A. SCOTT: That is probably a good idea. Hon Bruce Donaldson asked me about what other countries are doing about this matter. One small country in population size, Iceland, is doing the sort of thing that we should be doing. In the future, all of its mobile transport fuels will come from hydrogen. In fact, it is turning itself into a hydrogen economy and plans to become the world's supplier of hydrogen products and to develop the technologies and the hydrogen itself. I will read from an article in *The Ecologist*, and I am glad Hon Bruce Donaldson asked me about that -

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: Can you take a route around the world and make it easier for us?

Hon J.A. SCOTT: I will pop over to Germany for Hon Derrick Tomlinson. The article is headed "Germany - Leading the Way in Preventing Climate Change?" and states -

The new German SPD-Green coalition government holds out the hope of building a sustainable society that minimises its impact on climate.

It has reaffirmed Germany's commitment to a 25% reduction below 1990 levels of CO² emissions by 2005.

We are looking at a 240 per cent increase by 2012. Germany is aiming for a 25 per cent reduction. It continues -

To achieve this, road tax is to be replaced by a tax based on mileage. The development of a three litre car and 'Transrapid' maglev railway system is also promised. German car companies have already made very substantial progress towards developing cars that will be able to run on non-polluting hydrogen. The government's 100,000 solar roof project, Europe's largest solar initiative, aims at kick-starting and lowering prices for solar energy. Wind energy has gained enormous popularity and already provides 17% of Schleswig-Holstein's energy. The use of biodegradable products to create heat is common and could save 8.2 bio. Kw/h p.a.

The coalition treaty between Chancellor Schroeder's SDP and the Greens also assigns particular importance to socio-ecological research - funding projects on renewable energies with 300 million DM (£100 million). This is likely to be accompanied by a periodical increase of the ecological tax to generate more revenue for renewables and to create a real incentive for energy-saving.

German taxpayers currently subsidise nuclear power to the tune of 50 billion DM (£17 billion) every year. The general elections showed that they are unwilling to do so any longer. The government's pledge to abandon nuclear energy by 2030 proved an electoral success and will pave the way to a transfer of funds to much more cost-effective and ecologically sustainable renewable technologies. Whilst the German Environment Minister Jurgen Trittin's draft legislation to phase out nuclear power generation has not as yet been accepted, it will be re-examined towards the end of March.

Therefore, Germany, with an SDP-Green coalition Government, is leading the world.

I have pointed out a number of examples. A number of nations, such as Holland, have put programs in place to offset their CO₂ emissions. Holland puts a large amount of money into tree plantations in other countries. That is probably one of the only things that a tiny place like Holland can do, because it would be unable to have tree plantations there. Holland has certainly been keen to ensure that it does not increase its greenhouse gas emissions above the allowable levels under the Kyoto agreement, even to the extent that when it was considering buying karri from the Western Australian forest, it first sent a team here, which found that it was not sustainably grown, so it refused to purchase it, I am pleased to say.

Western Australia cannot continue to ignore the disastrous effects that we will suffer if we continue on our current course. The attitude of people like Hon Greg Smith is that this is not happening. The problem is that it is happening right now.

Hon Greg Smith: What I said was that we can contribute to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in the rest of the world by increasing our emissions here. For example, the production of natural gas here could replace the use of brown coal in some other countries.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: That is not a feasible way to achieve anything. Although the greenhouse gas emissions produced by our gas are lower than other forms of energy, such as coal, they are not neutral or negative. In the past, like most other nations with hydrocarbons, we have been flogging it off too cheaply. Liquefied petroleum gas delivered to Japan is about one-tenth of the price it is here. That is absolutely ridiculous. We are turning our own people off it but flogging it on a large scale to Japan, virtually at cost price.

Hon Greg Smith interjected.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: I can deny it. We must start to have an overall reduction. The only good thing about its going to Japan is that the Japanese are much more efficient users of energy than we are in Australia. For a unit of electricity, Japan has four times the production that we have in Australia. In Australia, we are wasteful users. In that sense, perhaps if we send it all to Japan it might be a good idea. However, if we are considering sending it to China, that would not be such a good idea. It is true that most of its economy is driven by coal-fired energy. Until we get the carbon taxes in place to ensure that people start using energy more efficiently, we will continue to have problems. At the end of the day, at the current trajectory, this planet - Western Australia is probably one of the worst offenders in the world - will see a global climate change to the tune of 10 to 14 degrees Celsius by the end of the next century. That is not a tenable situation.

Australia's production of natural gas is minuscule by world standards. It is barely a pinprick; it makes very little difference. What can make a difference is the sort of lead that Germany and Iceland are showing by going into new technologies and

seeing this as a time of great possibilities for their nations, not as a dead loss. There are huge possibilities in Australia to move into the new technologies. We have a well-educated populace and a good scientific community which is capable of great deeds, if given the right framework and the right funding to be able to get on with their work. Instead of that, we are developing dig-it-up economies. We have a one track economy in Western Australia, and this is the fault of government. It is a lack of understanding. If we want to deal with greenhouse gases, the situation must be considered in a strategic way, and it must start at the top.

Hon Greg Smith: A few months ago you said we should dig up concrete and iron ore to make sleepers instead of taking our trees.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: I think Hon Greg Smith said that; I do not think I said that. Show me in *Hansard* where I said it.

The way to deal with greenhouse gas emissions in this State is to make it a whole-of-government issue. To do that, it must start right at the top, with the Premier and the Cabinet giving serious and determined consideration to the way in which this can be seen as a positive challenge. I believe that countries like Iceland and Germany, which are developing these technologies, will be the countries that will win in the future. One of the documents I was reading referred to the company's roles in greenhouse production because we now live in a world that is driven more by multi-nationals than by government. It is therefore important that they use new technologies and new industries that are profitable, but not greenhouse producing. I point out to Hon Greg Smith that probably the best investments over the past decade have been in these areas.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

House adjourned at 5.00 pm

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS, TARGETS****33. Hon TOM STEPHENS to the minister representing the Minister for the Environment:**

- (1) What measures does the State Government intend to put in place to meet the targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in Western Australia?
- (2) Has the minister assessed the claims that the west Kimberley tidal power project could save more than 20 million tonnes of carbon dioxide during its lifetime and that it would meet almost 50 per cent of Western Australia's renewable generation obligations by 2010? If yes, are these claims accurate?
- (3) When does the minister intend to release her decision of the environmental review of the west Kimberley tidal power project?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1) The target for Australia set at the third Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change in Kyoto in 1997 is a national one.

The Western Australian Government has endorsed the national greenhouse strategy which details national measures for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, subject to four qualifications: Maintenance of international competitiveness; differentiated targets between States; the basis for the greenhouse strategy - that is, assumptions at Kyoto - and the cost of achievement of greenhouse targets.

The Western Australian Greenhouse Council is establishing a set of complementary measures for Western Australia that will demonstrate this State's intentions regarding greenhouse gas emissions. Five technical panel reports to the WAGC were released for public information last week as part of this process.

Western Australia is leading Australia in its response to greenhouse gas emission reduction. It was the first Australian State to develop a greenhouse gas inventory in 1998; establish a greenhouse council with membership including government, business, conservation and community representatives; establish technical panels of experts to advise the WAGC in key greenhouse gas emission sectors; carry out a cost-effectiveness analysis of measures in the NGS; develop projection estimates to enable accurate evaluation of consequences.

In addition, a Western Australian Greenhouse Strategy is planned to be submitted to government by the WAGC, based on the national greenhouse strategy but tailored to Western Australian circumstances based on the conclusions of the five technical panel reports.

- (2)-(3) The Environmental Protection Authority provided its report and recommendations regarding the Derby tidal power station to the minister on 3 June 1999. The minister received a number of appeals on the EPA's report and is seeking advice from the appeals convenor and the Department of Environmental Protection.

TIDAL POWER PROJECT, TARIFF VALUE**34. Hon TOM STEPHENS to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Energy:**

- (1) What is the value of the power tariff offered by the Government to preferred suppliers in reference to the west Kimberley tidal power project and is either of these guaranteed to reduce in real terms over time?
- (2) What jobs in which industries will result from the selection of gas power generation in the west Kimberley?
- (3) What full fuel cycle emissions are expected from gas generation in the west Kimberley and how does the Government intend to meet the greenhouse gas and Kyoto 2 per cent renewable obligations if the tidal power project does not proceed?

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

- (1) It is not appropriate to release this information arising in a competitive tendering process which is still under way.
- (2) The availability of economically priced power and the availability of a new fuel in the form of liquefied natural gas in the region will open up other opportunities in the region. It is expected that jobs in the production and transportation of LNG will be created as well as in the construction operation of the new gas-fired power stations.
- (3) Emissions have been considered as part of the evaluation bids as one of the criteria for selection. The quantification of the full fuel cycle emissions is a relevant matter for respective proponents and may need to be addressed when seeking environmental approval through the EPA providing advice to the relevant minister.

The Western Australian Government has no specific obligation yet with respect to the 2 per cent renewable undertaking that the Commonwealth advanced at Kyoto. Other sources of renewable energy are already in place in the State and continue to be considered in planning for the future. Western Australia's implementation plans for its role in delivering on the national greenhouse strategy are still being developed with input by the WA Greenhouse Council.

KYOTO AGREEMENT, EFFECT ON STATE FINANCES

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

- (1) Given the significance of resource developments and downstream processes, what consideration has the minister given to the effect of the Kyoto agreement on the State's finances?
- (2) What has he done to lobby the Federal Government for funding for greenhouse-friendly renewable energy projects and, in particular, what has he done about the proposed west Kimberley tidal power project?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

I ask that the member put that question on notice.

VARANUS ISLAND OIL SPILL

36. Hon GIZ WATSON to the minister representing the Minister for the Environment:

With regard to the recent oil spill near Varanus Island -

- (1) Is Varanus Island an A class nature reserve?
- (2) Is the minister satisfied that the island's conservation values were not jeopardised by the recent spill?
- (3) Will there be an inquiry into the spill?
- (4) If yes, will the Department of Environmental Protection and the Department of Conservation and Land Management be involved?
- (5) If no to (3), why not?
- (6) Will the minister prohibit oil and gas exploitation adjacent to nature reserves?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1) No.
- (2) Initial advice indicates that no significant impact occurred to the nature reserve.
- (3) An inquiry is being conducted by the State Committee for Combatting Marine Oil Pollution.
- (4) Yes.
- (5) Not applicable.
- (6) The Government's approach to oil and gas drilling and production proposals in state marine areas is to consider proposals on a case-by-case basis. The exception to this is Ningaloo Marine Park, where petroleum drilling is not permitted. For other state marine areas, proposals are subject to environmental impact assessment by the EPA. This includes a detailed ecological risk analysis, including consideration of both the probability of an oil spill occurring and the potential ecological consequences should a spill reach sensitive habitats such as islands or reefs. If necessary, the basis of this ecological risk assessment process will be reviewed in the light of the findings of the inquiry into the recent Varanus Island oil spill.

REGIONAL FOREST AGREEMENT, JOB LOSSES

37. Hon NORM KELLY to the minister representing the Minister for the Environment:

- (1) Will the minister provide the figures of the estimated number of jobs that are expected to be lost as a result of the Government's revised management policy?
- (2) How, and by whom, are these figures calculated?
- (3) Will the minister table the details of the basis for the calculations?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1)-(3) Job losses were estimated using the same procedures developed by the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Environment Australia and used in the Regional Forest Agreement. Estimates for the impact of the Government's policy announced on 20 July 1999 are:

Is this the same question that was asked yesterday?

Hon N.F. Moore: It is the same basic question.

Hon Tom Stephens: It is a variation.

The PRESIDENT: Order! If this is the same question, it is a breach of the standing orders. I am advised, and therefore am

prepared to accept, that it is a variation. A variation is not a breach. It is up to members in the end to decide whether they want to destroy their own question time.

Hon MAX EVANS: The figures are as follows -

Logging	75
Sawmills	371
Transport	25
Administration	50
Public	178
Indirect	838
Total	1 537

BUNBURY-PERTH RAILWAY LINE, CONDITION

38. Hon BOB THOMAS to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) What is the condition of the railway track between Bunbury and Perth?
- (2) What is the maximum speed permitted on the line and what restrictions are applied on other sections of the line?
- (3) What work is required to upgrade the track to accommodate the type of "fast train" the member for Bunbury is advocating?
- (4) What is the estimated cost of that work?

Hon M.J. CRIDDLE replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1) The railway is maintained to a fit-for-purpose standard. Re-railing work over 42 kilometres of track in that section of railway at a cost of \$11m is currently being undertaken to ensure it is maintained at that fit-for-purpose standard.
- (2) The maximum speed permitted on the railway is 110 kilometres per hour. The following temporary speed restrictions are in place for the *Australind* passenger train: Two kilometres between Mundijong Junction and Mundijong at 70 kmh; 10.1 kilometres between Keysbrook and Pinjarra at 80 kmh; 0.4 kilometres between Brunswick and Picton at 60 kmh. The restrictions will be removed progressively as a result of track work currently being undertaken.
- (3) The south west railway between Armadale and Bunbury would require a number of safety improvements, such as boom gates at the main level crossings and reduced track curvature to allow a high-speed passenger train to operate on the route. The need for grade separation with the South Western Highway crossings would need to be further investigated. Relocation of the passenger rail terminal to the Marlston Hill precinct would also require some minor track works.
- (4) Estimates prepared several years ago for the southern province transport strategy indicated that the cost of track works would be \$10m not including any grade separation works.

EVALUATION OF NEW LIVING PROGRAM 1998

39. Hon CHERYL DAVENPORT to the minister representing the Minister for Housing:

I refer to the draft report entitled "Evaluation of New Living Program 1998" and the final report completed in December 1998, which have not been publicly released.

- (1) Will the minister table both reports?
- (2) If not, why not?
- (3) If so, when?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1)-(3) It was not intended that the report be tabled in Parliament. This was an internal report for departmental use to determine the progress of the new living program. Notwithstanding that, the minister would be pleased to provide the member with a copy of the draft and final reports.

FLETCHER, MR IAN, RESIGNATION FROM PREMIER'S OFFICE

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

I refer to the voluntary resignation of Ian Fletcher from his position as chief of staff in the Premier's office.

- (1) Why was Mr Fletcher handed a redundancy payment of \$43 000, given that he resigned voluntarily?
- (2) Why was his total payout of approximately \$150 000 taxed as a bona fide redundancy at a rate of 31.5¢ in the dollar, given that at the time of calculation, 2 November 1998, Mr Gilleece's position had not been restructured from a special 6 to a special 3?

- (3) Was the Premier aware that by calculating and releasing the payment as a bona fide redundancy he may have defrauded the Australian Taxation Office?

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

In reading out the question, the member mentioned two gentlemen. I presume this question is about Mr Fletcher, not Mr Gilleece.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: I am sorry; the question refers to Mr Fletcher.

Hon N.F. MOORE: I am asking for the sake of the record. I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1)-(3) Mr Fletcher did not resign. He left the Premier's office on the restructure of his role. The Premier was not involved in personnel issues. That is the responsibility of the human resource services branch.

OMEX SITE, INDUCEMENTS TO HOUSEHOLDERS

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

I refer to the Omex toxic waste site in Bellevue.

- (1) Have officers of the Department of Environmental Protection been involved in offering householders living near the site inducements to relocate?
- (2) Were the inducements offered on the condition that the residents sign a document preventing them from disclosing the terms of the relocation agreement?
- (3) What inducements were offered?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1) Officers of the Department of Environmental Protection were involved in negotiations, and ex gratia payments were made to some landowners on the basis of advice from the Crown Solicitor.
- (2) Relevant contracts of sale did not contain any clauses to prevent the property owners from disclosing the terms of the purchase.
- (3) No inducements were offered; however, ex gratia payments were made.

QUEEN'S COUNSEL, APPOINTMENT

42. Hon HELEN HODGSON to the Attorney General:

- (1) Have new guidelines or procedures been implemented, or will they be implemented, for the appointment of Queen's Counsel in Western Australia?
- (2) If so, firstly, on what date did, or will, the guidelines or procedures come into operation; and, secondly, what are the new guidelines or procedures?
- (3) Has the Attorney General consulted the legal profession in respect of these changes, and what response has been received?

Hon PETER FOSS replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1) Yes. It is proposed to implement new procedures governing the appointment of Queen's Counsel which will make the process more open and transparent.
- (2) The terms of the proposed procedures are still under consideration, but it is envisaged that they should come into operation later this year.
- (3) Yes. Submissions have been received from the Law Society of Western Australia, the Western Australian Bar Association, the Women Lawyers Association and a number of individual members of the legal profession. These submissions are currently being considered.

NORTHBRIDGE TUNNEL, BAULDERSTONE-CLOUGH JOINT VENTURE EXEMPTION

43. Hon TOM STEPHENS to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Can the minister advise when the Baulderstone-Clough joint venture was granted a general exemption to work on railway reserve land in completing the construction of the Northbridge tunnel-northern city by-pass?
- (2) Will the minister table a copy of that exemption; if not, why not?
- (3) Is the minister aware of serious allegations that construction workers on the tunnel project had been required to work within three metres of live rails without any accredited rail safety officer being present, in breach of the rail safety legislation and/or the Westrail safety procedures code?

(4) If so, what action has he taken?

Hon M.J. CRIDDLE replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

(1) Two general exemption permits have been issued by Westrail to the Boulderstone-Clough joint venture to undertake work associated with the Graham Farmer Freeway. The first was issued on 3 April 1998 for construction of the Westrail 132 kilovolt substation for five months; the second was issued on 5 March 1999 for two weeks to allow work between East Perth and Claisebrook. Other procedures, including the issue of track access permits by Westrail, have been established to enable the contractor to work on or about the railway network. Compliance inspections are undertaken by Westrail.

(2) Yes. I seek leave to table the exemption.

Leave granted. [See paper No 89.]

(3) No.

(4) Not applicable.

DISABILITY SERVICES, COMMONWEALTH FUNDING

44. Hon KEN TRAVERS to the minister representing the Minister for Disability Services:

(1) How much of the \$150m, which the Federal Government has indicated will be available in the 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 financial years for meeting unmet demand in the disability services area, will be available to Western Australia?

(2) For what specific areas within the Disability Services portfolio will this funding be available?

(3) How much of the current unmet demand in disabilities services will it alleviate?

(4) What commitment will the Western Australian Government be required to make to access this funding?

(5) What strategies are in place to alleviate the current unmet demands until this funding becomes available in July next year?

(6) Will the Western Australian Government urgently be taking up its share of the responsibility, as requested by the federal minister for disability services?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question. No formal offer has been received from the commonwealth minister. The Western Australian Government's position in regard to the Commonwealth's offer will be determined once full details are known.

(1)-(4) Not known.

(5) The Disability Services Commission will continue to implement the service strategies funded through the five-year business plan.

(6) Until the details of the Commonwealth's offer are known, it is not possible to comment further.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

45. Hon E.R.J. DERMER to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Commerce and Trade:

When is it anticipated that each of roll-out phases 1, 2 and 3 of the statewide telecommunications enhancement program will be commenced and completed?

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

It is assumed that the member refers to points covered in part 2.2.3 on page 10 of the statewide telecommunications enhancement proposal request for proposal No 24399. If so, the preferred roll-out timetable is as follows:

1. Priority 1 locations within three months of the contract being signed;
2. Priority 2 locations within 12 months of the contract being signed; and
3. All locations within 15 months of the contract being signed.

The roll-out will have minor variations from the above as a result of the current negotiations with carriers' requirements and refinements in agency requirements. The actual roll-out for each agency will be set out in the customer contract and the carrier or carriers it chooses from the STEP panel.

TIMBER INDUSTRY, RESTRUCTURING IN THE SOUTH WEST

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

Some notice of this question has been given.

- (1) Will the Minister for the Environment table details of the industry development plan dealing with changes to the timber industry in the south west?
- (2) If not, why not?
- (3) Who is responsible for the development of this plan?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1)-(3) A comprehensive process has been put in place to assist the timber industry to restructure. The Premier has formed a ministerial task force to monitor the effect of the transition and bring forward a recommendation on the assessment and development opportunities and assistance for affected communities. As part of this process, the Minister for Local Government will chair a consultative committee involving local government and employee representatives. The Premier, Minister for the Environment and Minister for Local Government have personally visited the south west to talk to those affected. In addition, Mr Steven Fewster has been seconded to the role of Regional Forest Agreement coordinator. Mr Fewster is currently working with local communities to assist in determining their priorities.

SIMPLOT AUSTRALIA PTY LTD, CLOSURE

47. Hon KIM CHANCE to the minister representing the Minister for Primary Industry:

Some notice of this question has been given.

I refer to the up to 180 Manjimup potato industry workers - including factory workers and farmers - who will lose their jobs when Simplot Australia closes its factory.

- (1) What direct assistance is the Government providing to those workers and farmers in finding new opportunities and markets for their potatoes?
- (2) What assistance is the Government providing to farmers who have invested in extra potato production over the past three years in response to Simplot stating that the factory would double its output?
- (3) Will the minister table details of criteria for workers' eligibility to receive government-funded redundancy payments? If not, why not?
- (4) Will the Minister for Primary Industry be intervening on behalf of these workers and farmers to receive government assistance? If not, why not?

Hon M.J. CRIDDLE replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1)-(4) The Government's response to the announced closure of the Simplot factory is being developed by the Bunbury regional office of the Department of Commerce and Trade in collaboration with Agriculture Western Australia and the South West Development Commission. Therefore, it is more appropriate to address these question to the Minister for Commerce and Trade.

DEPARTMENTAL EXPENDITURE AND STATE REVENUE FIGURES

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

- (1) What is the deadline for the minister to receive the July figures for departmental and agency expenditure?
- (2) What is the deadline for the minister to receive the July figures for the State's revenue?
- (3) Will the budget subcommittee have these figures before it when it next meets?
- (4) When is the budget subcommittee next due to meet?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

- (1)-(4) I personally receive a list of the revenue received against budget for all the departments. I have done so for some years. The figures are not on expenditure and the information does not go to the budget committee. It is just for my information. There is no deadline; the information may even be in my office now, I do not know. The next meeting of the budget committee will be on Monday or Tuesday next week. I have a day sheet which tells me. We have a meeting every week. I was talking the other day about the revenue figures which I check against budget as we are going along. I get the same information every month from the Totalisator Agency Board to see how it is going on and off course. It varies at times with wet weather and things come and go each month.

Point of Order

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: The workings of the TAB have no relevance to the question asked.

The PRESIDENT: I will not agree or disagree but I invite members to look at Standing Orders Nos 139 and 140 to determine whether the answer was proper within standing orders. It is not for me to judge the accuracy or relevancy of answers. If a member is not satisfied, no doubt he will ask another question. However, that is up to the member. I cannot make ministers answer questions the way an individual member might like them to. I thought that was pretty obvious.

Questions without Notice Resumed

RAILWAYS, ACCESS CODE

49. Hon NORM KELLY to the Minister for Transport:

In the second reading speech on the Government Railways (Access) Bill made on 10 June last year, the former Minister for Transport stated the Government's policy for the sections of the rail network proposed to be included in the access regime.

- (1) Can the minister explain the apparent change in policy whereby the narrow gauge grain network and the narrow gauge suburban passenger network, including the Perth-Currambine link, are included in the most recent draft of the access code?
- (2) Will providing access to the Perth-Currambine link promote competition in at least one market as required by section 5 of the Government Railways (Access) Act?
- (3) If so, in which market is competition anticipated?

Hon M.J. CRIDDLE replied:

That is a very involved question. I could answer part of it but I would prefer that the member put it on notice so I can provide an accurate answer.

ROWE, MR PETER, CONSULTANCY DETAILS

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

Some notice of this question has been given.

In relation to the consultancy which the Ministry of the Premier and Cabinet had with Mr Peter Rowe -

- (1) When did the consultancy service commence?
- (2) Over what period was the consultancy provided?
- (3) What service was provided by Mr Rowe?
- (4) What was the total remuneration paid to Mr Rowe for this service?

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1)-(4) The Premier has advised that this information was provided to the member in a letter sent on 6 August in response to question on notice 1015.

WILLIAM BAY, DENMARK, SAND MINING

51. Hon BOB THOMAS to the Minister for Mines:

Some notice of this question has been given.

- (1) Has the Department of Minerals and Energy given approval for sand mining at William Bay and surrounding area in the Shire of Denmark?
- (2) If yes -
 - (a) What are the details of the approval in terms of the area and conditions attached to the approval?
 - (b) Will the minister table the relevant documents seeking and giving approval? If not, why not?
- (3) If the answer to (1) is no, are there any current applications for exploration or mining in this area before the Department of Minerals and Energy?

Hon N.F. MOORE replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1) No.
- (2)(a)-(b) Not applicable.
- (3) Yes. D.J. Blackshaw and K.W. Wolzak, the holders of exploration licence 70/1415, made application for mining lease 70/1016 on 30 June 1998 in conversion of part of this licence.

GREAT EASTERN HIGHWAY, REALIGNMENT EAST OF TAMMIN

52. Hon KIM CHANCE to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Can the minister confirm that Main Roads Western Australia suspended work on the realignment of Great Eastern Highway east of Tammin some time in June or July because of wet weather and planned to leave completion of the road until September?
- (2) Can the minister explain why the roadworks were reinstated within two weeks of Main Roads' decision to defer them?
- (3) Was the minister involved in the discussions which lead to the reinstatement of those works?
- (4) Were tenders or quotes called before Paving Technology was engaged to complete the works?

Hon M.J. CRIDDLE replied:

- (1)-(4) The works were suspended. I am not sure of the exact date but it was in June or July. The arrangement made with Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd was that those works would be completed and CBH would be allowed on site to carry out its reconstruction work. Members will realise that there was a deadline relating to the building of the facility for the coming harvest. Main Roads would have been in breach of that agreement.

A meeting, which I did not attend as I was still at Cabinet, was conducted at Main Roads' head office. Arrangements were made immediately for a senior officer, Mike Wallwork, to bring the work forward as soon as possible. I understand that a contractor was working in the area, and arrangements were made for that contractor to carry out the work.

ART GALLERY OF WA, MINISTERIAL INTERFERENCE

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

- (1) Does the minister agree with the official comments of the Association of Western Australian Art Galleries Inc that the minister's Culture, Libraries and the Arts Bill will legitimise ministerial interference, censorship and financial manipulation in the running of the Art Gallery of Western Australia?
- (2) Will the minister guarantee to continue to fund arts organisations which have criticised him both in his handling of his portfolio and his handling of this Bill?

The PRESIDENT: Order! I know that this is the first question from the Leader of the Opposition as the new shadow Minister for the Arts; however, it seeks an opinion from the minister. Only three or four words needed to be changed for it to have been a question seeking facts. I hope the Leader of the Opposition will take that into account. The minister will be able to provide an answer on the facts.

Hon PETER FOSS replied:

- (1)-(2) I welcome the opportunity to deal with this matter. Not only do I not agree with Mr Forrest, but also many of his members disagree with him, and have taken the trouble to inform me as such. I know that Mr Forrest personally has had some difficulties with things I have done. For instance, I recall when the Government wisely implemented the policy to encourage the purchase of Western Australian art in all government offices, particularly ministers' offices, and appointed a panel to assist in such purchase, he visited my office to demand that the Government force artists fortunate enough to have their work purchased to pay a commission to commercial galleries. He attended my office on a couple of occasions to insist that I so direct artists. It is up to the artist, not the Government, to make that arrangement. That is very much indicative of the attitude I have to artists: Contrary to government interference with the arts, the view I take - and that which Mr Forrest appears to take when it suits his commercial interests - is that we should not interfere.

Second, Mr Forrest is wrong in his comments. Importantly, Parliament must recognise that the Art Gallery of Western Australia is funded by government. I trust that in his new shadow portfolio, the Leader of the Opposition will be aware that Parliament appropriates money for the Art Gallery. A problem when I became Minister for the Arts was that the Art Gallery under the Labor Government had steadily moved into debt. The Minister for Finance kindly came to my assistance. Due to the strange budgetary practices of the former Government, its budget was passed at the end of the year when the financial year was six months old. The Government found it was not making budget, and everyone was told to cut another 10 per cent off the budget. The Art Gallery's only discretionary fund was its acquisition fund. It got this down to \$200 000, and it was about to disappear. The other way to make its money go further was to stop paying creditors. The Art Gallery had \$800 000-worth of unpaid creditors. Through the admirable assistance of the Minister for Finance, the Government was able to secure for the Art Gallery an overdraft from Treasury which enabled the creditors to be paid. An orderly arrangement was then made for the overdraft to be discharged. The acquisition fund was separately appropriated in the budget, and gradually increased. That was proper overseeing of taxpayers' funds. It should have been a matter of considerable embarrassment to the previous Government, if it had known about it. Unfortunately, it was not aware, probably because members opposite did not read financial documents too well. The Bill seeks to establish a proper and responsible system to ensure that taxpayers' money is appropriately looked after.

Regarding the nasty insinuation about funding people who criticise me, interestingly, the minister has complete

control over funding under the current system. I have made sure that funding is handed to a panel. A public forum was held the other day to discuss the legislation. It was kindly called by Arts Voice so people could talk about the legislation. Fascinatingly, I did not hear a single artist express concern, and nor were any questions asked about the legislation.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I can hear the minister from up here. Raising his voice only encourages interjection. I advise that the answer has been long.

Hon PETER FOSS: It was a long question with a lot of substance, Mr President. The intention is to continue the current method of funding; that is, to devolve funding to panels.

Hon Tom Stephens: Can you give an assurance that you will not penalise people who criticise you?

Hon PETER FOSS: I will not have the power to do so, as I have arranged for funding to be allocated through panels. I do not handle funding. I do not find out about allocations until after they are made. The insinuation of the Leader of the Opposition is not worthy of him, and it is certainly not worthy of me. The sooner he finds out how the system operates the better. The member has misunderstood the process and has misunderstood me.
