



Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

THIRTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT
THIRD SESSION
2000

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 24 May 2000

Legislative Assembly

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THE SPEAKER (Mr Strickland) took the Chair at 12 noon, and read prayers.

SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE - AFTER 7.00 PM

Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mr Strickland): Before I call for petitions, I advise the House that apparently there is a requirement to sit later tonight. That means I will authorise a dinner break between six o'clock and seven o'clock so that staff, as well as members -

Mr Grill: It is a bit late notice for this, for God's sake!

The SPEAKER: I beg the member's pardon.

Mr Grill: People have made arrangements.

The SPEAKER: It is not up to the member for Eyre to interject; I am advising the House that there will be a dinner break between 6.00 and 7.00 pm. The member for Eyre can go to dinner or not; I could not care less, to be blunt with him. The House will sit as per the decision of the Leader of the House.

ONLINE WA

Statement by Premier

MR COURT (Nedlands - Premier) [12.05 pm]: It is with great pleasure that I inform the House of the launch today of one of the most comprehensive Internet sites in Australia - Online WA. OnlineWA is a single doorway into every state government department currently online and many other non-government services. From today, 2 000 government and non-government online services will be accessible through Online WA.

To give members some examples, Western Australians will now be able to pay accounts including electricity, water, car licence registrations and some local government rates online, book a holiday at Rottnest, link into community groups around the State, lodge a tender for government business, plan a bus trip, and even find out what movie is on at a local cinema. Other government agencies will introduce online bill paying progressively; for example, AlintaGas should be online within the next week.

Online WA is the most advanced site of its type in Australia and it is very user-friendly. The site is easy to navigate and once users pass through the main doorway, they will find many clear signposts to help them find what they are looking for among Western Australian Government services. Seventy-four state government agencies are connected to Online WA and that number will increase. The services they offer are organised and presented in a completely new way, so people do not even need to understand the structure of government to find their way around.

The single doorway is accessible to everyone through any computer connected to the Internet - 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Western Australians are already widely familiar with electronic commerce; 80 per cent of us have used electronic commerce as a means to pay bills, for instance, or withdraw funds. One in four households is connected to the Internet in Western Australia and nearly 40 per cent of people access the Internet from home, work or places such as telecentres and libraries. The Online WA single doorway is the latest development in the Government's Online WA vision. Our schools are being well equipped with the latest in information technology, students and teachers are being taught how to use computers, and our latest housing developments are becoming smart communities. Families at subdivisions in Ellenbrook, Clarkson, Brighton, Seacrest in Geraldton and Dalyellup near Bunbury are being equipped with modern technology packages to help them get online.

The Online WA single doorway will be enhanced and continuously expanded to reflect changing services, times and customer needs. The Western Australian Government is proud to be taking a lead in the development of online services and I particularly commend the Department of Commerce and Trade and the Department of Contract and Management Services for the extraordinary efforts they have put in to get Online WA "live" from today.

I encourage everyone to visit the single doorway at www.onlinewa.com.au.

KINGS PARK AND BOTANIC GARDEN TEAM

Statement by Minister for the Environment

MRS EDWARDES (Kingsley - Minister for the Environment) [12.08 pm]: I congratulate the Kings Park and botanic garden team for once again bringing home the most coveted prize at the internationally renowned Chelsea Flower Show in London. Members of this House should know that Kings Park has only twice entered the show - in 1997 and again this year - and both times it has received the top accolade of the show, its gold award. Achieving international success on two occasions at the Chelsea Flower Show will boost knowledge and recognition of our natural environment, promote Western Australia as a tourist destination and promote wild flowers in the European market.

This year the Kings Park team presented 300 indigenous plants in a landscape of Toodyay rock and red soil, using a boab

tree as the centrepiece surrounded by the natural bonsai plants of arid regions - banksias, northern annuals and desert peas. Many of the seeds used to grow flowering plants in the display were collected months ago and frozen to ensure they flowered out of season especially for the display. The central theme of the display is indigenous plant usage, and Aboriginal presenters were on hand to tell more than 300 000 show visitors how these plants were used, to show them food preparation and to demonstrate skills such as didgeridoo playing and boab nut carving.

The display, named the centenary of Australian federation display, is a forerunner to July's Australia Week in London, which marks the centenary of the British Government's passing of legislation enabling Australia to achieve federation. The gold awards at Chelsea follow award-winning performances at Japan Flora 2000 in Awaji Island, near Osaka. There, Kings Park won three gold medals in the first of three rounds of judging and 15 medals in the second phase. The third round will be judged in September and I am hopeful of even more recognition for the Kings Park display at this international competition.

On behalf of this House, I thank the Kings Park team of chief executive officer Steve Hopper, curators Roger Fryer and Grady Brand and horticulturalist Amanda Shade for their outstanding work at Chelsea and the help of presenters Lana Williams and John Walley. They have captured world attention at this internationally recognised horticultural show and focused it on Western Australia's unique environment to the benefit of our tourism and wildflower industries.

BUILDING LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2000

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Shave (Minister for Lands), and read a first time.

Second Reading

MR SHAVE (Alfred Cove - Minister for Lands) [12.11 pm]: I move -

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The Building Legislation Amendment Bill 2000 amends the Builders' Registration Act 1939 and the Home Building Contracts Act 1991 to enhance the ability of the Builders' Registration Board to maintain high building standards in Western Australia and to improve the operation of the Building Disputes Committee, which is to be renamed and hereafter referred to as the Building Disputes Tribunal, to a level of service which is acceptable to both government and the community. More specifically, the amendments in this Bill will -

introduce measures to streamline the dispute resolution procedures and reduce waiting periods for the resolution of building disputes referred to the Building Disputes Tribunal;

assist the Builders' Registration Board in the administration of both the Builders' Registration Act and the Home Building Contracts Act, including strengthening its powers to deal with the failure, fraud or misconduct of a builder; and

provide additional revenue sources to assist the financial position of the Builders' Registration Board and enable it to carry out its statutory functions in a more efficient and effective manner.

The amendments were based on recommendations by the Building Legislation Changes Implementation Panel which consisted of an independent chairperson and representatives from the Housing Industry Association, the Master Builders Association, the Consumers Association of WA, the Builders' Registration Board and the Ministry of Fair Trading. In developing the amendments, account was taken of the recommendations in the reports of the statutory review of the Home Building Contracts Act tabled in Parliament in March 1997 and an independent review of the dispute resolution process that was completed in December 1997. Furthermore, the financial measures in the Bill were examined in an independent review that was completed in March 2000.

In Western Australia, the activities of builders are regulated by the Builders' Registration Act. This Act establishes the Builders Registration Board, which is primarily funded by registration fees paid by builders. The main function of the board is to register and regulate the conduct of builders. In April 1992 the Home Building Contracts Act came into operation. This Act regulates contracts between home owners and builders and provides for contractual disputes to be referred to the Building Disputes Tribunal.

The Building Disputes Tribunal was also established in April 1992 and is administered and funded by the Builders Registration Board. The tribunal provides a relatively informal, quick and inexpensive forum for the resolution of both workmanship disputes under the Builders' Registration Act and contractual disputes under the Home Building Contracts Act. Since the introduction of the Home Building Contracts Act and the establishment of the Building Disputes Tribunal, the Builders' Registration Board has operated under considerable financial stress. The expansion of the board's responsibilities and jurisdiction under the Builders' Registration Act and the Home Building Contracts Act, particularly its obligations to support the operations of the Building Disputes Tribunal, occurred without any commensurate increase in revenue. The impact of the expanded responsibilities of the Builders Registration Board is evident from the rapid increase in the number of disputes referred to the Building Disputes Tribunal. In the tribunal's first full year of operation in 1993, 629 workmanship and contractual complaints were lodged compared with 376 workmanship disputes dealt with by the board in 1991. This figure increased to a peak of 859 in 1994 and has averaged approximately 670 in the last four years. The increased workload has caused difficulties for the board and, as a result, both home owners and builders have expressed

increasing concerns about the dispute resolution process, including delays by the Building Disputes Tribunal in dealing with disputes.

A number of amendments in this Bill are designed to provide a more effective and timely dispute resolution process by minimising the number of matters which are referred to a hearing before the full Building Disputes Tribunal. This includes -

- the provision of a system of mediation;

- provision for certain functions of the tribunal to be exercised by authorised officers of the board; and

- allowing the chairperson or a deputy chairperson of the tribunal to sit alone to deal with preliminary matters and the resolution of simple disputes.

The jurisdiction of the Building Disputes Tribunal will also be extended so that it can deal with a situation where either the home owner or the builder has engaged in misleading or deceptive conduct in the formation and execution of a building contract or in negotiations to vary the contract after execution.

The introduction of a proposed fee of \$100 for the lodgment of complaints with the Building Disputes Tribunal will also assist in discouraging frivolous and minor complaints and thereby increase the efficiency of the tribunal.

To encourage a cooperative approach to dispute resolution, the Building Disputes Tribunal will also be given extended power to order any party to a dispute to pay an amount of money into an interest-bearing account until the matter is determined. The withholding of payments due under a building contract on the basis of alleged defective workmanship is frequently seen as a barrier to the resolution of disputes.

Other amendments contained in the Bill provide for additional sources of revenue for the Builders' Registration Board and will assist the board in meeting its statutory obligations, including supporting the dispute resolution system. Home owners, including owner-builders, and building trade contractors who can use some or all of the services of the Builders' Registration Board will be required to contribute to the cost of providing these services, particularly the disputes resolution system. Currently, the registration fees paid by builders meet the costs of all the services provided by the board.

I have already mentioned the introduction of a fee for the lodgment of complaints with the Building Disputes Tribunal. However, the main source of additional revenue will be the introduction of a proposed \$30 building licence levy to be paid by all persons who are issued a building licence by local government authorities. This levy will be collected by the local government authority at the time of issue of the building licence and remitted to the board less an amount that is to be retained to offset the collection costs. This approach is seen as the most equitable and administratively efficient way to assist the board in underwriting the cost of the disputes resolution system.

The additional revenue will enable the board to implement the improvements to the dispute resolution system resulting from the amendments in this Bill and other strategies identified in the statutory review of the Home Building Contracts Act and the independent review of the dispute resolution process to which I have previously referred. This will provide all participants in the building industry, including home owners, registered builders and associated building trade contractors, with access to a more effective, timely and relatively inexpensive dispute resolution system.

The Building Disputes Tribunal will also have the discretionary power to order a building trade contractor who carried out home building work and who is found to be at fault at a hearing, to pay the whole or part of the costs associated with the conduct of the hearing. This will ensure that trade contractors such as swimming pool installers, fencing contractors, patio builders etc who are not required to be registered as builders, will make an appropriate contribution to the cost of providing the dispute resolution system. Provision is made in the Bill for the minister to determine a fee to be paid to the Builders Registration Board by owner-builders as a contribution to the cost of the administrative, information and inspection services currently provided by the board at no cost to those persons.

At this time, the Government considers the other revenue measures contained in the Bill to be sufficient to meet the current needs of the board and will therefore not be fixing a fee under this provision. However, the provision will provide for a future Government to impose a fee if considered appropriate.

This Bill also contains measures to enable the Builders Registration Board to deal more effectively with the small number of builders who fail to maintain the high standard of building work that currently exists in this State. The most significant measure will be providing the board with the power to prevent any person who has been involved in the management of a building entity that has been deregistered from being involved in the industry in any management capacity for a period not exceeding three years. This power will be exercised only where the board is satisfied that the person has contributed to the circumstances giving rise to the deregistration of the entity. This will prevent such a person from becoming involved with another registered builder or simply setting up a new building entity that is then able to apply for registration under the Builders' Registration Act.

In addition, the Bill extends the powers of the board to suspend or cancel the registration of a person who was required to manage or supervise building works carried out by a partnership, company or body corporate in any case where the board cancels or suspends the registration of the entity. Currently, the board can take this action only in limited circumstances. The Bill also provides the board with the flexibility to impose a fine instead of, or in addition to, cancelling or suspending the registration of a builder or the person who was required to supervise the building work. The current powers of the board to only suspend or cancel the registration of a builder is not always in the best interests of consumers and creditors where

the builder has a number of building projects in progress. Furthermore, a fine may be a more fitting penalty for less serious cases of misconduct.

The grounds for taking disciplinary action against a builder will be extended to apply to situations where the builder is found to have engaged in unconscionable, harsh, oppressive, misleading or deceptive conduct or who unreasonably fails to comply with an order of the Building Disputes Tribunal. The board will also have the power to issue infringement notices for minor offences against the Builders' Registration Act and the Home Building Contracts Act. This will enable the board to carry out its compliance function in a more efficient and cost-effective manner as currently action for such offences must be brought before the courts, which is a time-consuming and expensive process.

The amendments in this Bill demonstrate the Government's commitment to maintain and enhance the standard of building work in Western Australia and to provide consumers with access to a timely and effective building dispute resolution system. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned by Mr Cunningham.

APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED FUND) BILL (No. 1) 2000

Second Reading - Cognate Debate

Resumed from 23 May.

MR MCGINTY (Fremantle) [12.24 pm]: In my contribution to the budget debate today I will deal with the Ministry of Fair Trading and its abject failure to properly deal with matters that were brought to its attention with respect to finance brokers. Many members of this House will have seen a *Four Corners* program on Monday night which touched on the finance brokers crisis that has beset thousands of elderly Western Australians. I will focus on the nefarious activities of one finance broker, in particular, Peter Fermanis of Trust Mortgages. It is amazing that this man still holds a finance brokers licence and is actively broking mortgages today in Western Australia. I will take some time to tell the House a number of things he has been involved in and why it is amazing that the Minister for Fair Trading, the Ministry of Fair Trading and the Finance Brokers Supervisory Board seemingly have done nothing about revoking his licence. In my view Mr Fermanis is a menace to elderly people in the community.

The story I will relate to the House today will establish, firstly, why his finance brokers licence should have been revoked a long time ago; secondly, it will demonstrate the sheer incompetence of the Ministry of Fair Trading; thirdly, it will show the complete failure of the Finance Brokers Supervisory Board to act in the interests of the mainly elderly investors who are losing so much of their hard-earned life savings; fourthly, the Minister for Fair Trading has been more than asleep at the wheel in driving his department, and the series of episodes that I will relate to the House today will demonstrate that; fifthly, I will demonstrate why the major fraud squad should act and lay criminal charges against Peter Fermanis and his company; and, finally, in the four cases I will relate to the House today of loans brokered by this man, the total expected losses from these four crooked deals will exceed \$3m and represent losses out of the retirement earnings of mainly self-funded retirees in Western Australia.

I will deal first with the sorry saga of the Margaret River Hotel Motel. I made reference earlier to the *Four Corners* program which was shown on ABC Television on Monday night. That program touched on some recent transactions to do with the Margaret River motel. I will relay what has occurred over the past five years in a series of dodgy transactions affecting the Margaret River motel and the shameful state that property is in today as a result of neglect by the Minister for Fair Trading, the minister's Finance Brokers Supervisory Board and his department. It is my strong view that had Western Australia had a decent Minister for Fair Trading doing what he is paid to do by the taxpayers, a decent Finance Brokers Supervisory Board that was not continually running away from its duty but did its job, and a Ministry of Fair Trading that was in any sense competent, these losses would not have been incurred.

I will relate the history of this property over the past five years. On 26 September 1995, Terrace Counsellors, finance brokers, brokered a mortgage of \$1.19m for 21 investors with security of the Margaret River motel. The borrower was a person who is now assuming a position of some infamy in Western Australia; that is, Gregory Kennedy and his company Shannon Equities Pty Ltd. The property was purchased in 1994 for \$850 000, which established its benchmark value: It was worth less than \$1m. When Greg Kennedy wanted to obtain funds in 1995, a firm brokered a loan for him. Greg Kennedy managed to raise that mortgage in excess of the value of the property because of a dodgy valuation carried out by another infamous character in the saga of sorry events. I refer to Stephen Olifent of South West Valuations who all members will remember produced the great valuations of three times the value of the Peppermint Park Holiday Chalets and three or four times the worth of the Bubbling Billy Restaurant. Stephen Olifent valued the property at \$1.7m. That was contemporaneous with it being purchased at \$850 000, so it was twice the market value. Kennedy was in default with the loan 12 months later in September 1996.

I interpose in respect of Gregory Kennedy. I made allegations in this House last November of fraudulent behaviour by MFA Finance Pty Ltd in broking loans to this man Kennedy. This behaviour partly related to MFA's rosy description of Greg Kennedy as a man of wealth with significant properties throughout the south west. MFA did not tell the investors in the other loan that Kennedy had defaulted on the loan for the Margaret River motel back in 1996.

The property sold for \$1m in September 1997 at a mortgagee sale. That was roughly right. The market told us that by 1997 the property, originally worth under \$1m, had appreciated in value and it sold for \$1m. The loss to investors as a result of

the deal brokered by Terrace Counsellors for Greg Kennedy to buy the Margaret River motel was roughly \$200 000. That is the subject of Supreme Court action as the valuer and the broker are being sued as a result of that loss. That was the beginning of an amazing series of transactions.

The second transaction occurred in September 1997. When the property was sold at the mortgagee sale, it was purchased by another very shady character in the finance brokers saga; namely, one Nabil Sadek. His company, Sunsurf Investments Pty Ltd, bought the property on 24 September for \$1m, and six days later miraculously sold it for \$2m. Obviously, a lot of property appreciation took place in the Margaret River region if in six days a property's value increased from \$1m to \$2m. He on-sold the property on 30 September 1997 to World Trade Exchange, a company which was created about that time seemingly to acquire this property and which disappeared some 10 months later. No wonder people wanted it to disappear given the nature of the transaction involved!

The broker was another infamous broker mentioned many times in this House for shady practices. I refer to Clifton Partners Pty Ltd, which brokered a mortgage for more than the purchase price of the property. It was purchased for \$1m and on-sold six days later for \$2m, yet Clifton Partners brokered a loan for \$1.16m. The first mortgage was for \$1.1m, and the second mortgage for \$60 000. This deal was for 12 investors. Again, the poor investors were taken for a ride because they were never told the purchase price of the property. They were told that they were investing on a loan-to-valuation ratio of about 50 per cent. If one considers that the property was purchased for \$2m, that was about right. Nevertheless, the \$2m was always fanciful in a shady and shonky deal. The 12 investors were put at risk because of the loan brokered by Clifton Partners and which was increased with a second mortgage a little time later.

Interestingly, the law firm Murie and Edwards registered both the transfers of land and the mortgage on 6 December 1997. Murie and Edwards acted for Clifton Partners and the mortgagees, and knew the property purchase price. Was any advice forthcoming as required under its duty to the investors? No. The purchase price was never disclosed to those people. That was the second transaction. Everyone in this House would consider it wrong that a motel is sold on the open market for \$1m, and six days later is on-sold for \$2m in order to generate the impression that the property was worth more than it was so investors are sucked into investing more money than would otherwise be the case.

The worst deal of the lot was touched on by *Four Corners*: On 23 April 1998, the property was transferred to a company known as Trishore Pty Ltd, which is owned or controlled by one Charles Boog. He purchased the property for \$1.9m. We know that its value at that stage was \$1m, so he purchased it for much more than it was worth. He then had organised by Peter Fermanis of Trust Mortgages a first mortgage of \$1.81m, which was nearly the full purchase price. Nineteen mortgagees were involved who were mainly elderly, self-funded retirees. Peter Fermanis spoke to them to get them to invest, in my view, in the full knowledge that the property had been sold at twice its market value. Fraudulent behaviour was involved - certainly, misleading and deceptive behaviour was involved - which will result in enormous losses in the order of \$2m to investors who became involved at that time.

A mortgage of \$1.81m was brokered on 23 April 1998. The property was then in all sorts of financial trouble, as was the borrower. On 11 November 1998, a second mortgage was taken over the property of \$210 000 brokered by Peter Fermanis of Trust Mortgages. It took the mortgage over the property to above \$2m, although on all the evidence available this property was worth only \$1m. What does one say about a mortgage broker who brokers a mortgage at twice the value of the property? That is bad enough, but the story does not stop there.

On 16 November 1999, those first and second mortgages were discharged and a new first mortgage was registered to the value of \$3.65m. The value of the property was about \$1m. Some improvements were taking place, but not enough to increase the property's value by anything like that proportion. The property had a mortgage over it to the owner and developer Charles Boog which was brokered by Peter Fermanis of Trust Mortgages; 36 investors were involved. The value of the mortgage was \$3.65m. That was in December 1999, so it was only five or six months ago. Why this man is allowed to retain his licence to operate as a finance broker and arrange these finance deals which will inevitably inflict massive losses on the people involved is something that only the minister for finance brokers can answer. The Margaret River motel is a massive disaster. The building is not complete, there is no money to complete the building and I am told that an estimate of the amount of cash required to complete the project is \$650 000. A tender process has been entered into, but there has been no sale or it has not been possible and the best valuation that can be put on the property today is that the property is not worth half the mortgage value. If the property were sold today, it would not realise half its mortgage value of \$3.65m. If that estimate is correct, the estimated loss from that disastrous series of transactions is about \$2m to the 36 investors. That is on top of the earlier losses associated with the same sort of shonky dealing by finance brokers in respect of this property. It is an absolute disgrace.

These deals which I have outlined to the House this morning involve a veritable rogues' gallery of some of the worst players in the finance brokers scandal in this State. It includes Trust Mortgages and Peter Fermanis, and Gregory Kennedy the disgraced bankrupt, who had loans through MFA Finance Pty Ltd and others and who has left a string of bankruptcies and properties that have been overvalued and with which corrupt behaviour has been associated. It includes also Stephen Olifent, the valuer who has been associated with so many shonky valuations, particularly in the Busselton-Margaret River region, who also has his finger in the pie. Nabil Sadek who has also been associated with a number of disastrous loans was also involved. Clifton Partners, who are associated with a number of disastrous loans, was involved in broking the second loan, which is arguably one of the worst and almost as bad as the final loan that was organised in this deal. Charles Boog is also involved with Trust Mortgages, and Peter Fermanis. It is a veritable who's who of the leading crooks in the finance broking industry in Western Australia.

Let me discuss the role played by Peter Fermanis and Trust Mortgages. On the *Four Corners* program on Monday night it was said that Peter Fermanis took something in the order of \$400 000 in commissions for arranging that last series of loans and broking them to Charles Boog. They were loans which were brokered and then discharged and then entered into again and updated and increased in value. If the *Four Corners* program is right and Peter Fermanis ripped off this particular project to the extent of \$400 000, then that is unconscionably criminal - but nothing has happened. He still has a finance brokers licence today. What else did Peter Fermanis do? He was signatory to the account for construction moneys. It was not a statutory trust account which finance brokers are required to operate, and as such, was in breach of section 48 of the Finance and Brokers Control Act. Has disciplinary action been taken against him? I do not think so. He has allowed money to be misapplied and that raises all sorts of questions about criminality. There is also possible fraud involved. He brokered a loan in the full knowledge of the true value of the property for \$1.81m in April 1998. In November 1998, it was increased to \$2.02m and in December 1998 it increased to \$3.65m. It is unbelievable that this man is allowed to operate as a licensed finance broker in Western Australia today.

Peter Fermanis and his partner Clifford W. Mitchell are crooks and spivs - that is the only way they can be described. They are preying on the trusting elderly investors in this State and they deserve to be rubbed out for what they have done. They should not have finance brokers licenses. They should be behind bars for what they have done. However, these issues do not involve only the Margaret River motel, which has had such a long and sorry history; it is a persistent course of action by Peter Fermanis and Trust Mortgages.

I will relate to the House three other mortgages in which Trust Mortgages is involved. The first is located in Cannington.. It is a warehouse-showroom located at unit 1, 64-66 Kent Street. The valuer was Mr Ron O'Connor, one of the biggest crooks who has been associated with this crisis in this State. Most of the dirty deals involving finance brokers in this State have, at one stage or another, involved Ron O'Connor, who was convicted a few years ago of stealing from a trust fund. The minister's department said that he could keep his valuer's licence. As best I know he still has that licence today. Ron O'Connor valued the warehouse-showroom in Cannington on 10 October 1997 at \$525 000. To show the House the extent of the overvaluation, last month a sworn valuation was obtained from another valuer who valued it at \$125 000, not the \$525 000 that Ron O'Connor did. That is one-quarter of Ron O'Connor's valuation.

Mr Pendal: I am sure it was just a mistake!

Mr McGINTY: I know that comment from the member for South Perth was tongue in cheek, but one would have to be extremely charitable to recognise that as other than absolute criminality. The valuation was designed to take money out of the pockets of the mainly elderly self-funded retirees and give it to these members of the white shoe brigade - the spivs - who have perpetrated so much harm and damage on investors and on a number of properties in this State. I mentioned the current valuation because one would have expected that properties would not have gone down in value since October 1997, when that property was valued at over half a million dollars. I want to talk more about the history of this Cannington property. On 20 November 1997, it was purchased for \$240 000 by Griffin Street Pty Ltd. On the same day, Peter Fermanis and Trust Mortgages registered a mortgage for \$355 000 - far more than the purchase price because the investors were never told what the property was purchased for. If they had been told the truth they would never have invested their money in the deal. It is fraud designed to deceive and mislead. The 12 investors in the Cannington property invested their \$355 000 in a first mortgage which is now in default. The property goes to a mortgagee auction on 30 May next week and if the sworn valuation that I have seen, which was only obtained last month, is right only \$127 000 will be realised from the sale. By the time one includes interest that has not been paid on that investment, it will result in a loss of about \$250 000. That is the loss that is expected to crystallise at the mortgagee auction on 30 May. The investors were never told the truth and that is the problem here. It is fraud under both commonwealth and state legislation and I hope that serious action is taken against these people in following up this matter.

The second deal involving Peter Fermanis and Trust Mortgages relates to a residential and business property located at 316 Fitzgerald Street, North Perth. On 22 May 1997, it was purchased for \$166 000. On the same day, Peter Fermanis of Trust Mortgages brokered a mortgage of \$200 000, which was duly registered. Innocent investors were told the mortgage represented a 60 to 70 per cent loan-to-valuation ratio; however, it was again more than the purchase price of the property. The property has gone into default and a mortgagee sale will be held soon. The expected losses on the property, which is modest by finance broking standards, are expected to be about \$50 000.

The third property is the Katanning Unit Hotel. This is particularly scandalous, and I raised this in the Parliament last year. It is not as if it was not known. *The West Australian* also reported on the deal last July under the headline "Investors sue over \$1.6m hotel deal". What action was taken by the minister, who has been asleep at the wheel? What action has he taken against the person responsible for this deal? Other examples can be given of mortgages brokered by Peter Fermanis of Trust Mortgages. In October 1997, our old friend Ron O'Connor - the thief, the convicted, dishonest man whom this minister has allowed to keep his valuer's licence - valued the Katanning Unit Hotel at \$1.6m. Four days later, it was sold for \$910 000. The sale amount comprised the land, valued at \$658 000, and the business, valued at \$252 000. Peter Fermanis, who still has a brokers licence, wrote to potential investors, telling them the property was valued at \$1.6m. He never mentioned the purchase price. He said the loan-to-valuation ratio was 62 per cent and brokered a mortgage for \$992 000. Again, it was more than the purchase price. The investors thought they were investing 62 per cent of the hotel's value; however, they invested more than 100 per cent of its value. The solicitor played an interesting role in this deal. A number of the lawyers associated with these dirty deals have a lot to answer for. In this case, the solicitor who registered the \$992 000 mortgage, Geoffrey Hayles, registered it only over the land component, which was valued at \$658 000. The ratio of the mortgage to the property's real value was about 140 per cent. When the property was sold and everything sorted

out, the investors received a net return of just \$235 000, a little over one-quarter of what they invested. They are suing in the Supreme Court for losses of \$800 000.

Mr Fermanis still has a finance brokers licence. I nearly choked on my Weeties when, reading through this morning's edition of *The West Australian*, I discovered that Mr Peter Fermanis of Trust Mortgages is advertising for business in Western Australia, despite his long history of criminal and deceptive behaviour. That sort of behaviour should have had him warned off, disqualified and perhaps even jailed years ago. The advertisement on page 62 of this morning's *The West Australian* states -

Funds available for all purposes . . . Ph 9228 1888
Trust Mortgages
Licensed brokers.

Trust Mortgages should not have a brokers licence. It is a disgrace. People have been trying to create the impression that this is a problem of the past; that it is the result of only one or two shady operators from the mid-1990s. They are at work today, taking money and broking mortgages when they should not be allowed. The issue is very serious. Mr Fermanis and his company were involved in broking well-known losses. Why is he still allowed to organise mortgages, resulting in further losses? His criminality is well known. Why is he allowed to keep his finance brokers licence and continue operating in Perth? His deceptive behaviour is also well known. Why is he still allowed to operate and inflict such massive losses on investors?

I estimate that the total losses inflicted through the deals on the Margaret River motel, the Katanning Unit Hotel, and the North Perth and Cannington properties are in excess of \$3m. They are just four examples I am able to raise in this House, yet this guy is still advertising in the newspaper. He still has an operating licence, approved by the Minister for Fair Trading. Why is Ron O'Connor still operating as a licensed valuer when he has been convicted of theft? Something is seriously sick and wrong with this minister's administration of the Ministry of Fair Trading.

The blame for these problems must be laid on the Minister for Fair Trading. Revelations about his incompetence are emerging daily through the Gunning inquiry, the media and the Parliament. We used to think the minister was asleep at the wheel. We have been prodding him lately, but there has been no reaction. I now think he is dead at wheel. The problem is that this minister does not comprehend the job in front of him or the pain and hardship he has inflicted on so many Western Australian citizens who, in good faith, believed the word of his ministry and finance brokers. Many of these people were not gullible but reasonably trusting. In many cases, they were told a story which turned out to be a bare-faced lie. Very little action has been taken. In the past two and a half years, the Finance Brokers Supervisory Board has undertaken only one action which resulted in disciplinary action against someone associated with a finance broking activity. That is a disgrace. Why do these dirty deals continue to occur? What has the minister done about these matters?

I received a note from Ian Green, an investor who was visited by senior officers from the Ministry of Fair Trading yesterday. It tells its own story -

Stewart Dowling and another man came to my home today to take a statement regarding Blackburne & Dixon.

I made the point that it was "closing the stable door after the horse has bolted". Dowling said no, Blackburne & Dixon still had a broker's license".

That is an absolute disgrace. Blackburne and Dixon Pty Ltd still has a licence after everything it did.

As an opening comment I asked if they had seen 4-corners last evening. Dowling replied he taped it and saw it later on. He said, "they have their own agenda", to which I replied, "yes, to protect the investors and catch the crooks". I assumed he was talking about you and Denise Brailey. However, on reflection, he may have meant 4-corners. The other man had not seen it.

The most interesting point was a discussion about Brokers, where I said, "Brokers by definition mean you act for both parties". Dowling disputed this quite firmly. He said Fair Trading had "QC's advise that they only acted for the borrowers". He further said " . . . it has not been tested in the courts, and it will take years to get there too". His partner was quite definite about the point also, but I cannot recall his words on the matter.

Is that not an absolute disgrace? Officers from the Ministry of Fair Trading visited investors who have lost money and they are still running the myth that the Ministry of Fair Trading can do nothing to help them because they are supposedly not clients of the finance broker. That myth is about to be exploded. It is a myth that the minister has relied upon for too long to prop up his own inactivity, his slothful approach to the job at hand and his failure as a minister.

Mr McGowan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the House that in budget presentations, members are entitled to cover a full range of subjects. However, people do not have the right of reply, so I will be fairly tough on interjections. I want people to bring matters before the House, as the member for Fremantle has. There are other ways of moving motions through which members can address issues and everyone can have a say.

Mr McGINTY: What I have related to the House today is an alarming case of maladministration and neglect at all levels in the Ministry of Fair Trading from the minister to his officers to the Finance Brokers Supervisory Board. To put this in

a budget context, I wonder why we bother making an allocation to the department, its minister and the Finance Brokers Supervisory Board when they are so obviously failing in the job that is before them. They are of no use to anyone. They have demonstrated that. I believe that the examples I have given to the House have also amply demonstrated that fact.

DR EDWARDS (Maylands) [1.02 pm]: I will raise matters about the environment and then move on to issues concerning my electorate. The first issue relates to an amount of \$9m in the budget to be spent on cleaning up the Omex site at Bellevue. I will comment on concerns that have been expressed to me about the clean-up that is going on. As members will be aware, badly contaminated waste is present at that site. The Government some time ago made the decision to clean the site up. Of course, we all welcome that decision. However, my concerns relate to the current process that is happening and the way residents, particularly those nearby and those who believe they are affected, are being managed through this process.

I will start by referring to a paper in a document on hazardous waste and public health which describes how a clean-up was undertaken in California at the McColl Superfund site in 1990. A number of similarities exist between that site and the Omex site. They are both dealing with the excavation of acidic petroleum sludge. They are both involved in trying to manage the process of the clean-up and the people who are affected as a result of the contamination and the clean-up process. The California Department of Health Services developed a health surveillance system to evaluate the effectiveness of community protection methods during the clean-up. The paper that I have describes what the Californians did and the results. The first thing that draws an immediate comparison is that when excavation activities were being undertaken, they were done under an impervious tent in which workers wore respirators.

I visited the Omex site about two weeks ago. I was lucky enough to be taken by the engineer in charge to see exactly what was going on. I put on a hard hat, walked around and had a look. What struck me was the odour, which was really awful. It was almost bizarre that on at least three boundaries of the site were odour-reducing machines, which were pumping out a spray which was meant to reduce the odour. I would be interested to know the effectiveness of it because the three machines pumping fine spray over such a large area seemed to be pretty cosmetic. It looked a bit ludicrous to be honest. However, what struck me was that the workers were wearing hard hats but really no other protection. I was reassured that there was no risk to them, but it concerned me, and it concerns me more now that I have read the contents of this paper.

The goal of the Californian health surveillance was to track the health symptoms against the activities that were occurring on the site. In some ways, that is happening at Bellevue as well. The Department of Environmental Protection, the Health Department and the proponents have provided a phone number for people to use. It is interesting that the complaints received in Perth are pretty similar to those received in California. There are two types of complaints: Odour, which I found very detectable on the day I visited the site, and the host of complaints about physical symptoms, which cluster around headaches, sore throats, nausea and irritated eyes. That is common to what happened in California and what is happening at the Omex site.

What really worries me is that in California a number of pathways were drawn up suggesting rational reasons for symptoms being experienced by people exposed to the excavation. Although the figures were too small and the study was not sound enough to indicate a definite pathway, they indicated a probable link between what was occurring at the site and people's symptoms. I believe there is probably a link at Bellevue as well. I am a little puzzled therefore to hear that residents are being told by the Health Department that this paper has been superseded and that the symptoms found in California were probably due to stress. They may well be due to stress, but recently I attended a seminar on social determinants of health, which was attended by the Minister for Health. I think that the Health Department sponsored the speaker. During question time a question was asked about the impact of stress on people's health. An emerging body of evidence shows that if people are in a stressful situation, it may well impact upon their health. We all know that stress impacts on people's health. We will not ask the minister to tell us about it, although I am sure he has some personal experience.

We have the fancy explanations of stress having an impact on our chemicals, hormones and neurotransmitters. Now a body of evidence shows that when improvements in nutrition and a whole lot of other public health variables are factored in, people in lower socioeconomic groups still have a higher rate of illness, such as heart disease, probably due to stress. It is now being postulated that stress can result from people being in a situation where they have no control. The fact that they feel so powerless adds to their stress and has a health manifestation. The Health Department's argument that this Californian study is 10 years old and has been superseded and that stress has been shown to be a cause is of no comfort. All of the people who live around the Omex site are grateful that the clean-up is occurring but some of them are still quite stressed at the exposures that they believe are happening as the process is being carried out. Indeed, I understand that last night the community consultation committee that the minister has set up met again, that people were shown the results of some of the air monitoring and that levels were exceeded on occasions in recent times.

The company is working to an air monitoring table that shows the levels that are of concern to health in the environment, and action and alert levels. I understand that sulphur dioxide has exceeded those levels. Again, the community is being told that the exceeding of those levels does not matter because it is only for a very short period. When I visited the site, I was struck by the fact that there are not a lot of monitors. I believe that for sulphur dioxide there are monitors on only two of the boundaries. It is therefore possible that if breezes are blowing the emissions and odours away from those monitors, they will not be detected because there are not enough monitors.

I am concerned about the air monitoring at this site. Some time ago, I received a fax from a company that undertakes environmental air and water monitoring. That fax was a copy of a fax that had been sent to the Minister for the Environment, and it suggested that the level of air monitoring was not sufficient. I subsequently wrote to the Minister for

the Environment, and after a time I received a reply. However, my concerns have not been addressed, and all I have been given is a huge bundle of documents that I am now trying to work through. I have the problem that I think all members have when they are presented with a huge bundle of technical documents; namely, I am reluctant to draw any conclusion, because I am not a technical person and it is very easy as a lay person to draw the wrong conclusion. I have ongoing concerns about the air monitoring and the way that people are being managed. Later today I will receive further information about this matter, and, if necessary, I will follow that up with the Minister for the Environment in the Estimates Committee next week.

Another matter that arises in the budget is the air quality management plan for Perth. I am saddened to see from the budget that Perth's air quality management plan has been deferred yet again, although there is money in the forward estimates for this plan. I will outline the history of this plan, and I question why we have had such a delay with a plan that by now should be pretty straightforward. In 1997, I was a member of the Select Committee on Perth's Air Quality. One of the major recommendations that we made was that an air quality management plan be drawn up for Perth. We recognised that this should be an integrated plan, because air quality is a complicated issue and there is no single solution to improving air quality. We recognised also, as has been said by the Environmental Protection Authority, that Perth is on the verge of having a serious air quality problem, particularly in light of the transport projections about the number of cars that Perth will have in the future. We must do something now to reduce the level of pollution that we are experiencing and to ensure that we can properly manage this problem in the future. We released our report in May 1998, and one of our prime recommendations was that we have a Perth air quality management plan. The minister has set up a group to work on this plan, and the Government has made a commitment that it will address the issue of the establishment of local air quality management plans to deal with the more local issues, and also that it will establish various committees, look again at monitoring and undertake community education.

We were told that the air quality management plan would be released to the public during the third quarter of 1999. We have well and truly passed the third quarter of 1999. My understanding is that the document has been completed but has been sitting around for about nine months. I am very concerned that the moneys for this plan are not in this budget but are in the forward estimates, which means that this air quality management plan will continue to sit around. I do not know whether members have noticed, but in the past few weeks the city has had quite high haze levels, which will have been noticed by people with a sensitive respiratory system. The Department of Environmental Protection's data for the monitoring that took place yesterday showed that the haze level was a bit above the recommended level. The data for the previous week, which was published on Monday, showed that the haze level was higher than it should be; and the data for the week before that again showed that the haze level was higher than it should be. The haze level was presumably above the recommended level due to burning-off in a dry autumn. Perth has also had some smog levels that were above the acceptable limits, which is a bit unusual, but I guess that is because the weather has been warmer than is usual at this time of the year. We need to have that air quality management plan as soon as possible, and I hope the Government will move on that more quickly than it has to date.

I turn now to Bushplan. The budget papers for the Ministry for Planning show that \$9m has been set aside for Bushplan in the budget and the forward estimates. We welcome that sum of money, but again we are puzzled about what the Government is doing about this matter. Bushplan was launched in 1998 with a huge fanfare. The Government held a big function that was attended by all the key ministers, the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party and I think also the Premier, and much was made of the fact that Bushplan was a new plan where all the relevant government agencies - housing, environment, planning and lands - would work together to protect bushland sites. That is not happening, and to date 11 sites owned by the State and Federal Governments have been cleared. While the uncertainty continues, two groups of people are really worried. The first group is conservationists, who are witnessing Bushplan sites being cleared. It should be pointed out that Bushplan sites were chosen on merit. That merit system was quite complicated, and if a site got into the Bushplan document, it was a pretty good site. Therefore, it is distressing that a number of these sites are being cleared. The other people who are affected are the small number of private landowners who have Bushplan sites on their blocks. The people who are particularly affected are in limbo because their land is already zoned urban. Some of these sites have been cleared, and I would not be surprised if some accidental fires had occurred on some of those sites. While this uncertainty exists, tension is increasing and resentment is being fuelled between the parties. It is a no-win situation for either side. I hope the Government will get a move on and release its final Bushplan in the near future, and that the fact that \$9m has been allocated in this budget and the forward estimates is some signal that something will happen.

I turn now to the most serious environmental issue of all - salinity. Salinity is a huge problem. It threatens remnant vegetation and inland waterways, and, as we all know, it also threatens agricultural production. It is said that two million hectares of Western Australia's agricultural land is currently salt affected, and that this will double in the next generation and will double again in the following generation. It is a huge long-term problem. From an environmental point of view, the most recent figure I have is that 850 plant species are at risk. That is a threat to biodiversity, because it is a huge number of plant species that we may lose. We face a huge and in some ways largely unrecognised environmental problem. We also have the risk of increased flood damage. The rain earlier this year in the Lockhart catchment, which ultimately ended up in the Swan River, perhaps brought home to city people that, simplistically speaking, there is now a lot of waterlogging in the wheatbelt, and when there is heavy rain in the wheatbelt the water will end up in the city more often than it used to. This matter needs to be brought home to city people so that they will have greater sympathy for and pay greater attention to the issue of salinity.

A huge cost to infrastructure is associated with rising damp. A couple of weeks ago I was in Kalgoorlie, and I was astounded to learn that Kalgoorlie now has a salinity-related rising damp problem and that some of the heritage buildings

in that area are suffering from rising damp and that that infrastructure, and also roads, rail lines and other infrastructure, is at risk. I acknowledge that a lot of work is being done to treat this problem. In 1983, there were only five land conservation district committees. The latest figure I have is for 1998, when there were 146. In addition, we have at least 300 catchment management groups. We also have the salinity action plan and the updated, but unfunded, salinity action plan or strategy that was relaunched in April this year. While a lot of activity is taking place, such as tree planting, changes in agricultural production and other programs, there is still a feeling that not enough money is being put in, and that the money that is being put in is not being targeted to the problem.

Some time ago, the Opposition called for an audit of spending on the salinity action plan. We would still like that to happen. It is interesting that we are joined in this by people like the Pastoralists and Graziers Association of Western Australia, which is saying that money from this plan and from the National Heritage Trust is not meeting its targets. I am concerned that a proportion of the National Heritage Trust money in this State is being used to fund programs in government agencies. I am concerned about what will occur when the National Heritage Trust money dries up, as it will in the next year or so. We have not heard from the Federal Government how the fund will be replaced or how the State Government will manage resourcing of state government agencies that have undertaken some very good work which was funded by the National Heritage Trust. That work should be funded by the State Government rather than relying on grants from outside.

Salinity has a big impact on communities. Country people are fearful that they will lose their populations and that areas will be taken over by large holdings. In some parts of the State there is concern that wall-to-wall plantations will be in place and families will leave. Once that occurs, services will diminish, hospitals and health services will be at risk and schools will lose teachers.

Salinity also has a big economic impact. That came home to me recently when I was told about some Kojonup farmland which has been on the market for about two years. No-one will buy it because part of the settlement requires detailing the salinity problems of the land. Studies have shown that its use is marginal due to salinity. The land therefore has become an asset that is decreasing in worth and is an example of how salinity can cause huge problems to local communities. Governments must consider some sort of intervention in cases such as that. We must try to turn the problem on its head and take more positive steps. For example, although acknowledging that the land in Kojonup is moribund, we must ask how we can turn it into an opportunity. We must first consider what pastures, trees or crops will grow in saline systems and what markets are available for them. We must examine the land to determine whether its capability is changing and whether we must change our agricultural and marketing systems to gel with that. Unless we do that, huge rural areas will be left bare.

We need to turn salinity on its head. We must appreciate that it is a serious problem. However, in some ways the people who know about it are so overwhelmed by its magnitude and seriousness that it leaves them feeling hopeless and full of despair. We must see what we can learn from other situations in which problems have seemed hopeless and people have felt despairing so that we can turn something into a positive. I recently drew some laughs when I spoke to people about the medical system and how doctors coped with the casualties of war. They had a triage comprising, hopefully, a small group of people for whom nothing could be done because they were moribund and it was not worth providing services for them; a much larger group of injured people who did not need immediate attention and who would survive; and another group whose health could be improved if action were taken immediately. The theory is to direct resources in the short term to the people for whom it will make the greatest difference.

Perhaps we should take this approach to the salinity problem, but with this caveat: When doctors look at the most moribund group, being doctors they insist still on interfering. It is not a message to the moribund group that it will be neglected and left to fade away and die. It is a message that we must change our thinking and consider more creative ways of tackling something. In medicine, when the worse comes to the worst and somebody cannot be saved, it is seen as an organ donation opportunity. Rather than leaving farmland vacant for two years, we must change our thinking and do something positive, which will take some creative thinking.

We must take more seriously some of the things that have been rejected; for example, drainage. I am pleased to see in the budget that the Government has set aside funds to further investigate the issue of drainage. If we compared the problem of salinity with the medical model, drainage would fit into that component for which immediate action must be taken in the short term to ensure longer term survival. However, with medicine, sometimes intervention in serious circumstances costs a lot of money and it should be properly evaluated. When we examine the option of drainage we must be very clear about what we are doing and what it will cost. Big projects that require much engineering cost a lot of money. We must be certain that proper evaluation is built into any proposal so that we know exactly what occurred and how to evaluate it. All that will require good leadership. One of the things lacking in this problem is positive leadership.

I refer now to the impact of the budget on water resources. For some time I have been concerned about the impact the introduction of the goods and services tax will have on community conservation groups. Early in May I asked the Minister for Water Resources about the impact of the GST on catchment groups. The answer I received shows that it will have an impact and that that group must register for an Australian business number and possibly take out GST registration, depending on turnover. What disturbs me about the answer is that the minister says catchment groups must register for the GST and an ABN in their own right and standing; as independent groups they are responsible for implementing their own GST planning and strategies. I have a letter from the chairperson of the Swan Catchment Council about this very topic that predates this question. The letter points out that the Swan Catchment Council plays a lead role in supporting more than 200 community conservation groups and many of the other integrated catchment management groups. That indicates the many

groups doing valuable work in the community in a voluntary capacity to improve the environment and to help the future for all of us.

The letter points out that the council is now very concerned about the impact the GST will have on the functioning and the funding of these community land care groups. The letter makes the rather alarming statement that already treasurers of these groups are withdrawing because they know they cannot fully understand or cope with the changes. As volunteers, they are worried about being caught in a financial accountability situation without understanding all the ramifications or having all the skills to fulfill the reporting requirements. All members know, because it is a problem in all electorates, that it is difficult to get competent volunteers to work in community organisations. I am concerned that the GST is becoming yet another barrier to getting good people into community groups. It is always difficult to enlist the help of good financial people because they seem to be particularly busy.

This is a copy of a letter from the Swan Catchment Council to the Australian Taxation Office. It is further alarming because it points out that although the ATO has indicated it is happy to run seminars and bring people up to speed, the seminars the ATO has run to target the environment, land care and heritage groups were promoted late in the day, particularly for people who had to come in from the country. Another problem is that although the ATO has advertised that staff are happy to assist groups, it has refused to do that for the Swan Catchment Council because the council has been unable to guarantee in advance an audience of 150 people. Members will be aware that in a State like Western Australia, where many groups are spread over such a wide area, it is very difficult to guarantee 150 people will be present at that sort of seminar on a set date. I will take this up again with the Minister for Water Resources during the estimates committee hearings. However, I am concerned it is a big problem that faces community conservation groups, land care groups and catchment groups in this State.

I turn now to my own electorate. The first issue is cell phone towers. I understand that telephone companies are now rolling out their cell phone infrastructure and that the issue of telephone towers in this city will become more prominent. One.Tel recently approached the City of Bayswater for permission to erect a very large telephone tower in Bedford. The council fortunately got the company to advertise what it wanted to do. If that had not happened, the local residents would not have known about it - assuming the plan was approved - until construction started. Once it became known, I notified people in the area about what was happening and told them to get information and to talk to the council if they had any concerns. I was asked what were my concerns. One.Tel did two things: First, it lodged its plans to build a very high tower on a commercial block, but on the back fence just near two houses. The planned tower is unbelievably close to a residential area. Second, One.Tel constructed a much smaller tower on top of a building nearby. When people heard that this tower was to be erected, they assumed it was similar to the smaller tower rather than a 25-metre tower. The little structure stood there unconnected for two weeks. People understandably became very cynical that this very small construction, which does not need any approval because it is low impact, was erected when the plans were for a much taller tower. They assumed that a similar tower would be erected on the other site. If they had not been told the truth, they would have been outraged when a 25-metre structure went up soon afterwards. We need better policies with regard to these structures. They should be located in industrial areas rather than in residential areas. Carriers should coordinate their activities to avoid this huge proliferation of towers.

While this situation was developing I was driving along in my electorate and saw a man up a very tall pole. It was yet another tower. It is deemed to be low impact and, although it is very high and has a real visual amenity impact, approval is not required under the Australian Communications Authority's regulations because of its low radiation impact. Other electorates will experience this problem given the rapidity with which these towers are being constructed.

The second issue of concern in my electorate relates to the redesign of Beaufort Street in Inglewood. Beaufort Street is very busy and has a severe kink - the street goes around a very old and lovely clock tower. For a number of years, the City of Stirling has had a plan to refurbish this area, and that refurbishment is vital. The area has a delightful village-type atmosphere with many old-fashioned shops. We have the most fantastic haberdashery in Perth, which sells materials for making costumes and about 10 000 buttons. The area has many small-scale facilities that form the heart of Inglewood. Recognising this, the City of Stirling has undertaken extensive consultation and has drawn up a very good plan to beautify the area, to improve access for businesses and to parking and to make it much safer. The council is also looking at the amenity of the area. It will be a great area when these plans are implemented. Local people will be encouraged to walk to the shops, other people who come in will have adequate parking off the street and it should work well.

About a year ago the Department of Transport decided that the council should not go ahead with its plans because the department needed to undertake a study of the road reserves to establish whether a rapid-transit bus route was required. That is fair enough and we all want the department to undertake such studies. However, we were told that the study would take three months. That three months blew out to six months and now, a year later, we know that the report is completed but no-one has seen it. I have not seen it; the ratepayers have not seen it; and, as of a week ago, the City of Stirling had not seen it. The difficulty is that the traders are now really annoyed. They have sat on their plans for a year while they waited for the report. The City of Stirling has allocated money for the development. One always worries when money is sitting around for too long that it will be spent on something else. We are still waiting on the Department of Transport to tell us what we can do. I hope that we can have bus bays and other arrangements for buses up that street rather than see houses bowled over. A dedicated bus lane is unrealistic because it would involve knocking down shops and structures at the intersection of Walcott and Beaufort Streets. We are probably being held up for something that, at the end of the day, will be seen to be a red herring. In the interim, this situation is having a very bad impact on the morale of people in my electorate.

I also have some complaints about the staffing allocation for gardening and maintenance at the Inglewood Primary School. Earlier this year staff and parents were horrified when used syringes were found in garden beds at the school. Children have access to these garden beds and, as we all know, they think they are being very helpful by picking up things like that and, as a result, are at risk of needle-stick injury. Gardening and maintenance services in that region have been rationalised and the Inglewood Primary School has lost many gardening hours. The gardener is now there only two or three days a week and he is incredibly busy just keeping up with routine maintenance let alone checking early in the day to ensure that no dangerous materials are lying around.

This is a problem because the school community has taken part in working bees and built some fantastic garden beds that break up the space and create quiet areas for class activities. They have put in an enormous effort to improve the facilities at the school. However, when the gardening and maintenance budget is pared to the bone and when syringes are left lying in garden beds - as happens in cities - the school morale goes down. The gardener is now rushing between three schools. I have spoken to departmental officials to get this decision reversed, but the Minister for Education must look at the issue. When we cut money from budgets we must remember that it also has an impact on people. This cut will have an impact on the social capital of the school. To date, the parents have been happy to raise funds and to spend their own time building new gardens, buying plants and so on. However, if that work is not maintained or if it is maintained at the expense of picking up dirty syringes, social capital will fall away and those people will not contribute to the community in the way they have done to date.

I will end on a positive note by talking about a rally I attended recently for the launch of the Bayswater-Bendigo community bank. In February this year, I was horrified to learn that the Commonwealth Bank was leaving Bayswater. The bank suffered being called the "last bank in town". Bayswater had three bank branches four years ago - the Westpac, the National Bank of Australia and the Commonwealth Bank. Over time, the other two closed. To our horror, in February the Commonwealth Bank announced that it, too, was closing its branch in Bayswater because it was not making the profit it needed to make. Bayswater has many senior citizens and a very large council-owned senior citizens' village. Many elderly people were very concerned about this closure. Some were using the automatic teller machine but they liked the face-to-face contact. We held a rally in February to try to convince the bank to keep the branch open. We told the bankers that they were really great guys and that we would be really nice to them if they stayed. We did not win. We then got serious and took a leaf out of the member for Avon's book.

Mr Trenorden: A brilliant leaf.

Dr EDWARDS: We looked at the study he did a number of years ago about banks. The City of Bayswater decided to take up the issue. Community banks are successful only if the local council supports the concept.

Mr Cowan: Or a community group supported by council.

Dr EDWARDS: The council was behind it. However, the concept would have been successful without council money. At the rally I went to we had a thermometer to indicate the amount of money raised. We were hoping to get about \$300 000 on that day. Fliers and letters had gone out and there had been extensive publicity. By the end of that morning we had been pledged \$595 000, which is just stunning. Since then it has gone up to nearly \$1m.

Mr Trenorden: It is \$1.05m. It is the biggest response to a community bank in Western Australia's history. You should be quite proud of that.

Dr EDWARDS: We were very proud of that, but it was much broader than just Bayswater. Although lots of familiar faces were lined up wanting to move accounts, buy shares or put their business through the bank, people from other areas also were wanting to send a message to all banks that they wanted this type of community focus. People who live in the city are lucky in that they can drive from Tuart Hill or Bassendean and the nearby suburbs, whereas it is more difficult in the country. People do not want to travel 60 kilometres down the road to another town.

Mr Cowan: I have to drive 65 kilometres to get to a bank.

Dr EDWARDS: We have a lot of lifestyle advantages.

Mr Trenorden: Unfortunately, a few other places might be in that predicament soon.

Dr EDWARDS: That is true. It was a positive outcome. One of the foresights of history we had with this new bank was that the council owned a building. When Australia Post - another agency that closes services - left its post office in Bayswater, the City of Bayswater was able to buy the building. Currently, some employment programs run out of that building. When we were looking at establishing a bank in our local community and a couple of banking bodies were interested, we could tell them that a building was available which would not need much modification and that it was owned by the city. The city was behind it. The city was prepared to look at what accounts it could run through that bank to bump up the turnover. It is a very positive and exciting story. I am hopeful that shortly, the Bayswater-Bendigo community bank will be launched. I hold it up as an example and I hope other people in other electorates can get into this as well.

Mr Trenorden interjected.

Dr EDWARDS: Will the member for Avon be invited?

Mr Trenorden: I do not have to be invited; I just wondered about it. Other than the proposal, I had little to do with Bayswater, but I was very pleased to see it.

Dr EDWARDS: We were very pleased and we know this issue is a big feature in country towns. About two years ago I made a speech about the budget in which I mentioned the member's report. I said then that it was also an issue in urban areas, particularly in areas where people were not as well off and where there were a lot of senior citizens, who are not so attractive to banks. They are also the group which wants more of the face-to-face service. I will keep the House informed of developments, but I think it will be a successful and resounding venture.

MR RIEBELING (Burrup) [1.42 pm]: Touching on the issue raised by the member for Maylands, we had similar problems in my electorate in Tom Price and Paraburdoo, which the member for Avon also knows about.

Mr Trenorden: Hasn't the Commonwealth Bank just decided to provide a service from the post office in one of your towns?

Mr RIEBELING: United Credit Union Ltd ended up taking over that facility.

Mr Trenorden: I thought I saw a press release last week about one of your towns getting a service through the post office.

Mr RIEBELING: Lots of communities have tackled it slightly differently, but in my area United Credit seems to be filling the gap in a lot of areas. However, I will give my response to the "Budget 2001" document which was released by the Premier a couple of weeks ago. I will go through a number of items that have been announced in the budget. In some areas I will congratulate the Government, and in others I will put forward my concerns about what has been announced. Then I will proceed to cover areas which were not covered in the budget and which should have been covered because of the extreme need in a number of cases and the Government's extreme lack of knowledge of the Pilbara region which is demonstrated by this budget.

On Thursday morning after the budget was presented, I went to a budget breakfast in Karratha hosted by the Attorney General, Mr Foss. I was fortunate to be able to ask Mr Foss a number of questions about that document, which outlines what the Pilbara region is supposed to get out of the budget. It is a summary of what is in it for the Pilbara people. It is an extensive document of six pages. As members can see, I have coded the items for the Pilbara region. From my reading of the document, 265 initiatives were announced in this document. Unfortunately for the people of the Pilbara, 188 of those initiatives do not relate specifically to the Pilbara. I am sure that when the ministers contribute to the budget debate, they will be able to say why some of these initiatives, which I do not think relate to the Pilbara, are shown as Pilbara-based items. A classic example is the \$2.7m which will be spent on a skeleton weed eradication program. The Acting Speaker (Mr Sweetman) may know whether there is a skeleton weed eradication program in his area, but there is not one in mine. These are generic fill-ups in a document for the people in the Pilbara, which was a response to the needs of the people in the Pilbara.

Some of the content relates to the Pilbara, and I will go through a number of those items. First, after much pressure from my office and from other people in the Pilbara, the floodways between Wickham and Karratha have been tackled in this budget. I applaud the Government for doing that and also for allocating money to fix the Popes Nose Bridge which was so tragically instrumental in taking a young child's life two months ago. That construction work is well overdue, particularly as we have had exceptionally wet periods - more than normal - in the Pilbara over the past few years. That has highlighted the problems for people who live in Karratha and commute to Wickham or who live in Wickham and commute to Karratha. It is also highlighted in the area of education. A large number of children live in Wickham and travel to Karratha on a daily basis to receive their education. On a number of occasions those children have either not been able to attend school or have been trapped in Karratha and have been unable to go home, which was even more unacceptable.

Mr Cowan: I bet they would have been upset about that!

Mr RIEBELING: Some of the children are very young and it caused a great deal of stress for those children.

Mr Wiese: I suggest that it would be more stressful for the mothers.

Mr RIEBELING: The mothers and fathers. The children who did not appear to be too concerned were the older teenage children. Nevertheless, it caused a great deal of angst. By the end of this year when the cyclone season starts, I hope that that problem will not occur again.

Another item that appears in this document as one of the five major key initiatives for the Pilbara region is the building of the Tom Price gymnasium. It is something I have pushed hard for and I was glad to see it in the document. I was particularly unhappy to see that, for a project which is worth \$3.2m, this Government has seen fit to allocate \$100 000 this year. That says to people in the electorate, as we are heading to an election, "Trust us; we will build it after you elect us." People are somewhat cynical about this Government's promises to the people of Tom Price.

During the last election campaign, a large number of promises were made about the road between Karratha and Tom Price. It was to be built within four years. That promise was made by none other than the Minister for Transport when he announced on the radio that it would be built within four years. Basically, no money has been spent on that road. I have no doubt that during the next election campaign the Government will rediscover the need to build the Tom Price-Karratha road, and I am sure it will announce that it will construct it within four years. What it may never do is say in which four years it will construct it. I am also sure that the people of Tom Price have had enough of this Government's deceit.

Of interest in this budget is the large amount of money allocated to enhance the facilities in the Karijini National Park, something which most people involved in tourism will applaud, because the park is a great natural attraction. Centres built to inform tourists about the highlights of national parks are worth their weight in gold. However, the Government has not put money into the road system which takes people from the coast into the Karijini National Park. A slightly hypocritical

situation is developing. The Government is spending money on the Karijini National Park, yet it is spending no money on the Tom Price-Karratha link to it. Some people in the Tom Price area have indicated that that is the major issue that they had hoped would be contained in the budget document. As I mentioned in this place last time, the road which is maintained by Hamersley Iron Pty Ltd had been closed to the public for six months. Therefore, when people want to go to Karratha from Tom Price, they have to drive nearly 700 kilometres, either through Auski or Nanutarra, to access health services and shopping in Karratha, as well as the coastline. That is a disappointment to the people in the inland Pilbara region particularly.

Recently, I wrote to the Government's Minister for Housing. I thought I would do him a service and express to him my concerns about the lack of planning that is going into the management of housing in the Pilbara region by the Ministry of Housing. I indicated to the minister that one of the great assets that the Pilbara now has is empty accommodation. Karratha has hundreds of empty houses. Wickham has hundreds of empty accommodation units. With construction jobs, one of the big disadvantages is that the work force must be housed. I have indicated to the Minister for Housing and to the Premier that this is a great opportunity for the State to take control of the empty accommodation and to use it as an asset. They could say to the companies which want to build steel plants and the like, "Come to Karratha. We have 500 empty houses that your work force can use. You do not have to build any."

The Minister for Housing does not understand what development means to this State, and he did not understand what the words in my letter meant. He still thinks that I am suggesting that these houses should be taken on board and used for welfare housing, similar to the rest of the work of Homeswest. He has said that construction people would not be able to access those houses because their incomes are too high. That was not the suggestion. The suggestion was that the Government enter into some sort of head lease, and lease all the accommodation to those companies so that they would not have a housing crisis. Those companies would not have to build another suburb or single men's quarters that would be left vacant for many years.

However, the minister went further. The need to start planning has been highlighted by the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party, who indicated recently that a project by the Syntroleum Corporation would start in the near future. Many people and small businesses in my area have been interested in the indication by the Minister for Resources Development that the West Angelas and Syntroleum projects will commence in the near future. That prompted the letter to the Minister for Housing. The Minister for Housing and the Minister for Resources Development are fellow cabinet members. In his response, the Minister for Housing referred to the announcement of the Minister for Resources Development and said -

Whilst there have been announcements, there has been no confirmation to date of any project receiving financial backing and a commencement date.

Therefore, either the Minister for Resources Development is running around this State, especially in the Pilbara region, deliberately telling untruths to people in small business by saying that projects are about to start when he knows they are not, or the Minister for Housing has no idea about what is occurring in the north of the State. I will forward that letter to the Minister for Resources Development. Perhaps he may be able to indicate more accurately to the Minister for Housing that there will be some development in the Pilbara and that Syntroleum, with whom I have had a number of meetings, is confident that by February it will be in the business of constructing its artificial or synthetic oil factory. Dealing with the proper planning and management of housing, the suggestions I made were sensible. Every person with whom I speak, other than Liberal politicians, sees merit in those suggestions.

I will move on to the area of capital works programs in our schools. I have written to the Education Department about the problems that exist in servicing some of our ageing schools in the central Pilbara region. As members know, the towns of Paraburdoo, Tom Price, Dampier and Karratha were all built about the same time, approximately 30 years ago. The people who built those school buildings did not expect them to be standing in 30 years. Unfortunately for central Tom Price Primary School, the time has come when major maintenance must occur so that the school can continue to house the children of Tom Price and teach them in safety. During the wetter periods of this year, the administration block at the central Tom Price School basically had no resistance to rain. The water flooded through the administration area, and many parts of the school leaked like a sieve. I am not talking about an ongoing maintenance program; I am talking about a massive decay of the capital infrastructure at the central Tom Price Primary School. I have found no allocation of substantial moneys in this budget to endeavour to rectify the problems at central Tom Price Primary School.

Now that a few more members are in the Chamber, I emphasise that only \$100 000 was allocated for the Tom Price gymnasium, which is a \$3.2m project. It was a \$3.2m project, but this Government's real commitment to the project is \$100 000.

Mr Bradshaw: A lot of programs are funded in that way.

Mr RIEBELING: Yes, except with this one the major part of the funding will be provided after the next election and, once again, the Government will tell the people of Tom Price to trust it because it will be done later. No-one in the Pilbara trusts this Government any more. It is time the Government realised that.

[Leave granted for speech to be continued.]

Debate thus adjourned.

[Continued on page 7183.]

[Questions without notice taken.]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE - PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS*Suspension of Standing Orders*

MR COWAN (Merredin - Deputy Premier) [2.39 pm]: I move -

That so much of the standing orders be suspended as is necessary to enable private members' business to take precedence today from 4.00 pm to 8.00 pm.

My purpose in moving this motion is that standing orders currently provide for private members' business to be taken from 4.00 pm to 7.00 pm. As we will have a dinner break this evening, private members' business should be extended to 8.00 pm.

MR KOBELKE (Nollamara) [2.40 pm]: Clearly we support this motion so that we can have the three hours that should be allocated to private members' business. However, it is not acceptable to opposition members for the Government to change the normal sitting hours without justification. We accepted that the budget Bills would be made priority Bills, and we gave an undertaking that they would clear the Parliament by 30 June, as the Government requires, yet we sat until after midnight last night, and at that time we were told that we would not be rising tonight at the normal time of 7.00 pm but would have to stay back, without any clear agenda of what we would be doing. Ten members on this side have spoken on the appropriation Bills, but not one single government backbencher has spoken on the budget. They are so ashamed of the budget that they are not willing to speak on it or on matters of interest to their constituency. That is the shame of this Government. The Government is trying to race the budget through this House by sitting late at night and not allowing its backbenchers to comment on the budget. The Government certainly has something to hide and does not wish that to be put in debate.

The reason for this motion is to extend the time for private members' business from 7.00 pm to 8.00 pm so that we can have a dinner suspension between 6.00 pm and 7.00 pm and can then continue with government business. That will cause great inconvenience to many members who have made other arrangements for this evening. We were given no more warning than after midnight last night, when the acting Leader of the House indicated that we would be sitting tonight. That is not the way to manage the affairs of the House. If the Government wants the cooperation of the Opposition, it should at least give us due notice of when the sitting times will be varied. If this Government wants this House to work effectively, it should seek to work cooperatively with the Opposition, which has given a clear undertaking about the appropriation Bills. While we accept the change, we point out the mismanagement of the acting Leader of the House with regard to this matter, and we hope that in future the Government will have more consideration for all members before it moves to change the normal sitting hours.

Question put and passed with an absolute majority.

APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED FUND) BILL (No. 1) 2000*Second Reading - Cognate Debate*

Resumed from an earlier stage.

MR RIEBELING (Burrup) [2.43 pm]: I am very disappointed that everyone is leaving! For a short time just before two o'clock, I thought my speech was attracting people, but then I realised that question time was about to begin. Now that question time is over, I have no doubt that in the next couple of minutes the Press will swarm back into the gallery to find out what I have to say about my electorate.

For the benefit of those members who missed the first part of my speech and those who are now leaving, I have been outlining how this Government has missed the point in a number of important areas of concern to my electorate. One area of expenditure that the Government has proudly put in its "Budget 2001" document is an amount of \$520 000 over two years to upgrade accommodation at Nickol Bay Hospital. That matter is of some interest to me, so I set about trying to find out where that money would be allocated. I found out that rather than that money being used for the much needed upgrade of Nickol Bay Hospital, it will be used to expand the senior management accommodation units to create an area where tea and coffee can be made and served to the senior management group at that hospital. At the same time as that announcement about that expansion of Nickol Bay Hospital, the shiftwork for nurses was changed so that now only three nurses are on duty per shift rather than four. Therefore, the medical coverage in that hospital has been decreased rather than increased, and the money that has been allocated for that hospital will be spent on what the majority of staff consider to be an unnecessary improvement to that hospital. Nickol Bay Hospital is one of the State's best equipped and newest hospitals in the bush. However, no government doctors are based at that hospital. The facilities for the administrative staff are to be expanded, and the number of nurses at the hospital has been cut, yet the Government has not tackled the fact that no government doctor is based at that hospital.

It gets even better in the Health area. This Government has made a fantastic announcement that the people in the Pilbara will hear about loud and strong. This Government has announced that it will spend \$15 000 - not \$150 000 - on new theatre equipment for the Tom Price and Paraburdoo District Hospitals. That money is not just for Tom Price District Hospital. Those two hospitals will have to share that massive amount of money and will each get \$7 500 for new theatre equipment. That is a fantastic effort by this Government! I remember outlining during a debate in this place an operation that was conducted on a lady who had broken her arm, and explaining that the stainless steel screws that were used cost \$95 each, the bits of wire that were used cost \$80, and a stainless steel metal plate with various holes in it cost in excess of \$140. I

do not think \$7 500 for theatre equipment will be greatly applauded in Tom Price and Paraburdoo. In fact, it is an insult to those two towns to spend so little on new theatre equipment.

In the "Budget 2001" document I can find only one allocation under the heading "Industry" that can safely be tied to my area. That is an allocation of \$70 000 for self-help retransmission schemes to enable a number of regional communities to receive Special Broadcasting Service television. The people in my area will applaud the expansion of SBS services to their region. However, an allocation of \$70 000 for that purpose is a drop in the ocean. As I have said on other occasions, the Commonwealth Government announced that after it had sold the second tranche of Telstra it would expand SBS services to country and regional Australia. The Shire of Roebourne wrote to the Liberal Federal Government and said that although it appreciated that the Government might not have all the money at once, at its expense the shire would erect the transmission towers and that when the Government had the money it could pay the shire. It was looking to the Federal Government to honour its commitment. Six months have passed without a reply from the Federal Government. That is a sign of its real commitment to regional Western Australia. The allocation of \$70 000 to assist is a drop in the ocean and is too small to be effective in any area.

The Attorney General proudly said that all the items in this "Budget 2001" document were initiatives to help the Pilbara region. No-one who has seen this document to whom I have spoken believes a word of it because it is clearly full of items that do not relate in any way, shape or form to the Pilbara region. The issues that do relate to it are not specific and will require a more in-depth examination during the estimates committee hearings. I will be examining, for example, why only \$100 000 is allocated to the Tom Price gymnasium and why this community is being told it must wait until after the next election for any real work to be done on it. Why do the children attending the North Tom Price Primary School not have a roof over their verandah areas to stop them getting wet when it rains? The minister has known about this for at least three years because I have been telling him for that long. I can see no allocation in this budget for maintenance to be undertaken to fix those problems.

As I said before question time, one of the major concerns to me is the age of the central Tom Price Primary School. A major redevelopment is required so that quality education can be delivered in reasonable surroundings. A thorough check of large areas of that primary school would reveal that large amounts of money must be spent, not to maintain the site, but to redevelop it.

The budget contains no allocation to review the patient assisted travel scheme, which is designed to assist people. The current system is a patient hindrance scheme, illustrated by a case in the past week involving a mother who took her critically ill child to Perth by the Royal Flying Doctor Service. Fortunately, the child recovered, which was very pleasing for all concerned. Prior to returning to Tom Price the mother asked the staff at the hospital in Perth how she could get back to Tom Price. She was told that she should buy a plane ticket for her and her child and she would be reimbursed through the PAT scheme. The mother bought the ticket, returned to Tom Price and appeared at the hospital for a refund but was told that she should have sought confirmation that her return trip expense would be covered before she initially travelled to Perth. In other words, the health system was telling the mother that although a life threatening emergency was occurring, she should have delayed her flight out of Perth while she waited for the hospital administration to open so she could fill out the appropriate forms in order to claim her return flight cost from the PAT scheme.

Fortunately, after the involvement of my office that crazy decision was overturned. However, the PAT scheme clerk had administered the guidelines correctly. Fortunately, we were able to overturn the decision of the PAT scheme clerk on the grounds that it was a stupid decision. The PAT scheme guidelines have not changed and that situation occurs regularly. This woman would not have approached my office had not a friend of hers previously been successfully assisted with a similar PAT scheme issue. The problem of the mother of the child was resolved, no thanks to the health service or the PAT scheme in the Pilbara region. I had hoped an announcement would be made that a review of the scheme would be undertaken as a major initiative of this Government with the aim of providing improved coverage and better assistance to people in the Pilbara region needing access to much needed health services.

An area not mentioned in the budget, and one about which I have written to the Premier, the Deputy Premier and the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party, is the impact of fly-in fly-out policies. This Government is sitting by and doing nothing to moderate the adverse impact fly-in fly-out policies are having on the Pilbara region. In the past few months the Government announced that it had given permission for West Angelas to fly in and fly out employees.

The operators of Robe River Mining Co Pty Ltd have been heading towards a fly-in fly-out work force. Workers are expected to work a 21-day rotation, 14 of which involve non-stop work for twelve and a half hours a day. Under this Government's much self-praised individual work contracts, people are working 176 hours a fortnight. No doubt the member for Riverton is very proud that Western Australians are now working such hours. Immediately after working 14 days straight they are rewarded with leave equal to three weekends in a row, to which they are entitled, plus one extra day. In other words, they work 14 days in a row, have seven days off and work the next 14 days in a row and so on.

I believe the only reason Robe River is requiring employees to work those hours in Pannawonica is that it wants its work force to be as flexible as possible and to work at both West Angelas and at the mine sites in and around Pannawonica. Mr Steve Bywater, the General Manager of Robe River in the Pilbara region, has said the company wishes its work force to be as flexible as possible. He hopes that his work force will be able to compete for the work at West Angelas.

My argument is not that the Government should be banning fly-in fly-out policies but that if that is to occur in the inland towns of the Pilbara, we should be devising methods that will allow the Pilbara to survive for the next 50 to 100 years. If the Pilbara is to have a future, fly-in fly-out bases should be at a regional centre. In its budget and its statements about

industry, this Government should clearly indicate that it has a long-term commitment to the Pilbara region and that this sort of development in the Pilbara threatens the existence of the Pilbara, especially the inland Pilbara towns.

As members know, Robe River Mining Company Pty Ltd is at the cutting edge of changes in industrial relations and methods of operation. It gets meaner and leaner as every year goes by. What is now occurring at Robe River sites will unfortunately spread to other sites within the Pilbara. There is now a real threat, especially to the smaller towns in the region, that in the not too distant future they will not exist. We have seen towns such as Goldsworthy disappear when mining ceased or the ore was exhausted. That is not the case at Pannawonica. Robe River has said that there is 20 years of ore still to be extracted from the area. This will be an unusual town closure if fly-in fly-out is implemented, and it will be contrary to the agreement Act. If the Government allows this to occur, it will have to amend the Act to provide for the town's closure and the death of the inland Pilbara. Great concern has been expressed in the region about the future of towns such as Paraburdoo and Pannawonica and, to a lesser extent, Tom Price and Newman. However, if this process continues, Newman and Tom Price will also be under threat.

I will now deal with some of the other items listed in the budget document. I do not know why some of these allocations have been included because they cover recurrent expenses. I note that \$75 000 has been allocated in the Department of Resources Development's budget for the Pilbara regional office. That is not funding for an initiative; it is ongoing funding of an office that has been operational for some time. An allocation of \$213 000 has been made to improve the intersection of the North West Coastal Highway at Dampier. That is great news for Dampier because that highway does not go anywhere near it; it is 14 kilometres away. We will be spending \$213 000 improving an intersection that does not exist. I think the reference should be to the intersection of the road that goes past the seven-mile shunting yards and the highway. No-one in the Pilbara knows where that intersection is because it does not exist.

Mr Kierath: You know where it is.

Mr RIEBELING: Perhaps the Minister for Planning wrote this because nothing he says relates to the truth.

Mr Kierath: Everyone who has been there knows it runs into the road that runs into Dampier.

Mr RIEBELING: Perhaps the minister should read this.

Mr Kierath: It is on the road to Dampier.

Mr RIEBELING: It is not. I think the intersection referred to is on the road to Karratha.

Mr Kierath: It is on the road between Karratha and Dampier and the member knows that.

Mr RIEBELING: That road does not go anywhere near the highway.

Some glaring problems need to be sorted out. The Transport budget reeks of someone having whacked in a few figures and then thinking about what they mean. One allocation relates to a subsidy of \$75 000 for a "North West Air Service" in the Pilbara, Kimberley and Gascoyne regions. I presume that that is \$25 000 for each region. I have never heard of a "North West Air Service". This document does not indicate what the money is to be used for; presumably it is for surveillance, but money is allocated elsewhere for that work. For the life of me, I do not know what it is. Perhaps the Minister for Planning, who knows all about this document, will explain it when he makes his contribution.

Allocations have been made, but not for new initiatives. An amount of \$1.2m has been allocated to student subsidised travel in the Pilbara and the same amount has been allocated for pensioner travel. Those programs were announced 15 years ago and they are still being funded. As I said, \$3.2m has been allocated for the construction of bridges between Roebourne and Karratha, which is appreciated. In addition, \$211 000 has been allocated to construct the Pannawonica to Millstream road in the Shire of Ashburton. I do not know what type of road it is, but it would be a dirt track at best after the expenditure of only \$211 000. The distance between the two towns is huge and \$211 000 would only pay for a tractor to grade it for six months. The Popes Nose causeway construction is welcomed by everyone in the area. It is overdue by at least six years according to this Government's previous promises.

An amount of \$23 000 has been allocated for an extended tour, including Karratha, by the Art on the Move Year 12 Perspectives exhibition. I do not know what that is about. It comes under the Art Gallery's budget, so presumably a gallery tour will include Karratha. This illustrates how hard it is for me to pick out the positives in this document. That \$23 000 is the only culture-based allocation to the region and Karratha is one of only five towns that will benefit.

I mentioned the visitors centres in the Karajini National Park. I hope that we get roads capable of carrying tourists to those information centres. The Ministry of Justice is having work camps built in the Millstream-Chichester National Park, which is of some interest. I also note the continuation of turtle tagging in the Karratha-Exmouth area.

The Minister for Planning may know something about land administration. I note an allocation of \$150 000 for the development and sale of light industrial lots in Karratha. Where are these lots? I understand that lots are currently available in the light industrial area, and I look forward to hearing where the new lots will be developed. There is \$100 000 for the development and sale of lots in the Karratha service trade area. I presume that is the light industrial area in the centre of town. LandCorp's proposed expenditure of \$330 000 in the region includes the development of the Karratha-Burrup west service corridor. I presume that is in relation to heavy industry. Once again, there is very little information about that. As I said earlier, there is an allocation of \$5.3m for housing construction. I am interested to find out where that construction is. It is clearly not in Karratha and I am trying to track down the minister's commitments and how he plans his expenditure.

in the area of housing. It is totally inadequate. He has an allocation of \$100 000 for land development within the Pilbara region. That would hardly employ two clerical people to draw up any proposals, let alone achieve anything.

All in all, this budget has missed the mark for the people of the Pilbara. I am convinced that the Government will be making further announcements because it will not be going to an election while it is offering so little to the people of my region. I hope that the people in my area look at this document and realise the Government's true commitment to the future development of the Pilbara, which is zero.

MR GRILL (Eyre) [3.11 pm]: In this budget debate I will make a few remarks about the status of people who live in regional areas and, in particular, people who live in the goldfields. It is a subject which is now getting some attention in the media; that is, the standards of living, the status of people who live in regional areas and the general discontent which is being displayed by many of those people in regard to government generally. I believe that the people who showed that discontent have some significant grounds for their feelings of alienation. I was looking at page 85 of the *Economic and Fiscal Outlook* which is associated with the budget papers. Of course, that tends to be a good news document, but it does contain a lot of interesting statistics. On page 85 we picked up information about the program on energy. The top item referred to the State's \$6m ongoing contribution towards the underground power project program - an increase of \$2m over 1998-99. It indicated that the State had already contributed \$4m in each year from 1996-97 to 1998-99. I applaud that program. It is a very good program and I congratulate the Government for bringing it in. However, I have some queries about the priorities of that program. When I look at the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder, which is central to my electorate, I find that outside of areas where developers are obliged to put in underground power because of the progress of new residential subdivisions, there is virtually no underground power in that city. Then when I look at suburbs such as Subiaco, where I used to live when I was a child and where my mother still lives, I find that nearly all of Subiaco has underground power. It has improved the aesthetics of that area. It makes it a much more amenable place in which to live. That is why we all applaud that program. We also applaud the program because it is a lot safer. Why do we find that suburbs like Subiaco, Peppermint Grove and Cottesloe are at the top of the list when it comes to implementing underground power? Places like Broome, Kununurra, Carnarvon and places of that nature have not been given that option, especially when they are the towns which are most likely to have powerlines brought down by cyclones and to face safety problems. Why have older cities such as Kalgoorlie-Boulder and places like that not been given the option first? One cannot help coming to the conclusion that most of what happens in the economic affairs of the State today is focused on the city, the big population areas and those places which return the biggest vote and command the most number of seats in Parliament.

Mr Bloffwitch: Our problem in Geraldton is that we do not have a big enough rate base and there is never enough money to do it. I thought it was a joint funding matter, and that is probably the problem. The bigger suburbs which have a large rate base can afford to put in the money. I think it is dollar for dollar. They must put in so much money to get their underground power. In our case, we do very little of it because there is never anything left over from the budget.

Mr GRILL: That is an inherent problem. That is probably a correct summation of the situation. However, a lot of the municipalities in my electorate do not have the money for those sorts of programs. There is an inherent problem right from the start. Treating unequals equally, as members would appreciate, is not always doing the right thing. Not only do places like Leonora and Norseman have a harsh climate, but also a lot of their streetscapes are not up to standard, because the municipalities do not have the money to put into those sorts of works. I do not believe that that should be the only criterion taken into account for these sorts of facilities and amenities. If we simply want to denude the country and regional areas and have everyone live in the metropolitan area, I could understand that sort of policy. Treating Peppermint Grove and Leonora or Norseman in the same way seems to be inherently unfair. However, that is the situation we have.

I look at places like Williamstown on the edge of Kalgoorlie, and I will say something about Williamstown and gas in a minute. Williamstown is a community which has been in existence for 100 years now. The municipality does not seem to have a lot of money to spend on it. The people who live there tend to be in the lower end of the socioeconomic scale, although I do not want to belittle them in any way. They are the people in our society who seem to come off the worst. We must fight to get decent roads for them. They do not have decent footpaths or playgrounds, and they certainly do not have underground power. The programs for underground power need to be amended so we have regard for some of this inequality. The big, rich or well-established municipalities can afford to put in underground power on a dollar-for-dollar basis. No doubt they will be at the top of the list under the current program. However, some of the other municipalities in my electorate cannot afford to do that, do not have the ratepayer base, as the member for Geraldton has indicated, and simply cannot do it. That is no reason for their not having it. These programs need to be rejigged in a way that takes that into account. People who live in regional areas are becoming discontented. They feel like second-class citizens. They feel as though beneficial policies do not extend beyond the Darling scarp and that the city-country divide is becoming more pronounced and, to some extent, depending on to whom one speaks, too vituperative in terms of some of the language which is being used to describe it. Although the Government can be proud of that \$6m program, it seems that it should be rejigged in a way that will make it more equitable.

I will now talk about gas. Kalgoorlie-Boulder is in the process of being reticulated with gas. Most of the work has been done, and people are grateful for that. However, once again with reticulated gas, there is some inequality. Straight off the bat, the difference in price between the city and Kalgoorlie-Boulder is some 4 to 6 per cent. That may not sound a lot, and it probably is not, but if one were to set up an industry, whether it be a small or large industry, in Kalgoorlie-Boulder or in Coolgardie as against the city, a 6 per cent difference in the gas price would not just make a difference; it would make all the difference. If a pensioner lives somewhere in Kalgoorlie-Boulder or Coolgardie, to use the same example, a 4 per cent difference in the cost of gas makes a difference over a year. On top of that, people must pay the cost of connecting

the gas from the mains to their house, and also change over their appliances. Although gas is going to places like Kalgoorlie-Boulder, it is not always equitable and fair, and it is not always available to all of the people to whom it should be available.

Parts of Kalgoorlie-Boulder will not be reticulated. It came as a surprise to me when I discovered that a year or so ago. I was told that Williamstown, to which I have already referred as being nearer to the bottom of the socioeconomic spectrum, would not be connected. That was only a rumour. When we first heard about natural gas going to Kalgoorlie-Boulder, it was on the understanding that all parts of the city would be connected. What do we find now? Initially, I discovered that Williamstown would not be connected. I found out by rumour. First of all, I contacted the local person in charge of the reticulation program in Kalgoorlie-Boulder. He assured me verbally that the rumour was incorrect and fallacious and that I had been misinformed. However, not long after that he came back to me and said that he was a little worried about the rumour I had put to him. He said that although he had assured me that it was untrue, he had checked with head office and discovered that it was true. The person who was responsible for the program in Kalgoorlie-Boulder had not even been told that Williamstown would not be connected, which I thought was a little underhand. I then wrote to AlintaGas and queried the situation. I received a letter from AlintaGas saying that it did not think it was in its economic interests to do so.

When that program was put in place, I did not understand that there was a differentiation between those parts of a town or city which appeared to be economical and those parts which did not. The program was sold to people in Kalgoorlie-Boulder on the basis that the whole of the residential and commercial parts of the city would be reticulated. No-one expected that isolated homesteads and residences some distance removed from the city would be reticulated, but they did expect that the whole of the residential and commercial parts of Kalgoorlie-Boulder would be connected. That will not be the case in Williamstown, because I received a letter from AlintaGas saying that it did not think it was economic and did not know how many people would be connected. I wrote to AlintaGas and asked whether, if there was an indication that most people in Williamstown would take up natural gas if it was offered, it would reconsider its position. AlintaGas wrote back and said that it would do a survey in due course. I said, "Why do a survey in due course? Let's do it now and make a commitment to connect those properties."

I suspect that there is no intention to ever connect Williamstown to natural gas, that I have simply been fobbed off and the people of Williamstown have been duped over the issue. The main gas pipeline that services Kalgoorlie-Boulder goes through Williamstown. As I said, Williamstown is probably not at the top of the socioeconomic spectrum, but it is a place where people have lived for a long time - older people, pensioners, families and people who, generally speaking, do not have a lot of money. Not everyone there owns the property or the house in which they live. Some people are squatters. Nonetheless, the community has existed for 100 years and it deserves some consideration. AlintaGas will not even do a survey of the area to ascertain how many people would connect to gas if it was prepared to put it in. That is letting those people down badly. I can understand why they feel a bit sour at the end of the day. At the beginning, they were led to understand that they could connect to natural gas, but they have not been given the opportunity to do so, and AlintaGas will not even do a survey.

The situation is similar in Kambalda. It was never said that the residential and commercial parts of Kambalda would be connected. However, the industrial parts of Kambalda are connected to natural gas because they are big users. There is a big mine and a big mill there, and they are connected to natural gas. People in the town said that they wanted the opportunity to have cheaper natural gas and, as their member, they wanted me to contact AlintaGas to ascertain whether it was prepared to connect their houses and businesses to that amenity. Therefore, I wrote to AlintaGas and made that request. I received a written answer from AlintaGas saying that it was not economic. The reason was that the connection to the residential areas from the mains would be a distance of something like 11 kilometres. I sent that response to the people in Kambalda who had been lobbying me and they immediately said that that was not true. They said that they knew the mains went within a kilometre of parts of the town, and no more than 2 kilometres in other parts. I again wrote to AlintaGas and advised it of that fact. AlintaGas wrote back to me and said that the information that had been given to me by my constituents was right. It had made a mistake about the distance it thought the mains was from the residential areas. Nonetheless, it would not go ahead and reticulate the town because it still did not think it was economic.

I believe that AlintaGas always thought it was not economic and that it never countenanced the proposition to connect natural gas to that town. It does not want to do it. It has set its face against it, and nothing I say will change its attitude to the matter. Once again, there was duplicity, and the situation was that people in country areas were not treated properly; they were treated like second-class citizens. It is worrying that that sort of attitude can be seen in many agencies that service country areas. AlintaGas is just one example of that.

More recently I have discovered - I have not yet verified this, although I have written to AlintaGas - that certain residential parts of Boulder will not be reticulated. That is a rumour. I have written to AlintaGas and I am waiting for a reply. I have been told that, unless someone is a big user, the whole section on the eastern side of Lane Street will not be reticulated. Once again, it is a breach of an implied undertaking and it is a breach of an implied promise. This is an old and central part of Kalgoorlie-Boulder. As with Williamstown, it has been a residential area for more than 100 years and it appears that because the return may not be as high in this part of Boulder, AlintaGas is not prepared to connect gas. It is thumbing its nose at people living in regional areas. People living in Perth probably appreciate that we live in one of the most beautiful cities in the world with most of the amenities, but those amenities are not always enjoyed in country areas, and it is sad that government agencies display this sort of attitude.

On the question of energy, I also refer to the cost of liquefied petroleum gas. Currently most of the towns in my electorate use liquefied petroleum gas in bottles. Some of them - the lucky ones in Kalgoorlie-Boulder - have the opportunity to

connect to natural gas. However, those living in Kambalda, Norseman, Leinster and Southern Cross do not have that opportunity, and they must put up with the price of liquefied petroleum gas. The price of bottled gas in Western Australia is far too high. It is usuriously expensive, but in country areas it is unbelievably expensive and that cost must be borne by an array of people in the community, including single mothers living on a pension and old age pensioners in the same position. Their energy needs, in an area that in winter is fiercely cold, can be much higher than those of people living on the coast where the climate is milder. Those people pay usuriously high prices for gas in bottles, and it seems that over the years no Government has had much concern about those costs.

I am a member of the Select Committee on Petroleum Products Pricing in Western Australia, which is looking at those costs. It has taken a long time for that committee to be set up. On the basis of the evidence given to that committee informally to date, it appears this country has some strange policies on the cost of liquefied petroleum gas. The two big uses of LPG are in automobiles and domestic residences. I am talking about high costs for both, but the costs for residential gas are much higher. The price in this country and State is not set by anyone within this country; it is set by the Saudi Arabians. It is set on the first day of each month in US dollars. It has nothing to do with the cost of producing that commodity in this State or in this country. It has to do with the supply and demand of that product in Saudi Arabia and on the world market. Australia has adopted the notion of world parity pricing, which has resulted in a situation which can be terribly unfair to our residents. If the Saudi Arabian-led cartel, which is pushing up petroleum prices in the world generally, decides it wants to push up the price of LPG, it can do it tomorrow without reference to the cost of living of anyone who lives in my electorate, in Perth or anywhere else in Western Australia. It does that and it is in its interests to do that. The higher it pushes up the price of petroleum products, the better its economy will be. It has had two or three attempts at keeping the cartel together to push up these prices, and that has been done.

This country is not dependent on Saudi Arabia for liquefied petroleum gas; in fact, Australia exports it. The cost of making LPG, although it is a closely guarded secret by the oil companies and others who make it, is a fraction of the price people pay. When the Saudi Arabians decide to push up the price, the benchmark price is applied across Australia and that price is set in American dollars. What does it mean when the Australia dollar is down against the American dollar?

Mr Cowan: It has absolutely nothing to do with the Australian cost of production.

Mr GRILL: That is absolutely right. It means oil companies and others who deal with this product get a giant windfall, first, when the Saudi Arabians put up the price and, then, every time the Australian dollar goes down against the American dollar. It is right down at the moment.

People in my electorate who do not have the means to pay are forced not to use gas in winter to heat their homes; they are being forced out of the use of LPG during the winter. If that is the sort of community we want to foster, I am very surprised. In truth, that is the situation and the Government has not done much about it. We seem to adopt policies which foster that situation, and we need to think seriously about changing those policies.

The Select Committee on Petroleum Products Pricing in Western Australia is also looking at the cost of petrol. In this State the cost of petrol is a mystery to most people, and certainly to those living in the country. I was in Port Hedland last week taking some evidence before this committee with some of my colleagues, and we found that, according to the Pilbara Development Commission, on average the differential between prices in the metropolitan area and those in Port Hedland is 14¢ or 15¢ on any given day. We also heard that the actual cost of freighting that product from Kwinana is 0.8¢ a litre. That was part of the direct evidence we heard, but some other evidence was contradictory and said the cost was up to 2¢ a litre. We think that the cost is 0.8¢, but we are checking that. It does not matter what the cost is because the differential is immense - 14¢ or 15¢ a litre, and sometimes even 18¢. I am talking about an average differential.

For no reason that anyone can publicly explain - obviously some people know the reason - people in Port Hedland who live on the coast, where costs of freighting this product are quite low, are paying, on average, 14¢ or 15¢ a litre more for their petrol than the people in Perth. The committee also ascertained that much of the fuel freighted to Port Hedland comes from Singapore. The distance between Singapore and Port Hedland is much less than the distance between Kwinana and Port Hedland, but the freight cost does not drop. A number of problems associated with this matter need to be ascertained and put right.

I have promised another speaker that I will allow time for him to speak before we move to private members' business. I would like to say much more about the difficulties under which people in my electorate labour, but I will just underline what I have said today. People in my electorate have a tremendous disability because of fuel costs. There is very little public transport in the areas I represent. We rely on our own motor vehicles to get around. One can understand why people get angry when they must pay these usurious prices for petrol. I was told by one of my constituents in Norseman last week that the price had increased to \$1.07¢ a litre. When the price of bottled gas is so high and when these people are precluded from using natural gas, one can understand why they get very frustrated and very unhappy about their predicament.

MR PENDAL (South Perth) [3.40 pm]: The budget brought down by the Premier on Thursday of last week makes a number of references in different parts of the budget papers to the question of dryland salinity in Western Australia. I want to use the short time available to me before private members' business today to canvass a number of matters touching on salinity and to examine the adequacy of the Government's response to the problem, both in the current budget context and in the broader approach that it has adopted for the past seven or so years. There are a number of references to salinity in different parts of the budget papers. It does not matter how many references appear in the budget papers, by any measure they are inadequate, especially given the magnitude of the task that lies ahead of us.

At page 96 of the document *2000-01 Economic and Fiscal Outlook* we are told -

Dryland salinity has been a problem for water supplies, farmland and nature conservation in Western Australia for over a hundred years. However it is only in recent years that the full scale and impact of the problem has been appreciated.

That observation couched in those terms seems to imply that salinity is something which has crept up on us and which is of such a nature that no-one is to blame for it. I find that difficult to accept. The quote goes on to say -

The Government introduced clearing control legislation in the late 1970s to protect the quality of water on some current and potential water catchments. In 1988 a Parliamentary Select Committee on salinity was told that about 2.4 million hectares of land was at risk, the first time that the true size of the problem was reported.

The seriousness of the matter has now come home to most Western Australians because the budget papers go on to tell us what has been a fear for some time; that is, somewhere in the vicinity of six million hectares of agricultural land are now at risk. My concern is not those figures but, rather, that the seriousness of the problem appears to have been acknowledged at last but the response to that seriousness is inadequate. There are good reasons to believe that the coalition Government has dropped the ball on arguably the most important environmental issue facing Western Australia and one of the biggest impediments to increased agricultural production facing this State. It is not as though there have been seven years of intensive activity.

I vividly recall that in 1992 the Liberal Party's Fightback WA document - which incidentally was largely an economic document - gave serious attention to the magnitude of the problem faced then by the State, almost a decade ago. That was at a time when land degradation in all its forms, not just salinity, was costing the State well in excess of \$600m a year. At that stage the then Opposition committed itself to something which to this day is lacking and which I suggest is one of the continuing impediments to an ultimate solution; that is, the creation of a single, central and, I even say, powerful agency that was described in those days as being a salinity and land degradation authority. Eight years later, in a legislative sense at least, still there has been no action. It is interesting to note that as late as a week to two weeks ago at a public seminar in the south west of this State a motion was passed by those attending to express that view once again, albeit slightly differently from the way the Liberal Opposition expressed it seven years earlier, but still expressing the need for a single, central, powerful agency with its own legislation and with the capacity to cut across state, bureaucratic, local authority and intellectual property boundaries.

It is interesting too that only a year or so ago a man called Angus Belford, who had a fair bit to say about this whole question of dryland salinity and who spent considerable time working in the State Public Service, independently of both the Liberal Party seven years ago and this group in the south west 10 days ago, came to the conclusion that, until the fight against salinity was put into the hands of a single agency with the legislative capacity to make difficult decisions, we would continue to impede our efforts. Again, that brought home to me the fact that there have been seven or eight years of lost opportunities. One of the adjunct issues mentioned in the Fightback document in 1992 was the future survival of the Blackwood River, which was then in an exceptionally parlous state. Those remarks of 1992 relate to some of the matters I want to canvass quickly today.

I now want to draw together the several things I have mentioned so far in order to make the point of my contribution to the budget debate. First, a consistent theme has run through the demands over the years that at a bureaucratic level the need is for a single, central agency with the powers that Parliament is prepared to invest in it. Secondly, there must be a commitment to rehabilitation in all its forms. Thirdly, those things must be directed not only at the degraded land but also at our waterways and native vegetation. When I mentioned waterways earlier, the Blackwood and Avon Rivers came to mind immediately. The failure on the part of the Government is starting to have some serious implications. Many possible solutions have been put forward. As only one member of Parliament I am not in a position to know, assess or understand the value of those individual solutions. However, I will briefly mention one of those proposals today - that is, the Coyne proposal, which the Government is generally aware of - in order to demonstrate that we do not have the mechanism in place today, with the lack of that single agency, with which to properly assess and make a decision about those individual proposals. Page 2 of the Coyne proposal, "A Creative Engineering Solution" states -

Our State Government and its agencies continue to promote tree planting, re-vegetation and farmer education as the tools necessary to fight salinity. If it is so patently clear to them that the water usage and pumping qualities of trees and vegetation will arrest the problem, why do they continually oppose engineering solutions such as pumping and drainage?

Mr Cowan: We do not.

Mr PENDAL: The Deputy Premier says that he does not. However, I will demonstrate to the House that the Government continues to ignore the capacity of engineering solutions, whether it be Mr Coyne's or anyone else's - there are several - to provide the answers.

Last year on 17 November 1999 in question on notice 1353 I asked a series of questions of the Deputy Premier, who was in charge of the program against salinity, but I will deal only with (a), (b) and (c) today. I referred to the Coyne document and asked, first, whether it had been assessed by the Government, because that seemed to be a pretty fundamental issue; secondly, if it had been assessed, by whom; and, thirdly, whether that assessment would be tabled. The answer the Deputy Premier gave to me was that the contents of the report had not been assessed. He also said that a preliminary assessment

had been made by a retired engineer working closely with the Water and Rivers Commission. That preliminary assessment was later withdrawn by that person. Strangely enough, that was the same Mr Belford to whom I referred earlier in a different context. Mr Belford was prepared to withdraw the assessment that he had made that the Coyne proposal could cost up to \$3b because he had misunderstood the nature of the channel to be cut through the Darling Range in the south west. Mr Belford was professional enough to withdraw his earlier remarks, which incidentally had never been commissioned by the Water and Rivers Commission, although the Deputy Premier's answer, crafted by the people who craft parliamentary answers, had given the impression that that assessment had been sought and obtained by the commission. Those answers begged other questions, which I posed earlier this year, but I did not get a chance to put them on the Notice Paper because of a domestic situation involving a family illness. The answers begged questions such as: Is it a fact that the preliminary assessment was not commissioned by the Water and Rivers Commission but was the result of a rival's work? Is it a fact that the rival theory rejected the Agri-Tech soil conservation method - the Coyne method - on the ground of its costing between \$2b and \$3b? The point of those follow-up questions was to indicate to the Government that it had not properly assessed the Agri-Tech proposals in the first place and the extent to which they were assessed after the event, accidentally as it were, was inaccurate and the person who made that inaccurate assessment had then withdrawn it.

That brings us to the current position. In the past couple of days I have come into possession of a draft response to the Coyne proposal prepared by the research and development technical committee of the Salinity Council. After all the efforts by a lot of people to have a proper assessment made, at last the Salinity Council's research and development technical committee was finally given the job to run the rule over the matter. I express my alarm that the assessment being made, albeit in a draft form as late as a couple of days ago, runs drastically counter to some of the best work being done by private consultants in the field. I refer in particular to Sinclair Knight Merz Pty Ltd. In effect, if we take the words of the draft of the technical committee at face value, the committee seeks to place a negative interpretation on the Agri-Tech proposal at a time when Sinclair Knights' professional assessment goes in the opposite direction. Somewhere along the line there will be a collision between those two views. For example, page 2 of the Sinclair Knight assessment refers to the Agri-Tech proposal and states -

It is concluded that the project is technically viable and the scheme may be commercially viable without factoring in the social and environmental benefits.

Even without looking at the long-term social and environmental benefits to which I have made some reference in my opening remarks - those benefits will be huge - this company, which also advises the Federal Government on dry land salinity, is prepared to say that the project is technically viable. This can be compared with the remarks at page 2 of the technical committee's report to the minister -

The committee questions the assumption made by Bob Taylor at the presentation that there is a solution to salinity.

Mr Taylor made the presentation to the Government's experts in March in South Perth. The report continues -

In many areas in Western Australia there may be no economic or technical solutions currently available to manage salinity.

The tenor and tone of the report, which admittedly, is still in the draft stage, runs 180 degrees in the opposite direction from the conclusions being drawn by Sinclair Knight. Who in the end decides who is right and who is wrong? That brings me back to my starting point: Until the Government, and unless the Government, is prepared to upgrade the activities and powers of the current Salinity Council, we will continue to plod on, mark time and look down the barrel of seeing up to one-third of our agricultural land disappear forever. That is the single central weakness in the Government's plan with salinity. I hope that this year the Government will start to undo the inactivity of the past seven years and address salinity. I support the budget.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION ON LAND USE, TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING

Motion

MS MacTIERNAN (Armadale) [4.02 pm]: I move -

That this House notes with concern the extraordinarily high level of community discontent with both the planning processes and the quality of planning decisions in Western Australia. Therefore this House urges the Government to adopt processes and structures that produce genuine and meaningful consultation and to commit to a more holistic approach to land use, transport and environmental planning.

I hope the Minister for Planning will listen to this debate because the Opposition is very serious about this issue, which all Governments and all political parties need to address. I begin by making what some might say is a positive comment about the Minister for Planning. I often tell community groups complaining about yet another government failure in the planning process that the Minister for Planning is doing a good job.

Mr Cowan: Of course he is!

Ms MacTIERNAN: That is right. It is the Government's poor planning processes and the quality of its decisions that are helping community networks to be built. People are getting angry that decisions about their environment are being made without their input and in defiance of sound planning principles. People are getting out of their homes, joining together

and demanding to be heard and included in the decision-making process. They want decisions made which benefit the whole community rather than those which provide windfall profits for favoured developers. They want a say in how their communities are shaped, and they want what they consider to be important about their landscape and environment factored into planning decisions. People want to be confident that decisions take into account the big picture. For example, they want decisions that would allow urban subdivisions beyond the limits of the metropolitan area to consider the impact on the availability of recreational areas, and the cost to the State in developing urban infrastructure in those areas.

In short, people want democracy done differently. We all believe that democracy is not simply marking a ballot paper every four years. The existing model of consultation is that the Government decides what it will do, it advertises its decision, and it then allows the population to write in to say what they do not like about the proposal. Generally, those submissions are ignored and the original decision is proceeded with largely untouched. There must be a better way.

I have listed all the things the community groups are demanding, but the groups are not simply demanding. They have demonstrated that they are prepared to give: They bring their time, energy, commitment and a great deal of expertise to the process. I have been amazed at the talents displayed by people I meet. These citizens have displayed extraordinary tenacity to get hold of data, and question time today demonstrated how tenacious one must be to obtain data. These people have understood the complexity of the issues involved, and unravelled the complex layers of decisions, reports and plans which have often accumulated over many years. They have also worked very hard to achieve broad community support. In many cases, these people have developed strong media skills in the process. In all cases, they understand the need to compromise. That compromise involves recognising the competing interests and needs, and that we cannot all get entirely what we want.

All of this effort and commitment is given by these people not because they have a financial interest, but because they care about the environment in which they live, recreate or which they consider to be an important asset for the State that should be preserved for all. As the community's representatives in this place, we should see this commitment and energy not as a threat to our power, but as an asset for our democracy. We must develop our consultative processes to properly utilise this asset and local knowledge and to integrate it into the decision-making process. This should not be as an afterthought, but at the earliest possible stage of the process. We have enormous energy and talent in our communities. People are prepared to put in the hard work to understand the complexity of the issues. However, our consultative process by and large excludes them. They put in this effort and find that those efforts are filed away in large round filing cabinets at the offices of the WA Planning Commission and the Ministers for Planning, Transport and the Environment.

Having set that scenario, I will now demonstrate some of the practical cases in Western Australia of ongoing conflict between the Government and the community over land use and transport planning issues. Many more case studies could be raised, but time will prevent us going through each matter. The Opposition will highlight some of the most prominent matters, and those with which opposition members have been involved over the past couple of years.

The work put in by each of the groups I will mention, and the legitimacy of the concerns raised, warrant some parliamentary attention. I hope that ministers will make some attempt today to comment in debate on the concerns that will be raised.

Some of the conflicts I will address are Gnarabup beach and the Prevelly Wilderness Progress Association; the Kwinana, Wattleup and Hope Valley issues, against which the Kwinana Air Buffer Zone group and the Hope Valley and Wattleup ratepayer groups are campaigning; Leighton Beach and the well-known Leighton Action Coalition; the Victoria Park Nutri-Metics site and the Causeway Action Group; the Scarborough Senior High School site and the Scarborough Open Space Group; the concerns of the Maylands ratepayers and residents over the Police Academy site; the opposition of the Midland Community Forum and the Labour History Group to the process of the Midland town redevelopment; the Jarrahdale link road to the Jarrahdale-Serpentine mineral sands site, against which Jarrahdale and Serpentine residents and ratepayers groups are protesting; the Bullsbrook section of the Brand Highway to Darwin and the redevelopment of the Royal Australian Air Force base, against which the West Bullsbrook Association is campaigning; Moore River, which is a subject of concern for the Friends of Moore River; and the Fremantle silos, which are the subject of protests and concern by the Fremantle "Save Our Silos" group. We do not have the time to talk about many other conflicts: Gantheaume Point; Reid Highway and Carine Swamp; Walpole; Breton Bay; Lancelin; and Gracetown. All those areas are subject to ongoing disputes with the Government over its planning processes. The Opposition's motion highlights a twofold issue: The lack of a meaningful consultation process; and the quality of planning decisions and lack of a holistic approach to land use, transport and environmental planning, which characterises many of these conflicts.

Moore River is an estuarine river situated 94 kilometres north of Perth. Most people in this place will know that the small town of Guilderton is situated on the northern side of the river. It has a stable population of 130. The southern side of the river is characterised by near-pristine bush and a range of interesting floral and geographical features. The river drains into the ocean, and is often cut by a sand bar that breaks open periodically. I am sure most members are familiar with the Moore River site because it is a favoured recreational site for thousands of Western Australians. People either stay in Guilderton or nearby areas or visit on day trips, especially those living in the northern suburbs. It is a beautiful spot. Nothing is more fantastic than canoeing down the river through areas which feel like wilderness, even though it is only 94 kilometres from Perth. Thousands of people fish in the area, particularly when the river mouth breaks open, and hundreds of thousands of children swim, both in the safety of the river and in the ocean. The area on the south bank of the Moore River was zoned rural. In 1994, the council decided to initiate a rezoning to urban development at the instigation of the property owners, Plunkett Homes, which wanted to create a 55-hectare development on the site. As I have said, the development north of the river has not only a stable population of 130 but also houses thousands of holiday-makers. The property owners proposed a 5 000-home development and a number of tourist resorts on the southern side which would house 15 000 people.

The development was approved, against the strongly expressed wishes of the Guilderton population, by the then Minister for Planning, Richard Lewis. John Prince, the president of the Friends of Moore River Association, has made some comments pertinent to this debate. He provided a history of what has happened in the area. Mr Prince writes that the member for Moore quoted the Leader of the House as saying -

. . . that as far as the South Guilderton land was concerned, "everyone had had the opportunity to have their say and the matter was now settled."

Was that really true? Mr Prince states -

There appears to be a complete mismatch between **government** at both levels, local and state, on one hand and the wider **community** on the other as to the meaning of the phrase "Community Consultation". The latter expect that when they are consulted, their input will be taken notice of, and, at least in some respects, acted upon. Governments, on the other hand, act as though the mere process of consultation is sufficient in itself, without there being any obligation to act on the opinions that have been expressed. The South Guilderton land question appears to have been a classic case of "allowing everyone to have their say" and then **totally ignoring** what they said and this explains the anger and the utter distrust of Government, at both Local and State Government levels, in the Guilderton community.

Those comments could describe the feelings of the people campaigning against the Leighton Beach development before their victory. They could also accurately describe the feelings of the people in Prevelly and Margaret River about what is occurring at Gnarabup beach and the concerns of the people in Scarborough over the redevelopment of the Scarborough Senior High School site. Mr Prince's comments particularly reflect the concerns of the people in the townsites of Wattleup and Hope Valley. People in the Midland, West Bullsbrook and Serpentine-Jarrahdale areas are also concerned that they might have that same problem. Despite the effort the Guilderton community put into the protests, the merit of their arguments - with supporting technical evidence - and the enthusiasm with which they garnered support for the campaign, the process of consultation was simply one of the community's making submissions which were then case to one side. It was a farce. There is no community confidence that the process is genuine.

The small Moore River community submitted an unprecedented total of 217 submissions about the proposed amendment to the town planning scheme. All but two opposed the amendment. However, it did not stop the amendment from being approved. The local authority, the minister and the Western Australian Planning Commission went ahead unperturbed. They instigated a consultation process but they opened the letters and chucked them in the bin. As far as they were concerned, consultation had been done. The Moore River case also highlights the minimum amount of integration between land use and environment planning.

Notwithstanding that this is an area of pristine bushland and a popular recreational spot, and notwithstanding that it is the only waterway that drains into the ocean for a 200 kilometre stretch, the Environmental Protection Authority decided that the issue of whether to change this area from pristine bushland to urban development did not require a formal EPA assessment. A great deal of work went into lodging an appeal to the minister, and there were many discussions with the EPA and the minister, but throughout that five-month process, the shire council declined to listen to any of the environmental arguments that were advanced. The Minister for the Environment, on the other hand, not only listened but gave a number of public assurances at Guilderton about the future protection of the Moore River estuary. However, not one of those assurances was honoured, and there was no formal assessment of this proposed development. Again, there was a lack of integration between the environmental and land use planning aspects of this process, and that has created a great deal of anger within the community.

This is not all ancient history. There are still some very live issues at Moore River. It is the view of some people, and obviously of Mr Barnett and the local member, Mr McNee, that this matter is all settled and nothing more needs to be done. That is not so. The development cannot proceed until an outline development plan has been submitted and approved. The council considered the outline development plan in 1998, by which time some new councillors had been elected and there had been a lot of community ferment, and the council decided to place 15 fairly stringent conditions on the outline development plan. The plan went to the Western Australian Planning Commission, which has only recently come down with its approval. However, much to the horror of the council, the WA Planning Commission has deleted many of the most significant of the 15 conditions that were placed on that outline development plan, particularly those that related to the coastal and riverfront setbacks. It did not consult the council about those changes. Rather, it acted in what I understand is a most unorthodox way - and I gather from the council's correspondence that this is also its belief - by negotiating directly a set of different conditions with the developer with no involvement by the council.

The WA Planning Commission is now making a situation that was pretty undesirable even worse, because even those minor protections that had been put in by the council with regard to river and coastal setbacks have been set to one side. The council is in a bind, because it appears that there are now two outline development plans - the council outline development plan and the WA Planning Commission outline development plan - and when an application is made, which of those two plans will be acted upon?

The Moore River episode highlights another theme that we are trying to develop today; that is, the lack of integration of land use and general infrastructure planning. This proposed development is 94 kilometres north of Perth and 30 kilometres, or more, beyond the boundaries of the metropolitan area, yet the size and nature of this development is urban in character. It will have 5 000 houses and 15 000 people, all of whom will demand, and need, urban facilities such as public transport, roads and schools. What we are doing here, in my view in the most mindless and stupid way, is making individual decisions

that will impact upon planning for the metropolitan region as a whole. We are planning not in an orderly fashion but in a way that will allow urban sprawl to continue and that will exacerbate the problem of providing a decent level of road and public transport infrastructure to all of the areas that are quite properly part of the metropolitan area. It will also affect the metropolitan area by destroying a community recreational resource that is well used by people in the city. That will detract from an important part of the quality of life that people in the city enjoy.

The Moore River episode also highlights the disgraceful situation in this State with regard to coastal management and planning and the fact that this State still does not have an urban coastal planning policy. That leads me to my next case study - the Leighton Beach redevelopment proposal - because the lack of a local coastal planning policy is a key feature of that proposal. That redevelopment proposal has become a byword on how not to conduct planning and on how to run a community campaign against a development. There is a legitimate case for the redevelopment of Leighton Beach, because times have changed and the Westrail marshalling yards have been moved from that area. For a start, the existing rail infrastructure needs to be removed. However, the Government decided, notwithstanding that this was a prime site fronting onto a very popular beach, that the planning for this proposal would be controlled by Westrail. Westrail is not a land developer or planner but is a rail operator with little experience in either community consultation or land-use planning. However, presumably a bit of a battle went on in Cabinet, and the Minister for Transport won and Westrail was allowed to act as the organiser of this redevelopment.

In September 1997, Westrail released its glorious plan. There would be a fabulous four-storey development, part of which would be within 30 metres of the beach cliffs. The total setback from the coastline would range from 65 metres to 100 metres, which would provide plenty of open space for the community, and in the order of 350 homes would be developed on this 17-hectare site. In short, there would be a high-density urban village on the site of one of this State's most popular beaches.

So bad was the planning process that, according to the Minister for Planning, his ministry played no role in assessing the proposal. It did not set out any guidelines and it did not have any dialogue with the proponents. Its only role was to be part of the panel that selected the preferred tenderer; other than that, it had no input into the planning of this site. It almost defies belief that this could be the case, although when we see the quality of the outcome, it is probably true that this was the case. When it was pointed out in this place and elsewhere that the proposed setbacks did not comply with the various government planning instruments - I think we quoted policy 2.3, which relates to urban public open space in coastal areas, and country coastal plan policy 6.1 - the Government said there was no policy governing setbacks. We were told that there were only drafts and that the developer did not have to abide by them. The Government shamelessly used the fact that it did not have a planning policy as justification for the shortcomings. The planning policy, which was supposed to apply and which is now only in draft form, was released in mid 1998. Now, nearly two years later, we still do not have a policy covering coastal subdivisions in the metropolitan area. Yet, we are continuing to deal with applications for coastal development.

I have a very interesting postscript to this. I learnt just this afternoon that shortly after I gave notice of this motion yesterday, the Ministry of Planning, which has for two years done absolutely nothing about taking forward this planning policy, has suddenly decided it will start doing some work on developing this draft policy. That is very good news and proof that we can achieve something from opposition. I have no doubt that the minister will say that this has been going on for ages. I know enough about what is going on in the ministry to tell him that it has not been happening. The decision to move ahead with this was made only yesterday.

I want to recognise the tremendous community campaign spearheaded by Sue Harrington and Andrew Smith of the Leighton Action Coalition, which forced the Government to withdraw its plans and go back to the drawing board. This has been important. I want to stress the significance of that achievement. It is important not only for the Leighton Action Coalition and those people from the southern suburbs for whom Leighton Beach is an icon and a crucial part of their identity and recreation -

Mr Shave: I swim and take my dogs walking there regularly.

Dr Gallop: That is obvious because you are not looking after the victims of the finance brokers.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Perhaps the Minister for Fair Trading is trying to discourage others from using the beach. I will now let all those victims of finance brokers know that that is where he goes, because they have been singularly unsuccessful in getting audiences with him in his office. Notwithstanding the 10 divans he has in that office, they have been unable to get a seat. I will tell them that he is spending his time at Leighton Beach. He might find himself accosted there.

Mr Shave: I talk to people there all the time.

Ms MacTIERNAN: It is about time the minister talked to those on the receiving end of some of his inaction.

Mr McGowan: He has a couple of Rottweilers to keep them away.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Not only was this a very important campaign to save Leighton Beach, but it has also energised many community groups. They now understand that they can achieve results. By hard work and creativity, by getting community support and ensuring that they are on top of the issues, they can make a difference. I know many groups - those from Moore River and Gnarabup - from time to time feel very dispirited about the way they have been systematically ignored no matter how strong their arguments have been. Leighton Beach stands out as a beacon to those wanting to make a difference.

Of course, the Leighton Beach case generated a great deal of sensitivity on the part of the member for Cottesloe, who is also a senior member of the coalition Government. His concern about retaining his seat may have had something to do with the decision. However, the huge strength of that campaign helped to achieve that result. I urge every action group not to give up. When the Labor Party comes to office, it will work very hard to put into practice the sentiments expressed here today to give more hope to people such as Sue Harrington and Andrew Smith.

Mr Kierath: You are saying that you will not develop the beach.

Ms MacTIERNAN: I did not say that. Did the minister listen to the speech? I do not know whether he has caught sleeping sickness from his mate sitting next to him. The Labor Party has made it clear in public statements that it supports limited development of the area. I will provide a copy of one of those public statements to the minister; I am surprised he has not seen them. Those statements shortly preceded his rolling over on the issue. The Labor Party supports limited development; that is, not development that will destroy the amenity of that area or within 60 metres of the coastline. Members on this side do not want to see the area turned into an enclave for the rich and famous.

Mr Shave interjected.

Ms MacTIERNAN: I will ignore the comments from the peanut gallery. I do not mind responding to interjections that have some sense. We have B1 and B2 coming into this Parliament -

Mr McGowan: They are "Dumb" and "Dumber".

Ms MacTIERNAN: Yes. They have the audacity to take their ministerial salaries. I find it extraordinary that they come into this place straight faced and claim to be effective ministers. If they want to ask questions, they should give notice and we will answer them.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Baker): Order! The member has indicated that she will not accept any interjections or answer any questions.

Mr Kierath: Will she abide by that?

Ms MacTIERNAN: I have answered many interjections. However, I will not waste the opportunity to discuss these issues.

Mr Kierath: We will remind you of this during question time tomorrow.

Ms MacTIERNAN: I hope the people in the public gallery can see how this minister behaves. Not only does he not want to listen -

Several members interjected.

Ms MacTIERNAN: I do not mind interjections that are relevant to the topic. I will not take interjections about the minister's dog and any other irrelevancy he wants to raise. I have said that the Labor Party supports limited development. I answered that interjection. The party has a policy and I will provide a copy of it. I will not take this any further; I have answered the question.

Mr Shave: You are avoiding it.

Ms MacTIERNAN: I have answered the interjection. The Labor Party has a policy and it has made it public.

I now refer members to another government site; that is, the Scarborough Senior High School site. The Government decided we had too many high schools in the western suburbs and that that area would be turned into an enclave for exclusive private schools. We now see those private schools locked in mortal combat trying to exclude new entrants. The Government was keen to assist the process and decided to close the Scarborough Senior High School. In making this controversial decision, the Minister for Education made a couple of commitments to the people. He said that he would keep the school gymnasium, the swimming pool and the adjacent land for public open space following the closure of the school. Early in the piece it became evident that that would not happen, and that not only would the gymnasium be demolished and the swimming pool eliminated, but also only a limited area of public open space would be set aside. Indeed, the initial discussions revolved around requiring only the normal 10 per cent that one would see in such a development.

At a meeting in 1999, Hon George Strickland announced that the commitment would not be met and the land would be sold. That was the first notice that the public had received that an amendment to the metropolitan region scheme had been proposed. Most people who do not spend their days scanning *The West Australian* may not have noticed that; indeed, people had not noticed that a metropolitan region scheme amendment process was in train. By the time they were alerted to it at this meeting, it was only two weeks from submission time. They went into overdrive and put forward an extraordinary number of submissions to the Western Australian Planning Commission. They had a number of meetings to garner public support. Notwithstanding the strong feelings that were expressed in the community and the overwhelming objection to the proposal by the citizens, they were overridden by the Western Australian Planning Commission, which recommended that the Scarborough Senior High School site be rezoned from public purposes, high school, to the urban zone, so the Government could proceed with its plans.

I have an interesting letter here which highlights the point that the Opposition has made time and time again. It is a letter to Christine Sansom from the Minister for Planning. He said -

Dear Christine

...

Thank you for the 667 letters concerning the future use of the Scarborough Senior High School site, together with a copy of a survey conducted by the Scarborough High Open Space Action Group and a concept plan prepared by the group indicating the potential uses for public open space at the school site. . . .

On 8 February 2000, the Western Australian Planning Commission made a recommendation that the Scarborough Senior High School site be transferred from 'Public Purposes (High School)' reservation to the 'Urban' Zone as part of the Metropolitan Region Scheme Amendment . . . I will consider the recommendation on the amendment and will then forward the amendment to His Excellency the Governor.

Therefore, the minister says thanks to Ms Sansom for the 667 letters, the survey and all the work her group had done to develop an alternative process, but the minister puts them in the round filing cabinet by his desk - the one brimming with submissions from her community and every other community. Community consultation in the Government's mind is not as it is in the community's mind. In the Government's mind, community consultation means that people have the right to submit letters, but it does not impose any obligation on the Government to take those submissions into account.

Mr Johnson: What notice did you take of the submissions on Hepburn high school when you were in government? Absolutely zilch.

Ms MacTIERNAN: I will answer that interjection. I can tell the minister that the Opposition is learning.

Mr Johnson interjected.

Ms MacTIERNAN: No, listen to this. The minister asked a question and I will give him an answer. The answer is that not everything that the Labor Party did in the past was right. We do not pretend that we have always been the repositories of all virtue. However, members on this side of the House have learnt an important message; that is, that the community has changed. Community expectations have changed. What the community wants from its parliamentary representatives has changed. It is no longer a case of winner take all, of fighting to get into power and then, having got into power, imposing one's will on the community. Politicians can no longer act in that way.

Mr Shave: Why don't you tell the people what you will do with Heathcote?

Ms MacTIERNAN: I look forward to the Minister for Lands responding on this debate. If he has a point to make, he will have the opportunity to put his point of view.

Mr Shave: That is exactly what I will do.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Great. As I said, we ask that the minister not go through ancient history.

Several members interjected.

Ms MacTIERNAN: The Government can, and the public will make its judgment about which side of politics has understood the mood of the community and understood that changes are afoot in our democracy and that we must move with them.

Mr Shave: That is called buying votes.

Ms MacTIERNAN: No, it is not. It is called being part of the new democratic movement. If the minister does not understand that, he will find that his comfortable seat of Alfred Cove is not as comfortable as he thought it was.

The next development with which I will deal is the Fremantle Rockingham Industrial Area Regional Strategy. A discussion paper was produced in March 1997. It drifted on for some time, but in March 1999, two years later, the draft study was released. The community argues that its input during that consultation process in 1997 was completely ignored in the preparation of the report. At the end of the day, the minister decided, as we all knew he would, to go ahead with option 4 of the FRIARS report. That provided for integrated industrial expansion. It basically provided for the closing down of the town sites of Hope Valley and Wattleup and the creation of nearly 1 000 hectares of industrial land, including 100 hectares for heavy industry. In doing so, the minister completely ignored the wishes of the local community. That was in spite of the fact that he was going to the extraordinary extent of closing down entire town sites - something that has rarely happened in Western Australia. Not only were the local people of Wattleup and Hope Valley, who have now been booted out of their homes, ignored, but also the views of the local council and the residents who occupied the rural areas were all completely ignored. There was no justification and no need for the decision that was made. Of course, development of an industrial site is needed in that area. No-one disputes that; none of the residents disputes it. However, there has been no demonstrated demand for any increase in the amount of area set aside for heavy industry. The Government has been unable to nominate which heavy industry might be required to move into that area to take extra space. The 800 to 900 hectares of general industrial land was well beyond any foreseeable requirement for industrial land. The Canning Vale estate was around 600 hectares. That took about 25 years to fill. That was in the days when many of the large, space-consuming enterprises, such as the Swan Brewery and the markets, moved out of central Perth into Canning Vale. There simply are not the sorts of industries requiring broad acres that need to be accommodated. There needs to be a bank of industrial land, and everyone agrees that there is a place for that in the Kwinana area, but not a development of that size. The Government has also failed to recognise that a viable agricultural industry is in that area. Approximately \$17m is generated each year from the rural activities in that area.

There was simply no demand from industry for these town sites to be closed down because they were threatening the operation of the heavy industrial area. We were told, when we ran community forums and brought the community groups together with industry, that the industry had no difficulty with the town sites of Hope Valley and Wattleup remaining there. They were, therefore, not a threat and they were in no sense undermining the health of the people in that area. If the emission data is to be believed, they were operating at a very low level of what is permissible. There was, therefore, no solid ground for taking the extraordinary step of closing down two town sites and forcing people who had been in those areas for 25 years out of their homes; and all for what? To develop a huge area of industrial land, much of which will not be utilised and which will extend a planning blight over much of that area for another 25 years.

The Australian Labor Party has a policy - I will send it to the Ministers for Fair Trading and Planning - which indicates our support for the retention of those town sites and a much more creative mixed use development which would allow industrial development interspersed with conservation and rural uses; something that will provide accommodation for all the interest groups in that area and provide properly for the growth of Perth.

Moving down to the south of the State is the area of Gnarabup Beach. For members who may not be familiar with the area, Gnarabup Beach is south of Prevelly Park in the Margaret River region. It is a beautiful area which is popular with tourists and the local communities. A range of studies was conducted in the Gnarabup area under the Leeuwin-Naturaliste Ridge planning policy. That policy identified an optimum size for the town of Gnarabup and identified areas where development was permissible. A town planning scheme was developed in accordance with the principles of the Leeuwin-Naturaliste Ridge planning policy. However, a developer also had an interest in that area and the development of the town planning scheme did not accord with the maximisation of his interests. That developer consulted then minister Richard Lewis. The minister decided that he had new evidence - as he described it although he never revealed what the new evidence consisted of - which led him to reject the town planning scheme developed by the town council and to add substantial developments to that town planning scheme which - surprise, surprise - would accommodate the interests of the developer. The development, therefore, went ahead. The town planning scheme, as eventually approved, was intended to be limited to 243 lots but the developer developed in the order of 290 lots. Not content with having exceeded the permitted number of lots by almost 50, the developer then told the council he wanted to develop another 201 lots. This time the development was to be on the west side of Wallcliffe Road. For those members who are not familiar with the area, the west side of Wallcliffe Road abuts Gnarabup Beach. Therefore, what was being proposed was an East Perth townhouse-style development in the wilderness of Gnarabup propped right on top of the cliffs above Gnarabup Beach. Again, that was something completely against the principles established in the Leeuwin-Naturaliste Ridge planning policy and completely against the spirit of the town planning scheme as amended. That application was rejected by the council and I understand it has not been appealed to the minister. However, there is a great deal of concern that the trend to favour this developer over the interests of the community of Gnarabup and over the many people who visit that area who want to preserve a wilderness recreational area will once again occur. If time permitted I would go into great detail about what has occurred.

The Water Corporation has extended enormous advantages and concessions to this particular developer. It has funded the cost of carting sewage because the developer exceeded the lot numbers and did not complete the expansion of sewerage facilities. There is, therefore, a legitimate concern that this will be another Leighton Beach or Moore River high-density city-style development plonked on a beach area which will, except for people lucky enough to be able to afford these highly expensive units, destroy the amenity of a precious beach area for the rest of us.

The next issue I raise is the Midland Community Forum. The ALP gave some credit to the Minister for Planning for what he did with the Midland Redevelopment Authority. A charrette process was set up in Midland which was an excellent model that enabled the community to participate in the plans for the future of the Midland central area. It was very creative and should become standard practice. The minister seemed to be getting things right and we quoted the Midland charrette process time and again as a prime example of what should be done.

Mr Kierath: You didn't say that.

Ms MacTIERNAN: I did and the ALP said it in this House when the Bill came on for debate. However, unfortunately, it appears that although there was so much promise, much of that promise has dissipated. The Midland Community Forum, an umbrella organisation representing a wide range of groups in Midland and the surrounding area, put forward three names to the Minister for Planning for consideration as members of the Midland Redevelopment Authority. The minister declined to appoint any of these people and appointed Ian Laurance, an ex Liberal Party MP; Mr Peter Bacich, an ex Liberal Party campaign director; and one Elisabeth Brown. The three government members of the authority are all company directors by profession - this is in Midland, not in Nedlands, therefore it is a really broad-based community group! - with little evidence of experience of broad-based community activities or any kind of qualification as set down in section 7 of the Midland Redevelopment Act. That section states that three of the members are to be persons who, in the opinion of the Minister, have a relevant qualification. It may be the opinion of the minister that being a member of the Liberal Party is a relevant qualification. Secondly, two are to be persons nominated by the council of the Shire of Swan. The definition of "relevant qualification" means knowledge of, and experience in, one or more of the fields of urban planning, heritage, business management, property development, financial management, engineering, transport, housing and community affairs.

I suppose the minister is saying that the emphasis will be on business management and property development. However, with a membership of three people, it is extraordinary to not have one person from any of the community groups who is active in that area and it betrays the promise given by the charrette process that was developed in order to get broad community support for this proposal.

Not only is the Midland Community Forum concerned about the style adopted by the development authority, but also the labour history group which is involved very much in the preservation of the Midland Workshops is particularly concerned by an announcement by the chairman of the authority, I think, the other day that although it has not yet appointed heritage consultants or prepared a heritage report, that authority believes it will save the nice, old brick buildings that formed part of the administration but demolish the rest. All of the important industrial heritage, which obviously is of no interest to the likes of Mr Laurance, Mr Bacich and Ms Brown, is to go. Again, that is a further demonstration that in those areas where there appeared to be some promise of consultation, that has been betrayed. Unfortunately, I do not have time to debate some of the other issues.

Transport planning has also been of real concern. Groups in Serpentine and Jarrahdale are very concerned about the lack of consultation in the planning process of the southern link road. Groups in West Bullsbrook are devastated that it appears that the Government is proposing to go ahead with plans for the Perth-Darwin Highway, which would bring that highway right next to their community. A better option, one which has been assessed as more economically viable and which offers better road safety, has been put to one side because it will interfere with the development and the maximisation of profit from the redevelopment of the RAAF air base. I ask that the minister gives every consideration to the very real concerns of the communities in relation to the Jarrah link road for Serpentine and Jarrahdale and the Perth-Darwin Highway.

DR GALLOP (Victoria Park - Leader of the Opposition) [5.01 pm]: It is interesting to reflect upon the state of affairs in Western Australia today, particularly in the metropolitan area. The Government is in difficulty in the areas of Hope Valley and Wattleup across to Serpentine, Jarrahdale and Whitby Falls, through to the southern suburb of Victoria Park, down to Leighton, across to Scarborough, then further north to the Moore River. The difficulty the Government faces is that it does not have a twenty-first century view of its relationship with local communities. The Government has had an arrogant contempt for local government in the past few years, particularly the current Minister for Planning, in the legislation he brings into Parliament and his treatment of planning appeals. As the member for Armadale said, the Government has been unable to bring itself up to date with community attitudes. It is unable to understand that the concept of community today is radically different from what it was even a decade ago. Today, local community representative organisations have detailed knowledge of the issues which face them. They prepare extremely well-developed cases to present to Government and they should have an equal part in the planning process in this State. It will take a change of government to bring about a reorientation of the institutions of our planning system and the philosophy and culture that underlie them.

An interesting media release was issued by the Victorian Minister for Planning, John Thwaites, on 15 May 2000, in which he says -

New residential developments will have to be more in keeping with the character of local neighbourhoods under proposed changes to the statewide planning scheme . . .

In Victoria, the Government is putting on an equal footing the character of local neighbourhoods and urban consolidation and other planning requirements in the planning system. That Government is listening to what is going on in the community and is taking into account the needs and interests of its people in the planning process. Today, the member for Armadale has presented the Parliament with a very important issue; that is, the respect the Government has for local communities.

One example of that is the proposed development of the Nutri-Metics International (Australia) Pty Ltd site in Victoria Park. I raised this issue in Parliament on 16 March this year in the form of a grievance about the decision by the Minister for Planning to approve the high-rise development on the Nutri-Metics site in Victoria Park. On that occasion I argued that the Minister for Planning had put the arguments and interests of the developer ahead of the arguments and interests of the council and the community, thereby undermining due process and community values. That is a clear example of what has been happening not only within the metropolitan area, but also outside Perth. It is important to go through the arguments again and to look at what the minister has said in defence of his decision. By doing that I re-emphasise my original point that he has put the interests of developers ahead of the local community.

The assumption behind my argument was that the minister could have acted differently. This is a very important point. When the Government gets itself into these types of heated controversies, it says it had to do what it did because it was obeying the law. The master of this form of argument was the former Minister for Planning Hon Richard Lewis, who is now retired. The member for Armadale mentioned some of the notorious decisions he had made when he was the Minister for Planning. He used the argument that he had to do what he did because it was the law. Let us examine this carefully in relation to the Victoria Park decision. The argument I put that the Minister for Planning could have acted differently has stung the minister. He has gone into print to try to justify his decision. One of the glossy brochures the ministry put out has a section called "Minister's Musings". The minister said of his decision in Victoria Park -

The reality is I had no alternative but to approve that development. It was within the Victoria Park planning scheme.

Now the council should have been aware they had no right to reject an application that fits within their Scheme. They would have expected the developer to appeal and I would be legally obliged to make the unpopular ruling for them.

The minister had the audacity to attack the community. He further states -

If anything, the situation should send a clear message that I intend to continue to staunchly maintain my statutory

responsibility and uphold Town Planning Schemes. It should serve as an urgent reminder for all residents and councils to check their relative Town Planning Schemes for what can be built in their area but I wonder how many have.

Indeed it is inherent that the State Government has a responsibility to community concerns, as do local governments, but let's not forget the community also has a responsibility.

The minister attacks the community for having the audacity to raise concerns and argue that his was wrong. What is more, he was even more hysterical in a letter he wrote to the *Southern Gazette* criticising me as the local member for raising this issue in Parliament and for arguing against his decision. He says that what I advocated was an abrogation of the rule of law. He said -

If the people of the Town of Victoria Park wish to have height restrictions in their TPS, there is a due process by which to achieve this which includes consultation with the community.

The minister says that it was the community's fault. It had not got its act together, and because height restrictions were not in the town planning scheme, he had to rule as he did. Let us go to the facts of this case. They show the extent to which this minister will go to argue a point against the interests of the community. What is more, the minister has gone further in that area of law on behalf of the developers than he had to. The Minister for Planning allowed an appeal against the refusal by the Town of Victoria Park to grant planning approval for the high-rise development of the Nutri-Metics site. The Causeway Action Group - which, like many of the groups the member for Armadale has mentioned - has come into being on the basis of this issue, but has taken up a broader range of issues concerning the future planning and amenity of Victoria Park. On behalf of the community, the group sought legal advice on whether the minister's decision could be subject to judicial review.

This advice was obtained by one of our leading planning lawyers, Michael Barker QC. Mr Barker noted that the application was a non-complying application under the council's town planning scheme in that it exceeded the specified plot ratio by 60 per cent. In his opinion, and he analysed clause 38 of the scheme which governs non-complying applications, it was true that the council had the discretionary power to allow a non-complying application by an absolute majority but only after satisfying a number of conditions. He went on to say - and it is very important - that, for his part, the Minister for Planning also had the power to grant approval providing he met the requirements that were laid down. What are those requirements? Those requirements are in the Victoria Park town planning scheme. They are not invented or made up - they are in the scheme today. They indicate that one must take into account factors like the orderly and proper planning of the locality; the conservation of the amenities of the locality; the effects on the occupiers or users of the development as well as local residents; and the future likely developments and their impact on the locality. All of these factors are clearly stated as being necessary parts of the council's consideration.

Mr Barker went on to look at the minister's decision in terms of the requirements laid down under the Act and the town planning scheme. In terms of the potential for judicial review, Mr Barker said that it was not a question of one's opinions on these issues but whether or not they had been taken into account in the decision by the minister. Mr Barker concluded that in this case judicial review would not be successful. I point out to this Parliament the precise terms of the conclusion that Mr Barker reached, because it is very important -

In conclusion, while there is no doubt, as a matter of planning law, that the Council, and the Minister on appeal, could take into account the height of the proposed development in the urban planning context in which it is proposed, and might, in their discretion, have disallowed the application and the appeal for that reason, there remained, at all material times, a relevant discretion in the Council, and the Minister on appeal, to take a different view on the merits of the development proposal from those opposed to it, particularly in relation to the height factor.

In his legal advice to the Causeway Action Group he is saying that there was not a case for judicial review of the minister's decision but the minister could have made a different decision, and in doing so, he would not have been going outside the law or the town planning scheme. This leads us to ask the question: Why did the minister make the decision he made rather than the decision he could have made? That question goes to the heart of what this Government does whenever it comes up against the community on these issues. The minister, in relation to the height issue, says two things: First, as he said by way of interjection again tonight, the town planning scheme does not contain any height restrictions. Secondly, he said there was no evidence of any intention by the council to control the height of buildings in this part of the district and, therefore, the proposal should be accepted. The minister is wrong in logic and wrong in law. Let us look at the logic. Just because the town planning scheme does not currently contain a height restriction does not mean general approval can be given for any building, regardless of the height. Let us look at the question of the intentions of the council. It is very interesting that the council had indicated that it was concerned about the height issue because when this issue first came up at Victoria Park and the council considered it, it started the process of an urban design study, which is still going on. One of the issues to be addressed by the urban design study was that of height. It was not true for the minister to say there was no evidence that the question of height mattered to the local council and the local community. In fact an urban design study had been initiated. Is it not interesting to note that, even though the study has not been completed, the minister actually used it as evidence that the council may want more tall buildings in the area. He said that the fact that the urban design study was going on was evidence that the council may want more tall buildings of the type being proposed by Nutri-Metics International (Australia) Pty Ltd. I point out to the minister that the reverse could also be the case; indeed, it is more likely to be the case, because that was the very reason the council set up the urban design study.

We are at the heart of the matter. We have a situation where the town planning scheme says certain issues should be addressed in any decision. Height was very much part and parcel of those issues. The minister determined that the council's conclusion, made on behalf of the community that height was a concern with the development, was not a concern and that the decision was in keeping with the character and development of the area. I thank the minister very much for that - he has interpreted what the people over there want and what they need and he has imposed his interpretation on the future planning of the Town of Victoria Park. That is what I call arrogance! The minister has compounded his arrogance by trying to say that people who raise these concerns are trying to abrogate the rule of law. I will rest my view on the rule of law on the opinion of Michael Barker QC, rather than on the opinion of the Minister for Planning, a member of a Liberal Government which overrides communities all over this State on behalf of the developers whose interests they represent in this Parliament. That is the fact of the matter.

[Interruption from the gallery.]

Dr GALLOP: At each turn of the argument, the minister's interpretation of his responsibilities and of the law always comes down on the side of the developer and against the interests of the community or the local council, when in fact he could have ruled another way in the interests of the council and the community it represents. The minister could have come into this Parliament and said that, in the case of the Victoria Park high-rise development, the council acted properly because there was concern about height, that the town planning scheme allows that factor to be taken into account in terms of precinct requirements. He could also have said that an urban design study was being conducted and until it was completed, a decision would not be made on behalf of the developers. If we had ministers saying those sorts of things in Parliament, confidence in our system of government would be restored because people would then know that due process was being interpreted so that the community's interest was equal to the developer's interest. We have a situation in the State today where the interests of the community are inferior to those of the developer because we have a Government which puts developers' interests first. We have seen it all over the metropolitan area and outside the metropolitan area. I can assure this House that the planning policies that Labor puts forward at the next election will incorporate these concerns in the institutions we design, and that we will continue to raise these issues in the Parliament so that the Government of Western Australia is held to account to the people of Western Australia, which is what should happen in our system of government.

[Interruption from the gallery.]

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Masters): I advise those in the public gallery that, while they have a right to see what is happening in Parliament, they also have a responsibility not to interfere in the activities of the Parliament. Therefore, I ask that there be no applause or any other action that might interfere with the way a member is making his presentation.

MR KIERATH (Riverton - Minister for Planning) [5.18 pm]: I do not support the motion for a number of reasons. First, I will deal with a number of statements made by the member for Armadale which were factually incorrect. She raised a number of difficult planning issues throughout the State, and I do not deny that they are difficult. The Leeuwin-Naturaliste Ridge statement of planning policy has been the largest, most comprehensive consultative process in the history of the State in terms of planning.

Ms MacTiernan: It was ignored.

Mr KIERATH: No, it was not ignored. It received overwhelming support from all sides of the argument; from those in favour of development and from those in favour of conserving and preserving the environment. It was one of the most difficult decisions made. The easiest way to get rid of planners is simply to remove land-use conflict. It is true that wherever there is conflict, there are planning difficulties.

Dr Gallop: Where do you line up?

Mr KIERATH: The member for Alfred Cove hit the nail on the head: It is interesting how the Opposition has changed its mind. When it was in power, the whole of Heathcote was to be subdivided with no open spaces or beautiful areas, as there are now, for the benefit of the people of Western Australia. The member for Hillarys pointed out the issue of Hepburn Heights. I could probably raise the issue of Casuarina Prison. The member for Bassendean raised the issue of Pyrtton in his electorate. I can tell him that one of the things that probably started my progress to Parliament was the development of Casuarina Prison at Peel. The member for Peel would know that even his Government gave him a prison that nobody particularly wanted.

Mr McGowan interjected.

Mr KIERATH: At least that will provide jobs for the community, whereas the prison did not provide any jobs for the community. At least the facility will provide employment for about 300 people.

Several members interjected.

Mr KIERATH: I want to get back to the issue. We at Kwinana were promised all sorts of jobs associated with the prison.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Masters): Order!

Mr KIERATH: Most of the prison officers were already in the system and had jobs. The member for Armadale raised the issues of democracy and consultation. I want to contrast the record of this Government on metropolitan region scheme

amendments with that of the Labor Government. Major amendments to the scheme now go through a full consultative process, but let us look at what Labor did when it was in government and how it went through the public consultation process. The Labor Government used minor amendments which the minister signed off and avoided completely not only the public process for the input of submissions but also the scrutiny of this House and the other place. Even when the MRS amendments have been through the full public consultation processes, they now come before both Houses. The Houses can disallow those amendments, and some of them have been disallowed. That indicates this Government's record of going through a full and proper, due process so that members of the public and of Parliament have their say. When the Opposition was in government it avoided that process at every opportunity and not one major MRS amendment was dealt with. For 10 years it used the minor amendment process to get round public scrutiny. Members of the Opposition should not come into this Chamber and make statements to the contrary. I give full credit to the former minister Hon Richard Lewis. He was a strong defender of the MRS system and felt that it should go through proper processes so that members of the public could have their say and then members of Parliament would have their say as an additional check on the processes.

When I table documents on the MRS the Opposition obviously does not read them. The MRS documents contain people's submissions and the planning responses to them. If people put forward good planning reasons, they are taken into account, and we modify the amendments.

Ms MacTiernan: You don't.

Mr KIERATH: We do. I remind the member for Armadale that every time I bring in an MRS amendment, it is as a result of public consultation and input. Every amendment that I have brought into this House has been subject to amendment after the public consultation process because of issues raised. The Opposition runs around and gets people to say that they do not like a project.

Ms MacTiernan interjected.

Mr KIERATH: I need protection from the member for Armadale. I remind her that she was not prepared to take interjections, and now I need a bit of help from the Chair.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: The minister will allow me to be the judge of whether he needs protection.

Mr KIERATH: I was on my feet speaking, struggling to get a word in edgewise.

Mr Johnson: She's a bully!

Mr KIERATH: She is.

People often write letters saying simply that they do not like something, but they need to give reasons for not liking it. If a proposal will affect the amenity of an area, it is a good planning consideration. If people can relate their dislikes back to planning reasons, they will be taken into account. I table documents all the time under the MRS in which people have mounted reasonable, sensible arguments and the proposals have been changed. Therefore, if people put forward reasonable and sensible propositions, they are entertained. Planning by its very definition is a complex and difficult task. We must ensure that we get the best outcomes for the community over a whole range of areas, especially in developing living and working environments which allow all Western Australians to enjoy a full and rewarding lifestyle. However, conflict is involved. Conflict arises where people want to live, work, play or enjoy life. In many cases, all of those are conflicting needs. Frequently the balance arrived at to meet those conflicting needs is a compromise. It does not take one extreme or the other, but finds some middle ground between two divergent issues. The community is concerned about many issues such as bushland conservation, public transport and the private motor vehicle and those issues must be taken into account. It does not matter which Government is in power, or which minister is responsible, it is inevitable that some planning decisions will not be universally popular.

The Northbridge tunnel is a classic example. The Government has had four and a half years of negative publicity and festering sores on that project because of campaigns run by the Opposition and other people. However, I ask everybody I have met who has driven through the tunnel what they think. They all say that it was good planning, good transport and should have been done for the benefit of the State. If we had played petty, popular party politics we would never have done it. We turned our attention to the needs of the community in the longer term even if it caused short-term political pain, and the tunnel was built. Every person I have asked has said that it is one of the best things the Government has done. The good thing about it is that 85 000 people a day are driving through it.

Ms MacTiernan interjected.

Mr KIERATH: While the member for Armadale keeps knocking it, it is good because she is drumming up votes for us.

Having said that these planning decisions are not universally popular and there will always be some who will be unhappy with the decisions that we make, our planning system recognises this and we seek to provide the opportunity for anyone with a particular interest to make a contribution to the process. Perhaps more importantly, it is a fair and equitable means of recognising those contributions when making a decision. Again I contrast the two styles. The Labor Government did not go through public processes at all. All its major changes to the scheme were made in the form of minor amendments, so that it could avoid the scrutiny of the two Houses of Parliament. It was scared the other place would knock out the MRS amendments. We run them through both Houses. Some have been knocked out, and we have copped that on the chin. My

only worry is that some people might forget the Labor Government's performance and I sometimes feel the need to remind people.

Our planning, environmental and heritage legislation share a number of statutory provisions: They allow the advertising of proposals; they allow the public to make submissions, and for those submissions to be considered; they further allow for appeals to be made against those decisions; and they put in place a procedure for determining those appeals. The Government is constantly reviewing the legislation. It is strange that the Opposition comes here and complains about the role of the minister in the planning appeals process. We have a piece of legislation in this House which would take the minister out of 99 per cent of that process, but what do we have? The Opposition opposes it. On the one hand it complains about the minister and on the other hand it will not pass legislation that would take the minister out of the process. The Opposition cannot have it both ways. If it wants to take the minister out of the process, a Bill is in the House at this very moment which will do that.

Ms MacTiernan: It does not take you out. It puts you in 99 per cent of them.

Mr KIERATH: The member's duplicitous position is exposed. A planning legislation amendment Bill takes that on. The planning system has accepted the need to allow for public consultation even outside some of the statutory requirements. We have put a couple of processes in place to enable public consultation at even earlier stages.

Examples of the Bushplan are the Leeuwin-Naturaliste statement of planning policy and the Fremantle Rockingham Industrial Area Regional Strategy. The Government tried to include people early in the process before the position was decided and tested in the public arena. However, complications arise with doing that. That was almost a preplanning process, even before the statutory process of public consultation. Members opposite say it does not work, but the National Public Relations Institute gave Bushplan an award for the nature of its consultation and the manner in which it was undertaken. The Government's record in this area is very good.

On the one hand we must allow for fast, efficient decisions without imposing intolerable delays while allowing people to have input into the process. At the end of the day these decisions must be made if we are to deal with the growth of the State. We are doing all we can to ensure that those decisions are of the highest quality. As I said before, we cannot expect they will always be well received by the community. That is why we have local and statewide planning in this State. Sometimes statewide issues need to take precedence over local issues.

This motion also suggests the Government should commit to a more holistic approach to land use, transport and environmental planning. The hypocrisy of that suggestion implies such an approach does not presently occur. That is simply not true. The foremost planning body in the State, the Western Australian Planning Commission, includes as members the chief executives of the Water and Rivers Commission and the Department of Environmental Protection, the Commissioner of Main Roads and the Director General of Transport to bring a wider approach to its decisions, not some of the backhanded, brown paper bag type decisions members opposite made in government. It is an independent body that is able to go against the Government of the day when it believes that is necessary.

In addition, one of the commission's statutory committees is the infrastructure coordinating committee that has the role of advising the commission on planning for the provision of physical and community infrastructure. The commission's coordinated approach is exemplified principally through the state planning strategy, which I had the great pleasure of releasing in 1997. It is the first time any State Government in Australia has produced such an overall strategic plan. The plan has received wide acclaim in planning circles throughout not only government and peer professional groups here but also nationally. Its referrals received full support through the cabinet process and its actions are now subject to an annual audit to ensure performance against some of those promises.

In addition, we have an annual metropolitan development program that aims to manage the urban development in the metropolitan region in such a manner that the planning, provision and financing of public infrastructure can be undertaken in an agreed sequence with regard to community requirements and government priorities. The planning system is totally committed to the holistic approach anticipated by this motion.

In addition, we are undertaking a consolidation of planning legislation which is spread over three different Acts. In 1986, Hon Bob Pearce, the then Minister for Planning, promised a consolidation of the present three planning Acts, but he did not deliver. I have a draft urban and regional planning Bill, which is well advanced, and which I hope to introduce into Parliament shortly - if not this session, at the beginning of the next session this year. We will then have a consolidated planning Bill. It will bring the three separate planning Acts into a single Act which will significantly update the current legislation and improve the planning process in the State.

What are we doing? We have drafted a Bill that I believe can be introduced into the Parliament this year. We should contrast that with the promises of Bob Pearce in 1986, which we are still awaiting.

We also have the model scheme text, which was gazetted as regulations in October 1989 and which has replaced the often different and conflicting provisions of various town planning schemes by standard provisions. In many cases we must be expert planners and lawyers to understand some of the basic requirements of the scheme. Model scheme text is an endeavour to standardise some of the provisions so that it is easy for lay people to understand them. More consistency in these scheme provisions will not only benefit the users but also reduce resources required for preparation and administration of schemes. That is the broader part of the Government's achievements.

We have created much of the central character of Perth through planning. A planning expert who recently came out from

the United States was stunned at the quality of life we have planned as part of our systems in Perth. It is true that we have a unique character, exemplified by a huge network of open space along the rivers. I have been "burnt" for trying to bring back from private ownership into public ownership land on the banks of the Murray River. That is something the Labor Government promised, but did not have the courage to deliver. I can understand why; it is a difficult decision. We are doing something for the long-term benefit of the people in this State.

We have preserved spaces along the coastline, and only limited development can be carried out on the escarpment. A characteristic of Leeuwin-Naturaliste is the restricted development on the ridge, so that it is retained for public use and public view for future generations. Our transport system of road, rail and ferries requires development and facilities. All of these and more provide ample evidence of the quality of our suburban environment.

A number of individual issues were raised by some members. I think they have made some interesting interpretations of the facts.

Other than an appeal that came to me, I did not have a great deal of involvement in the Moore River rezoning issue. I think the member for Armadale referred to rezoning. She knows that the Government cannot initiate rezoning; the council must initiate it and the Government can respond to it. The member for Armadale accused the big, bad Government of doing something, but she did not make it clear that the local council had agreed to rezone the land.

Dr Gallop: She did.

Mr KIERATH: She did not make it clear. The local council agreed to rezone the land. The member for Armadale raised that issue when she referred later in her remarks to a change of council.

Ms MacTiernan interjected.

Mr KIERATH: I listened and wrote down her comments, albeit in summary, because I will not have access to the *Hansard*. The local elected representatives who form the council agreed to rezone the land. That rezoning was not of pristine conservation parks and recreational land; it was land zoned rural which could be cleared and used for rural pursuits. The member for Armadale made it sound as though a nature conservation reserve had been rezoned urban. It was properly zoned rural and an application was made to rezone it to urban to which the local council agreed and later the Planning Commission endorsed.

A requirement existed to develop an outline development plan, but that does not go to the minister; it goes to that independent body called the WA Planning Commission. I must admit that at times I have been frustrated by those mechanisms because I would like to influence them from time to time, but it is an independent body and it makes decisions independently.

Ms MacTiernan: Don't you take any responsibility for any of this; did it all just happen?

Mr KIERATH: Not in the case of Moore River. The one thing on which I agree with the member for Armadale - perhaps I should not agree with her - is that I do not think Westrail handled the Leighton development in the best possible manner.

Mr Brown: It was Westrail, not the minister!

Mr KIERATH: I did not say that. Westrail is not a developer, so it is not experienced in the proper planning processes. The proponents were running around undertaking a preplanning consultation process. As I said, they were trying to find out what were the objections before starting the formal planning process. The only thing the Government did was to rein it in on the basis it was causing more trouble than it was solving. We advised Westrail to begin the proper planning processes which were to find out what were the parameters and limitations for that site.

Ms MacTiernan interjected.

Mr KIERATH: We have been able to manage all along without it. I admit that it would be an improvement, but it is not a crucial requirement in determining something. When a formal policy is being drafted, it is often derived from existing practices and procedures. It is rarely something completely out of left field. It often formalises what has previously been occurring within the agency. We said that we need to establish the parameters in which development can occur. The member is on record as saying that she supports the development of that site. We have said that we must rule out the things we cannot do -

Ms MacTiernan: When did you say that?

Mr KIERATH: When I made the announcement that we would develop the guidelines. The Opposition has not even been following due process. The guidelines are going through the proper process of being developed, and I hope they will be available at the end of the year. They will set the parameters, including coastal setbacks.

The one thing wrong with that campaign is that the Leighton Beach action group said that it was trying to save Leighton Beach. A constituent came to see me. She was like the Minister for Fair Trading. She told me that she walks her dog at Leighton Beach. I did not tell her that when my mother was able to drive, she always went to Leighton Beach, had a coke and walked her dog. That constituent told me that she wanted to be able to walk her dog and exercise her back at Leighton Beach. I told her that if the Government were proposing to take Leighton Beach from her, I would be marching up the street complaining as well. I assured her that as long as I was a member of the Government, it would not be taking Leighton Beach from her in any manner, shape or form. We are trying to resolve some of the difficult problems. We are trying to

resolve the parking issue and the problem of heavy trucks driving through and causing accidents. We are trying to resolve public access to the beach by confining people to proper areas and not having them destroy some of the vegetation and dunes. We are trying to improve the existing situation, not denigrate it. I place on record that that is what I would be doing. If we ever took the beach away from the people, I would be marching in the streets protesting as well.

I will skip over the Scarborough Senior High School site -

Ms MacTiernan: And the 667 letters you put in the bin as well.

Mr KIERATH: I have not put them in the bin. By our standards, that amendment will come into both Houses. If the Opposition can get the numbers in this House or in the other place, it will be able to disallow that amendment. We are showing opposition members that we have the courage of our convictions and we are prepared to take it through proper process. The member has said that she learns from her mistakes. We do not get everything right by a long shot. We make mistakes, and when we do, we learn from them.

I will take some members up on the issue of the Fremantle Rockingham Industrial Area Regional Strategy, because they were so wrong about that issue. In fact, some local people approached me when I became Minister for Planning and asked me to resolve the issue in that area. It has had a planning blight over it for the past 30 years. Before FRIARS was established, I could not give approval to some people who had applied to subdivide their property and who, in normal circumstances, would probably have received approval, because of the existing planning blight, the buffer zone and other planning restrictions. I place on record that the establishment of Wattleup in that location was a planning mistake. I have tried to resolve the long-term planning mistakes in that area, and if that is my fault, I plead guilty. If members want to blame me and want a scapegoat, I put up my hand because that is what I am trying to do. If people do not thank me in the short term, I believe they will thank me in the long term.

I wish to correct an absolute furphy by this Opposition. I know of no reason we would force a person out of his or her home. I have asked LandCorp whether it could see any possibility in the foreseeable future of forcibly moving people out of their homes, and I have been told no. If people want to stay there, they can. The only area that will not be included in that is Hope Valley, because it is too close to the heavy core industrial area. Hope Valley must go, but there is no reason for anyone to be forced out of his or her home.

The member mentioned a viable agricultural industry in that area. She is right. It is currently a major source of pollution in Cockburn Sound. About 40 per cent of the pollution load comes from agricultural industries in that region. The long-term health of Cockburn Sound relies on making long-term strategic decisions to phase out those agricultural areas. I know people have money invested in their properties, so we will not do anything suddenly. The Opposition is right about the planning for FRIARS: It is a 29-year planning horizon. That is one thing this Government has done throughout all of its state planning strategy and the various documents it has produced. We are trying to get a 30-year vision so people will not wake up tomorrow and see some stunt or proposal come out of left field. They will be able to see it in black and white, plan for it and take it into account when they make their various decisions. If that is the wrong way to go about planning, I accept full responsibility, because I think it is the right way. People know what is coming; they will not wake up one morning and get a fright.

I will show members how petty the member for Armadale was when she raised the issue of the Midland forum. It is true that the charrette - I will give credit where credit is due - has had bipartisan support from both sides of politics. When I was asked to establish the Midland Redevelopment Authority, I told those involved that it would be based on Subiaco. Three members would be selected for their corporate and business expertise, and two local community representatives would come from the elected government in that area - not from a protest group. The balance is done quite deliberately. On a strategic decision, the three members with a long-term interest would override the local community interest. In the case of Subiaco, a vote has been taken only once or twice. When the local government councillors go down there, they display a lot of commonsense and reason. Even when politics are being played at the council level, they have put on their Subiaco Redevelopment Authority hats and have made a decision that they think is in the best interests of the community. I was never going to appoint a community representative. If members do not believe me, Graeme Harris and all the business representatives will tell them that I told them that they had no hope. There were two local government representatives and I was going to appoint three other people for their business expertise in implementing redevelopment. Do members know why the Midland community asked for a redevelopment authority? Because it acknowledged it could not resolve it. It could not sort out its differences and it needed somebody to make the decisions. As a Government, we resisted the establishment of the Midland Redevelopment Authority. The only time we agreed to it was when the community unanimously said that it wanted a redevelopment authority as there were problems in the community and it needed something like that to resolve it. I spoke to the council and I was told that it could not sort out its differences around the council table and that it needed someone to do it. That is why the MRA was established, and that is why the charrette process began. All parties acknowledged that they could not solve their problems and they wanted someone to do it for them.

The member for Victoria Park has raised the issue of Nutri-Metics International (Australia) Pty Ltd and has accused me of all sorts of terrible things. I deny them. I will put the facts on the record, although they have been on the record. In one of the letters, the member for Victoria Park said that he would ignore the law, and I said that, as minister, I must uphold the law. The minister is obliged to uphold the town planning scheme. Why? Because the town planning scheme has been through the proper processes. It has been through the local council, public submissions, the WA Planning Commission and then it has been gazetted. It has been through a full and due public process. In handling appeals, the most prominent thing

the minister is required to uphold is the town planning scheme. The Town of Victoria Park had an old scheme, but there were no height limitations in it. Maybe it had forgotten them. In the controversies in the metropolitan area over heights, a recent review of the scheme was undertaken. The City of Melville has put height limitations in its scheme. Over the White Sands Tavern issue, the City of Stirling put a height limitation in its scheme. Did the Town of Victoria Park put a height limitation in its scheme? No, it did not. This is what bound me. The Town of Victoria Park had previously received an application from a group to develop that site. Although it rejected that proposal, it told the proponent that if it met certain conditions the application would be approved. The revised proposal met all the conditions except one, which was the height requirement. The Town of Victoria Park knew before it reviewed its scheme that if it wanted a height limitation, it should be included in the town planning scheme. That would have been very effective, but the Town of Victoria Park did not do that.

The member for Victoria Park was right on one aspect; I did have to make a decision. I received advice - I do not make decisions on my own, about five of us discuss it - and a decision was made. I do not shy away from it. I will put this on the record. To fit on the block the required number of units for which the town council had indicated it would give approval, a massive building, from boundary to boundary, about six storeys high, would have been required. That was the recommendation made to me, for the construction of that number of units. On the other hand, a tall, thin tower would allow for much more sensitive development around it to interface with adjoining streets. In the end I had to make a judgment, and I made a judgment on the basis of strong advice that the proposal I approved was better than the alternative. Only time will tell, but I made that decision on the basis of all the information I had at the time. I had to make a decision; I could not handball it to someone else, or sit on it. The decision rested with me, and I do not apologise for it. Large monoliths, built boundary to boundary, are more devastating to the amenity of an area than a tall tower. At least with a tall tower, people can see around either side of it. A building covering the land from boundary to boundary blocks almost everything. If people objectively looked at the scale models for the two proposals, they would agree that in the long term, without any height restrictions, that was the better proposition.

There are many issues across the State and many planning conflicts. There is no doubt about that at all. Through the state planning strategy, the Government predicted that the population in Western Australia would grow by one million, from 1.75 million to 2.75 million by the year 2029. The Government has tried to predict where people will need land to live, work, recreate and enjoy a high quality lifestyle in this State. That applies across the State, whether it be in the south west, Kununurra or the Burrup Peninsula where development is taking place. Wherever there is conflict in land uses, there are planning conflicts. The Government is trying to resolve as many of those conflicts as possible. I make no apology for that. I am proud of the major planning decisions of this Government, whether they be FRIARS, Bushplan, the Peel region scheme or those in a whole range of bulletins and activities. This Government is making a huge effort to turn around planning strategies in this State. Under the previous Government planning was done from one term of office to the next, by people gazing down at their feet. This Government slowly but surely is moving planning issues into 30-year time horizons, which will benefit all the community groups. It will benefit all parties because they will have some sense of certainty.

The Leighton issue has been raised, and the member for Alfred Cove has reminded me about that situation. The Government has established an implementation committee to develop the guidelines and restrictions, which includes representatives of government departments such as the Department of Transport and the Ministry for Planning. An officer from the Ministry for Planning is chairing the committee, and it includes representatives from local government councils in Mosman Park, Fremantle and Cottesloe. In addition, a community liaison committee has been established. The Leighton Action Coalition group has one representative on that committee, and only the other day it asked for an additional representative. I have agreed to that because I want the community to be involved as much as possible.

Ms MacTiernan: You know it is a political hot potato and they have the upper hand. You have been forced to retreat.

Mr KIERATH: No I have not been forced to retreat. The announcement of the process for drawing up the guidelines for the planning of Leighton was initiated by me, as Minister for Planning, and the Government. It brought that issue back into the formal planning process. I believe it will achieve the right guidelines. I give an undertaking to the House that when the guidelines are developed later in the year, they will be released for public consultation. It is funny that, on the one hand, people want public consultation, and now they are complaining that if I release the guidelines for public consultation it may delay the process. Some people are concerned that this delay may go beyond the next election. My response is that people cannot agree to a public consultation process and then prejudge the result. Before it even started, I was asked to rule on the setbacks from the ocean. I said that could not be done, because it would have been prejudging the process. I have full confidence that the implementation committee and the community liaison committee will do the right thing, and the community might be broadly supportive of the results. As a decision maker, I cannot please everyone. In the end some decisions must be made about the long-term benefit to not only the local community, but also the wider community in either the metropolitan area or the State. Those decisions are not always easy; sometimes they are extremely difficult. However, in the end a good Government must make those decisions and get on with it.

DR EDWARDS (Maylands) [5.56 pm]: This motion is about community discontent, the planning process and some of the extraordinary decisions that have been made. I shall raise an issue bubbling up in my electorate. From the minister's comments tonight, one might think he could resolve this problem in a positive way. I urge him to do so, but the indications to date are that he will not.

I refer to the future of the Maylands Police Academy. Since I have been in opposition, it has been clear that the police complex will be used for a different purpose in the future. I have liaised with three different Ministers for Police, and asked that I be kept informed of any proposals and the planning process involved. After considerable delays, I have received short

letters advising that I will be informed when something happens. Therefore, I was surprised in spring last year to hear that various community leaders living in Maylands had been called to a meeting to discuss the future of the Maylands police complex site. I jumped up and down, and eventually received an invitation to the meeting. Initially, we all thought it was great. The Police Service was in charge of the process and a planning consultant had been hired. They told the 15 people present that we had been called in to tell them how to consult with the community of Maylands about the future use of that land. We thought that was great because it is what the community wants; it wants to be consulted early in the process in a meaningful way. However, as a very quiet aside, the planning consultant and the police said that an application had already been submitted to rezone the land urban. As another aside, we were told that the private planning consultant had prepared a plan, with many modifications, for 241 houses to be built on the land. We were assured we would really like the development. Those people were shocked and horrified that we were angry. Of course we were angry. For years we had been writing to various Ministers for Police asking to be kept in the information loop. We understood the need to exit the site, although we preferred that the police stay, but we asked them to talk to us about the proposals. What did they do? They called us in and told us a lie. They said they wanted to talk to us about consulting with the community about the options for the site, and then casually mentioned that the land would be zoned urban, and they had plans for 241 homes. That is not what the community wants.

The motion refers to this kind of process. It is about the processes the Government has been using in planning and how it is riding roughshod over communities. The Government has not recognised that communities have changed and they want to be involved in these matters. Many people in the community feel they do not have much power. Decisions are made by multinationals. We live in a global world. People want more power and control and more say at the local level, and we are trying to achieve that with this motion.

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.00 pm

Dr EDWARDS: Once local people made their concerns known to the Police Service, they were told that there was an omnibus amendment and, if they were good, the Police Service would consider taking out the part that related to the Maylands Police Academy site, and it would deal with that separately. Although the Police Service has told us that will happen, it has not confirmed that in writing, and we are getting conflicting answers about whether that will happen. The local people were also told that the Police Service would continue to lodge the amendment, but there would be six months consultation with the community prior to the release of the metropolitan region scheme amendment. To my mind, if the Police Service does not intend to withdraw the amendment, consultation will be a hollow promise. One could argue that if the Police Service will not withdraw the amendment, it will lose great sums of money in that consultation process. The local people are also concerned about the consultation that is proposed. The Police Service wants focus groups. It will call for expressions of interest from anyone who lives in the area. It will then pull the names out of a hat and hold meetings. That is an interesting way to go about things. Part of the dilemma for residents is that with around 500 homes under construction at the moment, and the high turnover of population in the middle of the electorate with multistorey flats with absentee landlords in an area that is zoned R80, the focus group could comprise a great many people who did not know much about the issue or the history of the area.

Mr Shave: A high rise development could improve your vote.

Dr EDWARDS: I am not selfish like the minister; I want the best for our area.

An issue has become apparent, particularly in correspondence from the Minister for Police. In a letter to me dated 6 January, the Minister for Police states -

The Western Australia Police Service is investigating options for the disposal of the site on the basis of maximising the return to Government and supporting the Police Service's Capital Works Program.

That is what we are talking about tonight. This is a case in which the Police Service says that it needs this money. The Government has said that the Police Service can keep the money that comes from the sale of that land, and it is looking at maximising its dollar. However, that is to the detriment of my local community. I will continue to fight really hard for my community and to push for a better outcome. The local community want the Police Service to withdraw its amendment and to start a proper consultation process. The minister said earlier that planning is all about conflict. He also needs to recognise that we now have a sophisticated community and planning should be about opportunities, about recognising needs - in this case of the local community - and to see whether a win-win situation can be crafted out of that. The Police Service should look at the opportunities for the site; it should not just accept that because the construction of 241 houses is the easiest most direct option, it should proceed with that.

It has been interesting for me in the past few days following the rally that was held on the site to talk to a number of developers about what is going on in Maylands. They have said that as developers they feel it is a great site with huge potential. However, they are alarmed at the way the whole process has been handled. A comparison has been made with the process in the Leighton development. That is a pity, because all that happens is the community is in one corner and the developers in another and at the end of day somebody wins and somebody loses. We want a much better outcome.

I will make brief comments on some other planning issues that are not being handled well. In March 1999, the Government released the Fremantle Rockingham Industrial Area Regional Strategy for public comment. However, as occurred in Maylands, it was released with a statement for public comment, and stating the Government favoured option 4. How can the community have confidence in that consultation process if the Government had already stated exactly what it wanted.

The other issue that arises with FRIARS is air pollution and the Kwinana Environmental Protection Authority air buffer. Staff from the City of Cockburn informed me that they have commissioned a report from Sinclair Knight Merz Pty Ltd which presents a case for the buffer being more finely tuned. The study done by Sinclair Knight Merz used the DEP's methodology and data. The results showed that the air buffer should be configured differently from the current configuration. That is a great concern when one knows that these decisions that are said to be planning decisions based on the air buffer are not based on science. We have this circular situation in which the Kwinana environmental protection policy was due for renewal, and the EPA reviewed it rather quickly and said there was no need to change it because it was waiting to see what would happen with FRIARS. The problem is that FRIARS is using the EPP as its base. The process is thrown into question when a reputable engineering company that has been commissioned to look at the buffer says there are inadequacies about the way it was drawn up.

The other issue about FRIARS is the lack of understanding of the social impact. I was at a rally in Wattleup in April. I was struck by how sad the whole thing was. A great many people were there who, through a government planning decision, will not only lose their homes but will be compensated in such a way that they cannot buy that same lifestyle in a similar place because of the price differential. I will repeat a comment that was made in a meeting I attended earlier this year at which people from the Kwinana Air Buffer Zone group and FRIARS were present. One of them said, "Things are getting better but we are being asked to leave." The social impact of FRIARS has not been considered.

I wanted to refer to a number of other situations but I will refer to one as I have been asked to cut my speech time. I refer to the construction of the motor sports complex that will now proceed. This is an interesting issue, because industry, the locals and conservationists were all in the one camp saying that the risk of having the complex at this location was too high.

Mrs Edwardes: You are talking about community consultation and the community wanted it.

Dr EDWARDS: Not all of them, minister. The minister should look at what she is doing to Hope Valley. She says she is making strategic planning decisions, yet she signs the death warrant of Hope Valley by locating a motor sports complex there.

The other issue is noise regulations. When the EPA considered the noise levels that might be allowed in the new motor sports complex, it referred to the levels in use at the moment with the current exemptions. It found that the Claremont Speedway was operating without its exemption. In March this year regulations were wheeled into the Parliament to give the Claremont Speedway its exemption. What a farce; the season is halfway over and we had the bizarre situation that if anyone wanted to disallow the regulations they would not have been able to until after the speedway season had ended.

Mrs Edwardes: That was because of consultation.

Dr EDWARDS: No; it was because people were too slow in doing their work.

This is a shabby process. It comes back to power. In many of these problems the Government is saying what it will do. It says it will consult but at the end of the day it will impose its decision on people regardless of what they say. One of the things that saddens me most, particularly with the Planning Commission, is the lack of feedback to people who make a submission to the metropolitan region scheme amendment and attend a hearing but do not see any change. At least when people make submissions and present their evidence to the EPA, the feedback is that -

Mrs Edwardes: We listen!

Dr EDWARDS: That is the feedback we receive, and it compares starkly with the feedback from the WA Planning Commission, which we are told does not get back to people at all. The EPA at least gives feedback. The Government needs to listen to the community more and respond in more detail to what the community wants.

An article in today's *The Australian* referred to democracy. I now make a perverse comment. The article stated that democracy is excellent, but that we should not love it too much. Perversely, in some ways this Government loves democracy too much. The argument in *The Australian* ran this way: We need democracy, but it can give people many rights which are put in the corners. If one gets too hung up on that - as this Government has done - one forgets to look at the common ground, interests and goals. Planning, rather than always being about conflict, is about looking for common ground and the aspirations of all people. One then drafts a plan through consultation. That is a better arrangement than is the current system. We need a much better integration of planning, the environment and social impacts. The Government needs to move towards truly sustainable development.

MR MCGOWAN (Rockingham) [7.12 pm]: I welcome the opportunity to speak on this Bill, despite having to curtail my remarks because of the time available. I will refer to an issue discussed in this House before, and I am sure the member for Alfred Cove will speak about it shortly; that is, the Heathcote site. We have spoken at some length about the process involved.

Mr Deputy Speaker, are members not supposed to be in their seats before interjecting?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, I remind the Minister for Lands that he can speak only from his seat.

Mr MCGOWAN: I have some sympathy for the member for Alfred Cove because he does not understand the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly, and because of events which occurred after the 1996 election. The Liberal Party allocates portfolios in this way: The Premier sets out the ministers and distributes his portfolios on the basis of factions, geography, the particular expertise of the individuals or whatever. In the case of the member for Alfred Cove he said, "Here we have someone with little ability. Where can I put him in the ministry?" He sat around the coffee shop in December

1996 and thought, "I know! I will give him two things with which he cannot get into any trouble. I'll give him Fair Trading. How could he get himself into trouble there? It's not possible." What happened? The biggest crisis in the last eight years of this Government occurred under the tutelage of the member for Alfred Cove. The Premier also decided to give him Lands. What could go wrong there? The Heathcote issue then blew up in the city of Melville. The Premier gave the member the two portfolios saying, "You cannot possibly get yourself into trouble with those, member for Alfred Cove."

Dr Edwards: And electoral reform.

Mr McGOWAN: Indeed; we had all the commitments before the election and no delivery afterwards. The Heathcote issue, which arose in the Lands portfolio, has the potential to lose the member for Alfred Cove his seat. The Court Government said to the City of Melville, "Let's come up with a deal for that site." The City of Melville negotiated in good faith with the Government to make a deal which preserved the best, most historic and greatest heritage value parts of that site for future generations. It was a great deal. I am disappointed in the actions 10 years ago of the former Government, although it never carried through with them. The Court Government came up with the deal which was negotiated with the City of Melville. What happens after the deal was negotiated? The City of Melville proceeded, and the improvements to the site were carried out. It looked spectacular on Duncraig Road. Everything was going along swimmingly until the member for Alfred Cove came under a little pressure from people in his electorate, and from one wealthy person in particular. He said that he did not like the deal and he advertised in the local paper.

Mr Shave: Do you support the deal?

Mr McGOWAN: I do not support your compromise deal.

Mr Shave: Do you support the first deal?

Mr McGOWAN: Yes, I support the first deal. The minister's Government supported it.

Mr Shave: Do you support the housing on the bottom land?

Mr McGOWAN: Yes, I do. The deal was done, and everyone was happy. This minister came under a little pressure in his electorate from a very wealthy person and he caved in. He said, "I have a petition from 1 200 people, so I must go back to the drawing board." He then forced a new deal upon the council against its will to sell some of the best parts of the site including Duncraig House and the surrounding land on the top of the hill.

Mr Shave: You don't understand.

Mr McGOWAN: I understand it very well. The minister made a deal to lose some of the best parts of the site because of a little pressure in his electorate. I feel sorry for the minister again: He reneged on a deal the Government made because of a little pressure and a 1 200-signature petition. What happens now? An 8 500-signature petition is out in the community against what he has done. He is caught in the middle between the two. Rather than doing the right thing to preserve the best parts of the site for the future of Western Australia, he went with the pressure applied by a local millionaire. He was in the living room and had a word in his ear. Will the minister deny that he had a number of meetings in the living room with the millionaire and that he caved in on the deal? We now have internecine Liberal Party warfare in the city of Melville.

Mr Shave: Whose living room?

Mr McGOWAN: So the minister does not deny it.

We have a poll threat to the minister from various groups in the area, and a very bad deal was made which will lose some of the best parts of that site to the public of Western Australia. The Premier must think, "My God, what have I done? After the election, it was all so straightforward. I could keep Colin out of the way and behind Doug, and I gave Doug the easy portfolios." It has blown up in the Premier's face like an atomic bomb. We hope the Western Australian public will have a new member for Alfred Cove, but unfortunately they will lose some of the best parts of the Heathcote site.

MR SHAVE (Alfred Cove - Minister for Lands) [7.20 pm]: People can understand why the Labor Party has a problem when they can hear someone deliver a speech like that of the member for Rockingham. I will take the member through the Heathcote saga so that he understands what happened.

Mr Cowan: It will take too long.

Mr SHAVE: Does the Deputy Premier not want me to speak?

Mr Cowan: I want you to speak but it will take you too long to explain the saga.

Mr SHAVE: If it is necessary, I will go back over it twice.

Mr Cowan: It will not be enough.

Mr SHAVE: I will speak slowly because the member for Rockingham is very slow.

An agreement was entered into between the City of Melville and the State Government to subdivide some of the land at Heathcote and to sell that land to provide funds for the upgrading of the upper section of land and the buildings. The council spent \$6m. The community objected to the lower land being subdivided for housing. It is true that a petition was drawn up. It is not true that I had discussions in anyone's living room with any of the participants. I make that clear to the member for Rockingham.

Two or three weeks ago in this place, the member described the bottom land at Heathcote as a barren wasteland. He said tonight that he supports the original Heathcote deal between the State Government and the City of Melville. Because he does not understand the subject, the member then talked about the Government selling the precious land at the top to fund the development. The truth of the matter is that Duncraig House was always to be sold by the Government.

Mr McGowan: That is not right.

Mr SHAVE: It is right. The council had agreed to buy the site from the Government. Because the mayor and other people were concerned and had different views about what should happen at Heathcote, I received approaches on the issue. Unlike the member for Rockingham, who has probably never been to Heathcote and probably does not know where it is, I went into the whole issue and looked at it very closely. I understand from being in the tourism industry for 30 years that where there is a popular site, there must be open space and parking. As a result of a petition that was circulated on the Heathcote site when it was open, 1 042 people expressed a view on Heathcote. They were up on the site, but 60 per cent of them did not come from the City of Melville. If the member for Rockingham had done what I did and done his homework and went to that site on a Saturday afternoon, he would understand that the parking on the top section is inadequate because of the popularity of the site.

Mr Kierath: It is a very popular site.

Mr SHAVE: Yes, and far more popular than anyone anticipated. On a Saturday afternoon South of Perth Yacht Club does not have enough parking facilities. People attending the yacht club park on the bottom land. I hope after giving this history to the member for Rockingham that he will be a little more understanding of what happens in my electorate rather than talking off the top of his head. People on a Saturday afternoon park around the outside of a vacant piece of land opposite that lower area of land at Heathcote. There is totally inadequate parking in the area. Unlike Mr Coleman who believed that the whole area of the bottom land should be used for a park, I am of the view that it should have a multitude of uses, one of which is an additional parking area. The piece of land across the road from the bottom land is owned by the Commonwealth and is up for sale. The Commonwealth has decided that it does not want the tower that is on it. It wants to sell that land for housing. That will exacerbate the existing problem in that area.

What the member for Rockingham and others need to do to understand the whole issue is to obtain an aerial photograph of the yacht club 10 years ago showing the number of boat bays and jetties and also obtain an aerial photograph of the present situation showing the extension to the yacht club. The area has the same problem as exists at Point Walter where I live. What was a popular area five years ago is now on a Saturday 10 times more popular. People from all of the development outside Canning Vale going south who want to go for a barbecue are going to Heathcote, and why not? They do not have to pay for the barbecues. They could go to the movies and pay \$30 or \$40 but they can take their family to that area and sit at a world class location for free.

The member did not mention in his delivery that half the facilities are not open. When the restaurant on the upper section of the site is opened, four to five weddings a week will be held there, including Sundays, because it has one of the top restaurant and wedding locations in Western Australia. Those weddings will be attended by 300 people, which will create a major problem. I said to people who oppose my proposal to save the bottom land at Heathcote that that would be the issue. They said that they would get buses and bus the people in. I asked what they would do with the band members who would have to carry their equipment, and the waiters and waitresses and all those people who are not there yet.

The agreement went through the Government and was signed. It is no secret that I was instrumental in turning the arrangement around. The member has not realised that my motive in turning this whole agreement around was very sensible for the people of Western Australia. The member has said that we are intending to flog off all of this other land but he has not realised that part of that sale would include some tennis courts that the Government does not own. The council owns them and was to sell its own land. The 8 500 people who signed the petition did so on a number of issues, one of the most important of which was these tennis courts which the council thought it could close and sell.

A small building site next to the river was occupied by the Scouts. The proposal was to shift the Scouts closer to the yacht club so that they would have access to the yacht club and to the boats. Some people believed that would assist them. The Scouts did not initially object to that and never ruled it out. As long as they were to get better facilities, they were prepared to consider that. Some of the residents said that they wanted the Scouts to stay. The question got emotional when people said that the Scouts should stay. What did the good member do? The caccgood member said that he understood the concerns and that other options must be looked at. That is what is happening with Heathcote.

This Government has vested and will be vesting between \$10m and \$30m of real estate with the City of Melville for the cost of a dollar. I think the land must be transferred for a dollar. The City of Melville will get all of the income stream from the buildings on the hill. It is the greatest deal that the City of Melville could ever get. The member for Rockingham's former Government was about to cut up all of that land to pay for the WA Inc debts. He should hang his head in shame. He should be coming into this place and criticising me for pork-barrelling. If I were the local member in another electorate and I was getting between \$10m and \$30m of real estate for my constituents at no cost to the council or the ratepayers, I would be pretty happy. Whatever else I may have done to make the member for Rockingham even less happy, I have said to the City of Melville that if it has government land which is vested with it and it wants to realise on that land to pay for some of its improvements on the hill, we are prepared to look at it.

That is where we are now. As we get closer to the election, I will remind all of the people in Applecross and Mt Pleasant in my electorate that the member for Rockingham has been calling this piece of land barren wasteland. Why did the Valuer

General put a value of between \$6m and \$10m on that land? It is because it is valuable. It is not barren wasteland. It is prime riverfront land in a strategic location.

Everything has a price. However, the price of that land is inconsequential, because what is most important is that the Heathcote site be saved for the public and for future generations and that it have adequate parking so that people can visit the site and enjoy its amenities. Recently I was talking to my good friend Clive Griffiths, and he said, "I was standing there 15 years ago when the Labor Party was trying to cut up this land for housing, and you are going through exactly the same thing that I went through then. The idea sounded good, and everyone was going to get some money out of this site." If we looked at it purely from a monetary position, we could make a lot of money out of subdividing the lower land at Heathcote. However, I have been able to convince the Premier and my cabinet colleagues otherwise. The member for Rockingham inferred in his speech that the Government asked the council to change the deal. It was the Melville council that asked the Government to change the deal. I suggest to the member for Rockingham that he go back through his paperwork, and he will find -

Mr McGowan: That is not what the council says. Are you calling it a liar?

Mr SHAVE: It may not say that, but that is the situation. The City of Melville asked for the agreement to be renegotiated. It passed it through its council meeting. I happen to agree with the resolutions that it passed.

I turn now to Leighton Beach, because that happens to be very close to my heart. I visit that beach every weekend, even though my two poodles think they are bull terriers. That land is also very important. I recommend to the people on the community liaison committee and the implementation committee that they take a broader view of what should happen to Leighton other than look at it just in dollar terms. I was horrified by the Multiplex proposal for the development of that site. My preferred position is that there should be no development in the centre or the northern end of that site. I am prepared to listen to the views of the community liaison committee and the implementation committee with regard to that site. I know a bit more about that site than does the member for Armadale, having had a business in North Fremantle for nearly 20 years. I know the problems that exist on that site. That beach will get busier and busier. If people look at this matter just in monetary terms, they will not look at it in a lateral or sensible manner. Therefore, when this matter comes back to our party room from the implementation committee or the community liaison committee, I will look at it very closely. I recommend to those people that they take a lateral view. We can expect a large increase in population in our southern suburbs, not particularly in my electorate but in areas such as Canning Vale and the back of Leeming, and it is critical that we provide a good amount of open space on Leighton Beach.

The Labor Party did a deal on the old Swan Brewery that has locked me into an agreement with Multiplex where I am compelled to agree to things to which I should not have to agree as a landlord. The Labor Party signed that agreement just before an election -

Mr Kierath: A dirty deal.

Mr SHAVE: Yes. The Labor Party knew that if a coalition Government came into office, it would overturn that deal. That deal was one that no landlord would ever do. That deal was a straight-out roort, and it gave the person who took the lease the opportunity to dictate to the Government what it could do with its own building. It is of some interest that the member for Rockingham talked about supporters of the Liberal Party. It has not gone unnoticed that the proponents of that development at the old Swan Brewery had very close links to the Labor Party.

I make this final point to the member for Rockingham: If he is not sure about something, he should ask me. He should not stand in this Parliament and talk off the top of his head. The member for Rockingham should at least read his local newspaper, because if he had read his local newspaper he would have found that I have endorsed the council's decision with regard to the Scout hall and the tennis court. I believe that the decision that the council made in the end was the right decision. We will resolve this issue; and probably in 12 months, because I have done a reasonable job with regard to this issue, the member for Rockingham will stand in this place and accuse me of pork-barrelling in my electorate.

MRS EDWARDES (Kingsley - Minister for the Environment) [7.37 pm]: This motion deals with planning processes and decisions, which are primarily the responsibility of the Minister for Planning. On Friday, 19 May, a seminar was held by the Environmental Defenders Office, which discussed the need for government to adopt processes that produce genuine and meaningful community consultation. This Government was very much part of the ongoing discussion that took place at that seminar, because it involved officers from the Department of Environmental Protection and the Ministry for Planning, and that included Mr Simon Holthouse, the Chairman of the Western Australian Planning Commission. I would like to talk about the integration of the Environment and Planning portfolios, because the Planning Legislation Amendment Bill 1996 introduced a new section 48A process, which amended the planning and environmental procedures for assessing schemes and scheme amendments to ensure that environmental factors were considered early and up front in the planning process rather than later during the subdivision and development stages. It meant also that planning and environmental matters could be dealt with concurrently, as opposed to the situation that existed previously, where planning would go down its path and environmental assessment would go down its path, and although they might come together at some point, there were often divergences, it was costly, and there were duplicative processes for industry. It was not very satisfactory for the community either.

It was generally agreed that environmental issues should be considered up front, because it provides an assurance that those environmental factors are given proper consideration by the Environmental Protection Authority and the Minister for the Environment long before the subdivision or development occurs. That process also allows for the community to have

access to more information before commenting on the most appropriate use of the land and it provides certainty to the landowners once the land has been rezoned. Again, that is a major change in the process.

The DEP and the EPA consider that the section 48A process has improved environmental input and the inclusion of the community's environmental concerns into the planning process. There are two stages during which the community is consulted or is able to appeal against decisions in the section 48A process: First, when the instructions are advertised and, second, when the EPA publishes its report for the Minister for the Environment. The local authority can also ask for the environmental conditions to be reviewed by both the Minister for Planning and the Minister for the Environment.

The member for Armadale raised a number of examples to which I will refer, particularly from the environmental point of view and to illustrate how the community has been consulted during the environmental planning process. The Leighton Beach proposal has not been forwarded to the EPA for environmental assessment. However, the DEP is a member of the Fremantle Rockingham Industrial Area Regional Strategy implementation committee. That committee has brought together a community reference group to facilitate community consultation. Even though it has an informal structure, that committee allows for environmental issues to be considered up front.

The EPA chose not to assess the metropolitan region scheme rezoning of the Maylands Police Academy property under section 48A. The EPA considered that there were no environmental issues involved in the rezoning and that public consultation was possible under the planning legislation.

The EPA provided advice on FRIARS during the public consultation period. Anyone who suggests that there was not considerable public consultation throughout that exercise, which was conducted by both the Ministry for Planning and the WA Planning Commission as part of the strategy preparation, probably does not understand the process. It was a lengthy process and the time frames were extended far beyond what was anticipated. I met with a number of groups and residents who had concerns that they wanted to raise about FRIARS and the issues they wanted the Planning Commission to take into account when the strategy was being finalised. All the information I received was passed to the DEP representative who was part of the public consultation exercise.

The EPA chose not to assess the MRS rezoning of the Scarborough Senior High School property under section 48A. It considered that there were no environmental issues involved in the rezoning and that there was an opportunity for public consultation under the planning legislation.

The Midland Redevelopment Authority will be preparing a town planning scheme and there will be opportunities for community input and comment on that scheme in accordance with planning and environmental legislation.

I am aware that Main Roads has conducted community consultation about the southern link road and has included more corridor alignment options in accordance with community comments.

The Bullsbrook bypass was also raised. Main Roads WA has completed the route alignment selection process, but this proposal is yet to be referred to the EPA as an amendment to the MRS.

The EPA has informally assessed the Shire of Gingin's proposed rezoning of 557 hectares of land from rural to urban development at Moore River and recommended that, subject to implementation of agreed commitments by the developer, the land be developed for urban purposes. The proposal was assessed at an informal review with public advice. I met Moore River residents and listened to their specific concerns, one of which related to the buffer along the river. Their concerns were taken into account and fed back into the process. I believe that that issue is still under consideration. The point being made was that the slope from the river was of such angle that it did not provide the appropriate buffer. That point is valid. A number of other issues were also raised.

Ms MacTiernan: What have you done?

Mrs EDWARDES: The member obviously missed my last comments; she should read *Hansard* tomorrow.

The community is heard on many occasions through the environmental assessment process. Its views are taken into account, particularly through the appeal process to me as Minister for the Environment. On a number of occasions I have upheld an appeal either in full or in part because of the issues raised by members of the community. For members opposite to say that the Government does not engage in community consultation because the end result may not necessarily be all that the community wants defies the truth. We do engage in community consultation and the issues are fully and appropriately canvassed. I can point to many examples of situations in which the community's concerns have been taken into account and changes made. The Government opposes the motion.

MS MacTIERNAN (Armadale) [7.47 pm]: The Opposition attempted to put the motion in a relatively neutral form. I find it extraordinary that the Government can pretend that the Opposition is making up this problem and that it can continue to ignore the fact that community groups do not believe that they have been consulted. It was put most eloquently by John Prince from the Moore River group, who said that there is a complete mismatch between what the Government considers to be adequate community consultation and the community's expectations.

I will ignore the Minister for Lands; I am not sure that he spoke on the motion. The Minister for the Environment and the Minister for Planning both recited the statutory provisions, which enable a group, once a decision has been made, to tell the Government what it does not like, and the Government may or may not listen.

Time and time again, notwithstanding the overwhelming weight of public opinion and the very detailed reasons given for

objecting to those decisions, those decisions do not produce any results. The Minister for the Environment - whom the member for Bassendean calls the "kiss-and-make up" minister - goes to community groups and mouths very nice and encouraging words, but, at the end of the day, nothing happens. Notwithstanding all the promises about Moore River, there was no formal assessment of the plans to change this fantastic area into an urban zone. The minister told us that all the environmental factors were taken into consideration. In this case, I find that hard to believe.

The real point I want to make tonight is that the Minister for Planning and, I suspect, many of his colleagues do not understand the point the Opposition was making, which was that the community has moved on, and it now expects to be involved far more deeply in the decision-making process. We have seen what is happening at Leighton. At least superficially, it appears that the Government is setting in place some processes whereby the community will get involved in the decision-making process. That has been forced upon the Government because it had so comprehensively failed to do that in relation to the Leighton plan. Thousands of people in the community were taking action by taking to the streets, taking to the beach and protesting that decision. There was that rare coalition of the member for Alfred Cove and the member for Cottesloe, who formed a tag team and supported a revision of what went on at Leighton Beach. Under those exceptional circumstances, the Government pulled its plans off the drawing board and went back to square one with its processes. However, that has not been repeated elsewhere. Unfortunately, it has not been repeated outside Leighton, and the community is very disappointed about that. It will be at the Government's peril if it continues to ignore the demands of the community for a much greater degree of consultation. I admit that it probably is a greater degree of consultation than largely existed under the Labor Government, but times have changed and we must move on. We cannot continue to go back to the past and say that that was how things were done in the past. It was a different place and time. Community expectations are different. If the Government is not prepared to move with the times, it will find itself severely tested at the ballot box.

I will make a couple of points about the comments of the Minister for Planning. It was disappointing that he was so patronising towards the community groups, particularly given those who were present in the gallery here tonight. The minister said that the problem really is that people should not just write to him and say they do not like something; they should come up with reasons. We mentioned about 12 groups tonight, and all of those groups have completely familiarised themselves with the planning and environmental issues. They have shown a profound understanding of not only those issues as they impact on the local community but also some of the broader statewide issues and, in some cases, how they might impact on the Australian economy. Those groups have shown an amazing amount of sophistication. The submissions put by those groups to the Minister for Planning and the Minister for the Environment go well beyond their writing to those ministers and saying that they do not like a plan and they want the Government to scrap it. A great effort has been made by, for example, the Scarborough group, the Leighton group and the Kwinana air buffer zone group to draw up alternative plans that have as much credibility as those that have been put forward by the Government. The Minister for Planning today showed contempt for those communities. They are not people to be patronised. They are a great asset to our community. Their understanding and involvement should be something that we, as parliamentary representatives, want to bring into the circle and use. They should not be denigrated in the way that the Minister for Planning has done today.

We do not want to go back. A number of the people who were in the gallery made the point that they were nauseated by the Government's attempt to go back over history and to say that Labor used to do this and that, rather than to defend its position. The Government talked about the different approach to metropolitan region scheme amendments and how Richard Lewis very bravely decided that he would not use minor amendments but would use the major amendment process. It was not all that courageous, because when Richard Lewis was Minister for Planning, the coalition knew it had control of the upper House, and that was the context in which the decision was made. On the other hand, Labor faced, as it has done every time it has been in Government over the past 100 years, a hostile and often irresponsible upper House which would take every opportunity to thwart Labor initiatives, no matter how reasonable they may have been. That is the context in which there was a different approach - not that there was a greater democratic urge on the part of Richard Lewis to subject matters to parliamentary scrutiny. What nonsense. The coalition knew that it had the numbers in the upper House, as it had had for 100 years, and it knew it could get its way with any major amendment. People are not deceived by arguments of that vacuity.

That probably sums it up. The Opposition is disappointed that there has not been a recognition by the Government that the sorts of things it has been forced to do at Leighton should become the standard practice, and that that is the way that it should, as a matter of course, go about planning decisions. It should be recognised that the people in the community not only have a right to participate in planning decisions but also have an enormous contribution to make in getting those decisions right. We need to put structures in place. We need to completely revamp the processes of consultation to make them far more interactive and meaningful. I know that, unfortunately, the Government will vote against this motion tonight, but I hope that some of the comments that have been made will ring a few wake-up bells at least in the heads of some of the brighter ministers, if not in the heads of some of the more recalcitrant ministers.

Question put and a division taken with the following result -

Ayes (15)

Mr Brown
Mr Carpenter
Dr Edwards
Dr Gallop

Mr Grill
Mr Kobelke
Ms MacTiernan
Mr Marlborough

Mr McGinty
Mr McGowan
Ms McHale
Mr Ripper

Mrs Roberts
Ms Warnock
Mr Cunningham (*Teller*)

Noes (24)

Mr Ainsworth
Mr Barron-Sullivan
Mr Bradshaw
Dr Constable
Mr Court
Mr Cowan

Mr Day
Mrs Edwardes
Dr Hames
Mr Kierath
Mr Masters
Mr McNee

Mr Omodei
Mr Osborne
Mrs Parker
Mr Pandal
Mr Prince
Mr Shave

Mr Sweetman
Mr Trenorden
Dr Turnbull
Mrs van de Klashorst
Mr Wiese
Mr Tubby (*Teller*)

Pairs

Mr Riebeling
Mr Thomas
Ms Anwyl
Mr Bridge

Mrs Hodson-Thomas
Mr Barnett
Mr House
Mrs Holmes

Question thus negatived.

ESTIMATES COMMITTEES*Sessional Order*

MR COWAN (Merredin - Deputy Premier) [8.01 pm]: In accordance with the sessional order, I present a report of the management committee prescribing which parts of the estimates will be considered at Estimates Committees A and B and the time allocated for that consideration.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I propose a motion -

That the report be adopted.

Question put and passed.

APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED FUND) BILL (No. 1) 2000*Second Reading - Cognate Debate*

Resumed from an earlier stage.

MR BRADSHAW (Murray-Wellington - Parliamentary Secretary) [8.02 pm]: I would like to make a few comments in this debate as the Opposition have made some spurious remarks about the budget.

Mr McGowan: Scurrilous!

Mr BRADSHAW: Scurrilous, spurious and totally political.

Ms MacTiernan: Political! We are in Parliament and we are being political. Oh shock!

Mr BRADSHAW: The member for Armadale could be honest though.

Ms MacTiernan: We are being political and we are politicians! The next thing you will be saying is there are Catholics in the Vatican!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Armadale will come to order.

Mr BRADSHAW: The facts are that the budget on this occasion was generally well received by the commentators and because it was not attacked by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia, the Opposition was left distraught.

Mr McGowan interjected.

Mr BRADSHAW: Dr Michael Nahan, whoever he works for -

Mr Carpenter: Are you going to provide explanatory notes to this speech?

Mr BRADSHAW: Probably.

Ms MacTiernan interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Armadale will come to order!

Mr BRADSHAW: The facts are that Mike Nahan and the CCI were critical of last year's budget for various reasons. Whether that was justified, they have the ability and the options to be critical. However, they were supportive of this year's budget, as other people have been. It is interesting to note that when the Federal Government announced its budget, the Opposition criticised it for including assets that it intended to sell. We did not include asset sales in our budget and we were criticised for not including them. We are therefore damned if we do and damned if we do not.

Mr McGowan: Do you support the sale of Westrail?

Mr BRADSHAW: I do, after hearing the reasons for it. I have not been totally supportive of selling off state government assets but because of the circumstances surrounding Westrail, I do support it.

Mr McGowan: Do you support the dairy industry deregulation?

Mr BRADSHAW: Not totally. I have already spoken on that, as the member knows, and I reluctantly supported deregulation. It is a vexed question for me because of the huge effects it will have in my electorate.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I ask members to allow the member for Murray-Wellington to continue his speech instead of throwing in interjections and putting him off his contribution to the budget debate.

Ms MacTiernan: We are just trying to assist him. He is obviously having trouble.

Mr BRADSHAW: I am not having any trouble. It did slip my mind where Mike Nahan worked and by whom he was employed.

Ms MacTiernan: But you knew his comments were important.

Mr BRADSHAW: They are very important as he is one of the recognised financial commentators in Australia, has a very important position and is listened to generally when he comments on financial matters, particularly relating to the Public Service. The Opposition tries to point out that the country areas of this State have missed out by not having been looked after in budgets of the past few years. I assure members that is incorrect. One of the fallacies from the Opposition is that all the money goes into the Northbridge tunnel and the belltower project. I agree people get emotional over those matters; however, the people who opposed the tunnel should have had their heads read. Again, I am sure those people opposed the tunnel for political reasons because any logical person, even at the concept stage of the tunnel, would have supported it because it is a logical thing to put into place. It has removed the need for traffic lights, has taken traffic off other roads and has proved to be a correct decision when one considers the volume of traffic using that tunnel. It is easy for people to run around the countryside saying, "Look at this; all the money is being spent in the city and nothing is being spent in the country."

I assure members, as the member for Murray-Wellington, that I am happy with the money that is spent in my electorate. Obviously, members would like more money to be spent in their electorates but there is only so much in the cookie barrel and, as far as possible, it must be allocated equitably.

Let us consider some projects that have occurred in the Murray-Wellington electorate over the past year or two. I visited the Dwellingup Primary School and had use of a recently built covered assembly building which is fantastic for that school and of which it is very proud. That building cost around \$440 000, which is no small fee.

In Burekup - not in my electorate - students from my electorate attend the River Valley Primary School, which is in its second year of operation and was built as a result of the Burekup Primary School being condemned due to an infestation of white ants. As a result of that, the Roelands Primary School agreed to combine with the Burekup Primary School to form the River Valley Primary School. We therefore have one magnificent school instead of two older-style antiquated schools.

The South Western Highway has been upgraded from North Dandalup to Pinjarra with a widening of the highway and the creation of passing lanes. An upgrade of the highway is in progress between Pinjarra and Waroona on which about \$12m will be spent to take out some of the black spots and dangerous bends at which people have been killed in recent years in motor vehicle accidents. There is also an allocation in this year's budget for a passing lane to be constructed between Harvey and Bunbury. These works will make travelling on the South Western Highway a much better experience than it has been because, let us face it, the highway was a disgrace. Some of it still is a disgrace and is nowhere nearly up to standard. It is uneven, narrow and, as I said, there are dangerous bends in that road.

The money is allocated. Driving down the South Western Highway from Waroona to Pinjarra is often a pain as one must stop for some time while one line passes through before proceeding. Changes are happening. More money is being spent on Old Coast Road, which is becoming an excellent road. The extension of the Kwinana Freeway - as much as we would like it to run down to Mandurah - makes it quicker for people from the south west to travel to Perth, and the removal of traffic lights on the Kwinana Freeway will also improve the situation. All these developments come at a cost.

Currently, the Harvey Brunswick Football Club is building new clubrooms with an \$80 000 allocation from the Ministry of Sport and Recreation. Obviously, such facilities are fantastic for the community. They create employment while being built, and is a place at which footballers can meet after games and hold socials. The Waroona swimming pool was opened about two years ago following a huge allocation from the Ministry of Sport and Recreation. The Pinjarra recreation centre received funding as did the football clubrooms in Pinjarra. Overall, country people get a fair shake of the stick about which I am happy. It is important that money is spread equitably.

The Opposition also claims that not enough money is spent on health, and that we should spend more on King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women. Sure - we would all like to spend more money on health. Millions more could be spent on the health budget and be consumed. One must say, "This is the budget" and learn to live within one's means. If one puts more money into these areas, one can do one of two things - borrow money to fill up the hole or put up taxes. The Opposition bleats about putting more money into the Education and Police portfolios. What is the Opposition planning in its policy for the Health, Education and Police budgets? How does it expect to fund those policies? As in the past, will it borrow money and run up the state debt, or does it plan to increase taxes? The public needs to know those things before we reach an election. It is not a matter of bleating that things are not right, as they will never be perfect. The Government

has done its best to ensure things are put in place. As pointed out, we have provided four new hospitals, which is fantastic as money is flowing in this general direction. New schools are being built every day. This Government has ensured that Western Australia is a better place in which to live than it was when it came to office. The Opposition bleats about more money being needed for many areas, but taxpayers need to know from where the money will come. The only way I can see is for members opposite to increase taxes. The record of the Court Government over the past seven years has been not to increase taxes dramatically. A little increase has occurred in public transport fares, but Western Power and gas prices have been kept to a minimum or with no increase at all. Prices have been contained through efficiencies. This budget is fair and reasonable. The commentators have not knocked it, but we have heard the usual bleating from the Opposition.

The SPEAKER: The members for Vasse and Churchlands rose in a dead heat. I know the member for Vasse will take over from me in the Chair, so he has the call.

MR MASTERS (Vasse) [8.12 pm]: I am impressed by your impartiality, Mr Speaker. In rising to support the Bills and, therefore, the state budget as presented two weeks ago, I concentrate on certain consequences from last year's decision to sign the Regional Forest Agreement and make changes to the forest management practices. The greatest negative consequence to flow from those decisions - I emphasise that there are many positives - relates to the fact that significantly less money will be generated as a result of the sale of timber from our native forest. Therefore, we will have far greater difficulty finding the funds to manage those areas of native forest, much of which has been put into areas of protection of one form or another.

It is important that all understand that when looking at nature conservation, we accept that we human beings, Aboriginal and European, have changed the environment of Australia, as has occurred in many other parts of the world. To sit back and say that we can allow nature to take its course means that we would accept the extinction of more species, greater degradation of the environment and other undesirable things happening within our environment. The Government has done a very good job in balancing competing demands throughout the budget process, particularly in providing funds for the management of the natural estate of Western Australia.

I turn my attention to a very significant negative which arose in the past few days. This relates to the Australian Labor Party's proposal to create the Walpole wilderness area should it be elected to government at the next election. *The West Australian* of 23 May states under a headline "ALP picks up votes in the wilderness" that the ALP has "offered a bigger wilderness area on the south coast". The article reads -

On Saturday, Labor said it would create four national parks of a new Walpole wilderness area covering about 330,000ha of mostly untouched old-growth forest.

The plan would create an unbroken chain of almost 500,000ha of national parks from Augusta to Denmark.

. . . Under the plan, almost 90,000ha would be added to three existing or proposed national parks to create a continuous 215,000ha system along the south coast.

The emphasis I place over the next few minutes of my speech is on the wilderness aspect of this proposal. Wilderness is defined in many ways. However, a generally acceptable definition found in a 1992 federal government document, which was recent when I prepared a paper on the subject, reads -

. . . a wilderness area is:-

of sufficient size to enable the long term preservation of its natural systems and biological diversity;

substantially undisturbed by colonial and modern technological society; and

is remote at its core from points of mechanised access and other evidence of colonial and modern technological society.

That 1992 federal government document strongly supported the expansion of wilderness areas in Australia, and was entitled "Wilderness in Australia". A second publication entitled "National Wilderness Inventory: Stage III - Wilderness Quality on Cape York Peninsula" defines wilderness as "the extent to which a location is remote from and undisturbed by the influence of modern technological society". By definition, wilderness has four components: Remoteness from settlement, remoteness from access, aesthetic naturalness and biophysical naturalness. Therefore, a wilderness area must be large - hundreds to thousands of square kilometres - and relatively undisturbed, although this does not apply to disturbances caused by past, and potentially current and future, Aboriginal land uses. My proposition is that wilderness is a dangerous concept and should be rejected in most of the areas for which it is proposed. Wilderness is an anthropocentric concept, which is the belief that humans are the most important and central factor in the universe. That is contrary to green and conservation philosophies, which place nature either above or equal to the importance of humanity. Nonetheless, anthropocentric principles are used to justify the creation of wilderness areas. This false conservation principle should be seen for what it is: An attempt to prevent economic development in up to 20 per cent of the Australian mainland. The people and groups actively supporting the concept of wilderness have extreme political and social ambitions for Australia. They are attempting to change our society by furthering the economic controls and restrictions that have become so obvious in the green movement, in certain aspects of the Aboriginal industry and in other areas over the past 20 to 30 years.

Ms MacTiernan: We used to have reds under the beds. Do we now we have reds in the forest?

Mr MASTERS: The greens in the forest are displaying red tendencies. The "Wilderness in Australia" discussion paper

fails to identify how the vast majority of Australians - those without the physical or financial ability to spend one to two weeks backpacking in a wilderness area - can enjoy the natural environment when it is protected in this manner. Even aeroplane flights over wilderness areas could be banned because of the noise and physical intrusion. The wilderness concept hides behind a pro-environment facade, but in reality it is an anti-development, political concept that will take Australia further down the path towards social inequality and economic ruin.

Mr Wiese: Is it elitist?

Mr MASTERS: It is very elitist. Although the principle of protecting our natural environment on biological and conservation grounds should be strongly supported, the concept of wilderness is a distortion of sound scientific principles and should be rejected. Most people who support wilderness will not allow mining and forestry operations in such areas. Page 44 of the "Wilderness in Australia" document states -

4.3.2 Mining (including mineral exploration)

The ESD (1991a) Final Report on Mining states that "some environmental impact is an inevitable consequence of virtually all mining and mineral exploration activities, with the exception of remote sensing exploration". It also notes that "ground level activities, however, can have significant impacts, particularly where ground access is gained for the first time in remote localities".

It is important to understand the implications of such comments. The mining industry - of which I am proud to have been a member for many years - believes that, as Australians, we must know what all the natural resources, both environmental and mineral based, in Australia are. Wilderness denies the ability to simply explore an area, even though such exploration would be carried out in a manner so environmentally benign there would be no recognisable trace of it in a matter of months or years. People supporting wilderness are strongly opposed to mineral exploration in such areas because they fear that a mineral resource of significant proportion might be found and that the people would value that mineral resource far more than the wilderness resource and, therefore, mining might be allowed to proceed. The banning of mining and exploration activity in wilderness areas is simply an attempt to deny any economic development within that area. Page 45 of the document is headed "Forestry Operations" and states -

The broad nature and severity of potential impacts of timber production and harvesting on wilderness values have been summarised by Davey *et al* (1984) . . . The report says that clear-felling and regeneration burning are totally incompatible with wilderness values.

My personal belief is that 99 per cent of Australians, if taken into places that have been clear-felled of their original karri cover, such as areas like the Boranup Forest in the Augusta-Margaret River Shire - within the electorate of Warren-Blackwood - or the 100-Year Forest near Pemberton, would think they were standing in the middle of a wilderness area and ask how anything could be allowed to happen to that area.

Mr Omodei: And Big Brook.

Mr MASTERS: Yes, Big Brook as well.

Mr Wiese: Even Blind Freddy standing in one of those areas would see that the understorey was totally different understorey from old-growth forests.

Mr MASTERS: I am sorry, but the member for Wagin is absolutely and totally wrong. I have spent numerous occasions, in small and large groups, walking through what the green groups consider genuine old-growth forests and the regeneration areas I mentioned. All the characteristics of old-growth forests exist in regenerated areas bar one: The knowledge that the forest is untouched. That is the only difference in most of the regrowth areas which have had sufficient time to regenerate.

Wilderness is essentially an anti-development concept. A document prepared by the World Wildlife Fund - now the World-Wide Fund for Nature - supports that claim. The document is a December 1992 discussion paper entitled "A Protected Area Strategy for the Conservation of Biological Diversity". It is an extremely sound document because it provides logical arguments for the better management and protection of our natural resources. However, the word "wilderness" does not appear anywhere in the body of the text. It is referred to only in appendix 2, which describes the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's proposed protected area categories. In 1992, the World-Wide Fund for Nature deliberately failed to accept that wilderness as a concept had any place in the conservation of biological diversity.

Mr Trenorden: In the debate six months ago, we said that rocks, streams, fields and everything except for trees were worthless to conserve.

Mr MASTERS: The member is quite right. The reality is that the complexity of nature, which includes rocks, streams, heath and dunes, not simply wall-to-wall forests, makes nature as valuable and important as it should be. Wilderness is not necessary. Later on, I shall point out that the concept is antagonistic to good biological conservation imperatives.

Even though wilderness has been shown by the World Wildlife Fund not to be a necessity, I refer to an August 1992 publication of the Australian Legal Group, which is the "Environmental Headlines, sheet 8", under which there is a section headed "Victoria passes new wilderness legislation" which was written by a lawyer. It states -

It is intended that the creation of these new wilderness zones (which will result in nearly 4 per cent of Victoria's land being in a wilderness zone) will go some way towards combatting the loss of local vegetation that is a chronic problem in Victoria due to land degradation and salination.

That lawyer has got it absolutely and totally wrong. Wilderness per se does nothing to further the goals and needs of nature conservation. The World Wildlife Fund has recognised that. Nonetheless, ignorant lawyers and others support this concept which in theory sounds nice but in practice poses grave dangers for nature conservation.

Mr Pendal: Do you not think that is also a term that is used by people of goodwill as an illustrative concept without necessarily being a technically correct term?

Mr MASTERS: I agree and understand what the member for South Perth is saying. The danger is that people in our community will use the term "wilderness" in all of the most negative ways. They will use it in the way that I am defining it, namely anti-development, which means that only a very small number of very fit and financially secure people can go in and experience a wilderness area. The member has raised an interesting point. I will have more to say about the more general views of wilderness later on.

I will refer to some newspaper articles which appeared in March and May of 1992. An article entitled "Parks plan to curb NW" refers to a proposal by the Wilderness Society to try to create an immense wilderness zone in the northern part of the Kimberley region of Western Australia. One of the comments is that further development of the area including roads would be curtailed. It reads -

There would be wide-ranging implications for the mining, pastoral, tourism and fishing industries and significant implications for defence in the country's north . . .

Mineral and oil exploration and mining would have no place there.

Provisions would be made for low-impact tourism but operations should be either Aboriginal-owned or leased out by traditional owners and limitations should be placed on access points to the parks.

No further tourist access roads should be approved . . .

Restrictions should be placed on light aircraft and helicopters flying over the area . . .

Plans for a tidal power station at Walcott Inlet should be scrapped.

A second article on the same page, entitled "Minister hits land 'lock-out'", states -

Environment minister Bob Pearce -

Many members will recall that name -

- criticised the Wilderness Society for its "lock away" mentality . . .

The Government's plan for the area was based on proper management of conservation areas, as distinct from the society's big land grab, he said.

It is important that we try to understand who it was from the Wilderness Society who was making these claims. An article dated 16 May 1992 in *The West Australian*, which is entitled "CALM support for park plan denied", in part reads -

Conservation would not be achieved by alienating local people in the area which the Wilderness Society appeared to have done through its proposal, he said.

"He" is Dr Syd Shea. It continues -

Wilderness Society state co-ordinator Peter Robinson, who has just returned from a tour of the Kimberley . . . admitted he had a mixed response.

It is interesting that Peter Robinson is the person who has been coordinating the WA Forest Alliance project for the past three years to try to stop all logging in native forests in Western Australia.

I hope that I am painting a picture in which the concept of wilderness appears to have some emotional merit in many respects, but when one starts understanding the implications and the people who are driving it, it becomes more and more an anti-development proposal. I refer to a document dated August 1988 on the economic losses in Greenlee County in Arizona caused by wilderness designation for land in Greenlee County, because one of the major consequences of locking up areas in wilderness zones is no mining whatsoever. Mining in Western Australia is by far the biggest export earner and employer when one adds the downstream beneficial effects. The Americans have got to the stage at which they are so fearful of the creation of new wilderness zones that before a wilderness area can be declared, there must be an assessment of every other resource that might be tied up or lost as a result of a wilderness zone declaration. Hence, this report in 1988 referred to economic losses in Greenlee County, Arizona. The proposal in the area was that 14.8 per cent of the entire county be locked up in wilderness recreation. The report states that the opportunities in that area are very limited. The area is somewhat remote from larger population centres. At that time it had very little infrastructure for tourism, be it skiing or whatever. The end result was that there would be a significant negative impact on the county and the state as a whole should that wilderness zone go ahead. The article states that tourism and travel have been of even less significance in the economic base of Greenlee County than agriculture and federal employment. It reads -

It is estimated that in the period from 1985 to 1987 out-of-county visitors has provided an average of \$300,000 in personal income directly to Greenlee County residents. This relative insignificance of tourism to the county's

economic base can be attributed partly to its relatively remote location with respect to major population centres . . . and partly to its lack of development of tourist and recreational attractions.

If a wilderness area were created or expanded in that county, as had been proposed at that time, the summary of this document says that the creation of new wilderness areas would depress economic activity by a total of \$163.7m annually in Arizona and by \$19.3m each year in Greenlee County. The article states that the total loss would result from restricting effective general public access to the existing wilderness area - in other words, the creation of a bigger wilderness area will stop tourists from going into the existing one - and by further restricting access to and use of both public and private land for a range of purposes.

That is one example, although it is a little dated now. I have three US geological survey bulletin reports out of the many in my files, which refer to proposals to create wilderness areas in parts of the United States. One is from Utah which states that within the wilderness study area is about 221 000 tons of identified sub-economic uranium and vanadium resource and about 11 million tons of gypsum, and about 680 000 tonnes of gypsum in a third area, and that the mineral resource potential for localised, thin tar sands of variable grades in all wilderness study areas is high.

For a second wilderness proposal area in Utah, the mining summary states that the mineral resource potential for gypsum, potash, halite, and bentonite on the surface and in the subsurface beneath the wilderness study area is high, and that the energy and mineral resource potential for oil, gas, carbon dioxide, uranium and vanadium on the surface and beneath the wilderness study area is moderate. A third area in Colorado is referred to as follows -

The southwest part of the wilderness has a high mineral resource potential for gold, silver, lead and zinc in small deposits in veins, and a small part of this area along Halfmoon Creek has a moderate potential for molybdenum associated with the Halfmoon Creek stock.

People might ask what is the relevance of the mineral potential of different parts of the world to the proposal for the Walpole wilderness area. The answer is that no-one knows. It is because no-one knows that the creation of that wilderness zone may deny the people of Australia tens or hundreds of millions of dollars of economic return from mining or other activities. I am not saying that we should mine; I am saying that we should allow mineral exploration to occur in an environmentally sensitive way, so that if a mineral deposit exists, we will know the details of it and allow the people of Western Australia to decide whether they prefer wilderness and its economic consequences over mining or mining with its economic consequences over wilderness creation.

I refer to the 1992 document "Wilderness in Australia". Figure 5 is a preliminary map of Australia's wilderness which I can table if anyone is interested. It is significant that three of the four large general zones of wilderness still in existence in Western Australia at that time cover areas of significant mineral potential: The Kalgoorlie area, the Great Victoria Desert area where WMC Resources Ltd today announced a major new nickel-copper discovery, the iron ore country in the Pilbara and one of the world's largest alumina deposits in the Mitchell Plateau area.

Is it coincidental that these areas of proposed wilderness lie over the top of mineral deposits, or is it deliberate? I think it is deliberate. I could say much more. However, I realise there is a long waiting list of speakers. I will summarise some more points and invite people to come and see me if they want more details.

In an article dated 31 October 1998, the *Economist* refers to how mountaineers are denied access to wilderness areas because they may leave behind some of the metal clips that allow them to climb sheer rock faces. It is contrary to wilderness preservation; therefore that recreation activity cannot be allowed. An article in a journal called "Conservation Voices" dated August-September 1998 refers to "Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness". At that time, although it is an outstanding wilderness area, a major fight was occurring over whether motorised transport should be allowed for elderly and handicapped people so they, too, could enjoy the wilderness area.

Changing tack a little, the issue of Aboriginal usage of wilderness areas is very interesting. A book entitled "Wilderness the Future" contains a not very convincing argument that in Australia, Aboriginal people, even though they have traditional hunting and usage rights to those areas, should also be allowed to use motorised boats and vehicles and modern weapons, and be able to undertake commercial activities within existing wilderness areas in Australia. Again the argument is a bit thin, but I will gloss over it because time does not allow me to do otherwise. In *Time Magazine* of August 1999 an article entitled "Cultural road blocks" and subtitled, "On a small beach in New South Wales, a national dispute over land use is played out in miniature" refers to the fact that in one wilderness area, the National Parks and Wildlife Service has banned non-Aboriginal access other than on foot, but local Aboriginal people are able to make use of it on motorbikes, in four-wheel drives and so on.

To finish I will quote fairly extensively from an article written by Dr Tim Flannery, head of the mammal section of the Australian Museum. It was published in the past two or three years in the *Australian Natural History* magazine and reads -

. . . I have come to the sad realisation that Australia is one of the few continents that cannot afford wilderness. In brief, this is because we (*homo sapiens*) are the last of Australia's megafauna. . . . Removing us from the environment is equivalent to having a megafaunal extinction all over again.

As occurred when the Aboriginal people moved onto this continent of ours some 40 000 to 60 000 years ago.

Our perception of this problem is clouded by the devastation of the Australian environment that has occurred over the past 200 years. We have come to see people, particularly Europeans, as a negative force in the environment.

In fact, I am now convinced that much of the damage of the last 200 years was not so much the result of what Europeans did, but of what the Aborigines could not continue doing. The real damage to Australia occurred thousands of years ago, with the extinction of the continent's megafauna, including almost all of the 60 largest animals. Aborigines replaced in part those giants, preventing a potentially devastating trophic cascade; until 1788.

Which was when Europeans arrived. He concludes by saying -

So, where does this sad history leave wilderness areas? If we are happy to watch as biotic diversity is gradually lost from our wilderness areas, making them unstable and susceptible to invasion, perhaps we should just let them be. However, if we wish to see them remain in their complex grandeur, we must accept that humans have been an integral part of the Australian landscape for 40,000 years. If we fail to manage the system, and withdraw the last of the megafauna, collapse will follow. Specifically, we must replace the mouths of long extinct plant-eating giants with a sensible fire policy, and those of the carnivores with effective culling and species management programs.

To conclude, wilderness is in fact an anti-development concept. If it is applied to the area of the south coast in the Walpole area as recommended and supported by the Australian Labor Party, it will mean very significant environmental degradation over many decades, maybe even centuries, until we wake up to the fact that human beings are part of the environment; we must be part of the environment to protect against all the negative consequences of not managing large areas of the natural environment of Australia. To accept the Walpole wilderness area as a desirable concept will cause us environmental harm in the short and long term.

DR CONSTABLE (Churchlands) [8.48 pm]: In my brief remarks tonight I will address two issues. The first is a general issue relating to the Treasurer's speech and the second is an issue important to my electorate and I think important to the electorate of Innaloo; that is, the proposed Stephenson Highway.

The first issue concerns the Treasurer's speech in a general sense, and a matter that I find surprising that he did not address. I think in general the Treasurer's budget speech was a business-as-usual speech that follows previous themes of careful financial management. However, as I listened to the Treasurer it struck me that the budget is a fairly shortsighted document. It deals with the next year in particular, with some estimates for up to four years after that.

My concern is about the lack of vision and the medium to long-term future thinking that is missing in his speech. I must ask the question: Where is the Government leading us in the medium and long term? I do not see the answer in the Treasurer's speech. The speech starts to get interesting about page 9 of the printed document we were given, which refers to the agrarian and industrial revolutions. I thought, "Now we will get into the beginning of the twenty-first century and what is to come." I thought the Treasurer was going to address the issue of the technological revolution, but he did not. The speech falls seriously short. It does not recognise the new industries. Those new industries will create wealth in this country and in this State and will create jobs in the decades to come.

What does this Government have to say about nurturing the new technologies of biotechnology and telecommunications in particular? A major goal of this State must be the creation of technology. Simply being able to utilise technology, which is a theme in the Treasurer's budget speech, is not enough. It is in the areas of biomedical research, technological advances in other industries and communication and information technologies that the wealth of the future lies. If we are not part of those technologies, we will fall by the wayside. We have been very fortunate in this State for many decades - in fact, for 170 years. We have carved out an enviable history and success in agriculture, mining and some, but few, key industries. In fact, most of the time we have lived off the fat of the land. In recent decades we have been very fortunate national and international companies have been easily attracted to Western Australia because of the natural wealth we possess in this State. We are indeed very fortunate and we will be able to reap that wealth for some time to come. However, we still need to address the issues of the new technologies. It is the countries and the States that are addressing that issue and encouraging those technologies which will continue to flourish and create new jobs. That is where we need leadership in this State. I had hoped that the Treasurer would address this issue in the budget and would give us some sense of where the policy is and where this Government might take us beyond the next election and into the years ahead.

We all know that Western Australia can be disadvantaged by distance and by time in relation to the eastern States. We are clearly advantaged in distance and time in our geographical relationship with other parts of Asia. We are stable in our political and economic present and future and we have much to offer our neighbours in the region. If we do not join the new technological revolution, we will become a backwater in Australia and in Asia and a forgotten corner of the world, and we will see an exodus of our best minds, researchers and scientists, who will go elsewhere in Australia, particularly to Queensland.

Mr Cowan: When are you going?

Dr CONSTABLE: There have been lots of offers. Those people who are involved in creating new technological advances will simply go where there is money for their research and where there are opportunities to commercialise scientific and technological developments. If we lose those researchers, scientists and active and creative minds to other parts of Australia and overseas, our young people will not want to stay here either. They will want to study in centres where those scientific advances are being created. There is a lot at risk if we do not address this very important subject. If we do not join the new technological revolution, we will miss out on the creation of jobs for our young people. If those young people are interested in science and technology, they will be forced to seek employment opportunities in other places. Very importantly, if we do not join the technological revolution, we will miss out on attracting some of the new investment.

Mr Omodei: Technology is our biggest export industry at the moment.

Dr CONSTABLE: If the minister lets me continue, he will get the point of where I am going. The only State in Australia which has aggressively joined the technological revolution is Queensland. Technological advances require patience, a long lead time, infrastructure for the technologies, government support and certainly some risk taking. The Treasurer's speech was devoid of all those things. In the section starting on page 17 of the printed document, the Treasurer quite properly mentioned five key industries: Agriculture, minerals and energy, tourism, marine industry and forest products. I have no argument with that. They should be mentioned; they are very important to Western Australia. However, I would have liked to see the mention of the new technologies. In fact, if the member for Warren-Blackwood is correct and it is our biggest export industry, the Treasurer certainly should have mentioned it, but he did not. The key words biotechnology, biomedical technologies and information technologies simply do not appear in the entire speech that goes for 19 or 20 pages. In the short section on agriculture, there was some general mention - again, quite properly - of technology and modern science. However, there was no specific indication of the financial or policy commitment of the State and the Government in that area. There is no mention of biotechnology as an industry in its own right. Where are the biotechnologies and the communication technologies in the Government's thinking? If those are recognised as industries for the new century, one would expect the Government to be addressing them in a document as important as the Treasurer's budget speech.

To illustrate my deep concern that Western Australia is already being left behind in becoming an active and aggressive player in the development of technology, I turn for a few minutes to what is happening in Queensland. If we refer, for instance, to Beattie's budget speech in September last year, we find that the centrepiece of that speech related to Queensland's forward-thinking policies on new technologies. Those policies relate to the drive to attract knowledge-based industries to Queensland, including, and in particular, biotechnology. Within the budget itself are a series of initiatives through what Beattie refers to as "strategic investment in Queensland's research infrastructure". The thrust in Beattie's speech was not a one-off flash in the pan for the current budget. His budget outlined a 10-year plan with the current budget laying "the foundations for Queensland's development as the technological and intellectual hub of the Asia Pacific region". A Premier and a leader who uses such words is indicating where Queensland sees its future in at least the next 10 years and the decades to come.

Mr Cowan: Dr Mahathir has been using those words for the past 10 years.

Dr CONSTABLE: It just shows that Australia is lagging behind. That adds to my concern.

Mr Cowan: We are not lagging behind Malaysia, I can assure you of that.

Dr CONSTABLE: The outward thinking is not present.

Mr Cowan: I am trying to explain to you that it needs more than a few words in a document.

Dr CONSTABLE: Beattie is using more than a few words, and the Deputy Premier knows it, because we have had this discussion before. Premier Beattie went on to say -

We will achieve this through increased funding in areas including telecommunications, biotechnology, information technology and far-reaching education initiatives.

The Queensland government plans to outlay \$270m in the next 10 years with the aim of creating thousands of jobs. The fastest growing industry in Queensland is information technology and it is Queensland's fourth largest industry. If members reflect on what Jeff Kennett did while he was Premier of Victoria to try to put Victoria on the map -

Mr Cowan: We try not to!

Dr CONSTABLE: Exactly. He tried to stage large events, particularly sporting events. In fact, he was very good at stealing them from other States. I suspect that what Mr Beattie wants to be remembered for is putting Queensland fairly and squarely in a leadership role in technology. That is what he is saying and that is what he is trying to do. He will also be remembered for stealing scientists from other parts of Australia. It is already happening; he is stealing from institutes in Victoria.

Mr Cowan: In Western Australia the information technology industry is growing by 34 per cent annually.

Dr CONSTABLE: I am not surprised.

Mr Cowan: All the words that you are saying about Queensland can be applied to Australia and probably could be applied to every other State.

Dr CONSTABLE: The Deputy Premier is playing into my hands, because I am not saying that we are not doing those things. I am saying that the Treasurer does not see that as important to talk about it. We should be talking about it and encouraging people because it is so important.

Mr Cowan: We would rather do it than talk about it.

Dr CONSTABLE: Yes. Tell us about it if it is a good story. I do not think there is a good story to tell yet because the Treasurer did not tell us about it. I would be happy to be proved wrong. I raise this issue because it needs to be discussed. I have looked through the horrible fat books we get on the budget and I have seen some of the initiatives, but they are not seen as important enough to be mentioned in the Treasurer's speech. I find that absolutely extraordinary.

We must compare Mr Beattie's long-term approach to the technological revolution with the Treasurer's speech last sitting week. There is reason to be concerned if we are not talking about it in this State. Page 7 of the Treasurer's speech spoke about investing in the future and a commitment to infrastructure. I thought I would see what I was looking for in that section, but he said -

. . . superior infrastructure such as roads, transport, energy and water services are essential.

No-one would argue with that. We certainly need infrastructure for resource projects. On page 8 he continued -

When we came to government seven years ago, we knew that we could not maximise our mineral wealth, boost our farm production or develop new tourism destinations unless we had better roads.

That is a major statement! Of course, we need better roads but there is more to infrastructure than that yet it is the main point the Treasurer made. We are paving the way to future success by building more roads. It is a sad state of affairs that it is the main point the Treasurer makes about the infrastructure needed in this State for the future. He also said -

Our \$2.4 billion program has now provided us with the finest road network in Australia.

If we were to spend 10 per cent of that money on infrastructure for new technology - an amount of \$240m - we could begin to compete with Queensland and some of the Asian nations which are attracting money and technology to their shores. In the section of the Treasurer's speech under the heading "Investing in the Future", he does not mention the new technologies. They are not in the future consciousness if he does not talk about them.

The online strategy is to be applauded. Strategies in education and computing are to be applauded. However, they are only the first step to get the State thinking about these matters. I would have been a lot happier with this budget if it had recognised the urgent need to find ways to make sure the best minds in WA remain here, and to find ways to attract scientists and other technologists to develop technologies so the new wealth comes to Western Australia and does not stay in other places. The word "biotechnology" does not appear in the Treasurer's speech, and in that sense I regard this budget as belonging in the twentieth century and not the twenty-first century.

I turn now to one issue that has been important in my electorate in the nine years I have been a member, and certainly before then; that is, the Stephenson Highway road reserve. It has been changed on many occasions since it first appeared in the metropolitan region scheme in 1963. The current route of the proposed Stephenson Highway goes from the traffic lights on West Coast Highway and Oceanic Drive, along Oceanic Drive, behind the administration building of the Town of Cambridge, through part of Bold Park, along Bold Park Drive to Wembley Golf Course, and across the golf course between Newman College's junior school and Edith Cowan University, where it cuts across the entry to the school. If the highway were built on that road, there would be no access to the school. The route continues a short way along Pearson Street and along its new route. A year or so ago in this place, under the metropolitan region scheme, the route was changed along Pearson Street to Stephenson Avenue, and then proceeds across Osborne Park to the Mitchell Freeway. This issue has been raised again and I am pleased that it has been raised by the Department of Transport in a review of that road reserve.

I go back to 1991 when this was a major issue in the Floreat by-election, and the Liberal Party promised to remove the road reserve when it was in government. That has not happened in its seven years in government. In 1992, when I was speaking on this issue, Hon Bob Pearce interjected and said a study had been done, the road reserve was not required and should be removed. Studies were done in 1993, 1994 and 1995, and people came up with similar conclusions; that is, even in 20 or 30 years time there would not be sufficient traffic to justify spending hundreds of millions of dollars on that highway.

I was very pleased that in January this year the Acting Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Transport, Mike Harris, said the department would look into whether the road reserve was required. This followed the publication of the Nelson English report, commissioned by seven local authorities, which looked at the route from Fremantle to the Mitchell Freeway. The Department of Transport and the other departments involved in the current study should be applauded for their approach, the way they have involved the community, and for the careful attention they are paying to not only the technical data and projections of future traffic flows in 10, 20 or 30 years, but also the environmental and social concerns in that area. They have collected the technical data and have set up one committee with representatives from key local authorities, and another committee made up of organisations and individuals who have particular interest in and concerns about the road reserve.

Recently some preliminary options have been published - again it is a fairly brave move by the people involved - to allow for more community discussion. I will run through those options. The first option relates to the Bold Park-Wembley Golf Course section, and the technical, environmental and social data indicates that the road reserve in that section should be removed. The second section considered was the area across the Edith Cowan University campus, and they suggested that any decisions on that part of the road reserve should be put aside until decisions are made about the future of the campus. If ECU vacates that campus to concentrate its efforts at Mt Lawley and Joondalup, there will be an opportunity to change the road reserve, vary it or look at the traffic in that area and deal with an up-to-date situation.

The part of the road reserve of most concern is that in the Osborne Park area near the Mitchell Freeway. There is clearly a need for a section of major road there to alleviate the horrendous traffic problems in the industrial area of Osborne Park. There is a long way to go, but the new approach is admirable and has caught the imagination of the people in the area I represent. When the final report is written, I will urge the Minister for Planning to seriously consider removing from the metropolitan region scheme that area, which was mentioned in the first option. The part of the road reserve through the northern part of Bold Park and Wembley Golf Course should be removed. The technical data shows that the projections for traffic in 2021 are for no more than 10 000 cars a day. The Government could not justify spending tens of millions of

dollars on a major road in that area for no more than 10 000 cars a day. Other traffic problems in the area must be addressed, but they do not relate to that section of the Stephenson Highway. It is an excellent approach and I applaud it. I hope that the final recommendations will remove the road reserve from the northern part of Bold Park, which contains some important flora, and also that part that cuts across the Wembley Golf Course. The Wembley Golf Course is an important asset of the Town of Cambridge. It raises \$1m of revenue for the Town of Cambridge every year. If a road were built across the golf course it would destroy not only an important financial asset for the town but also an important recreation area for people who live in the Wembley-Floreat-City Beach area and for many thousands of Western Australians and visitors.

MR WIESE (Wagin) [9.11 pm]: As usual the member for Churchlands surprises me; she has caught me unawares. It is with mixed feelings that I make my contribution to the budget debate this year, because it is the last budget speech I will make in this House. It is the fourteenth budget I will see go through this Parliament in those 13 years. Many other members of the Government and I served an interesting apprenticeship in opposition. I appreciated it when we made it into government, because being on the government benches - as opposed to the opposition benches - puts a totally different perspective on what one is able to achieve for one's electorate and for Western Australia. I also acknowledge the real privilege to have spent four years in the Cabinet as a minister and to have worked with the wonderful people in the Police Service over those four years to improve their capability by giving them the support they need to perform what I believe is probably one of the most difficult jobs that anyone can take on; that is, to provide public safety and law and order right across the State. It is a big job, and they do not get a great deal of thanks for it. When I became the Minister for Police, police officers were working with depleted assets and infrastructure. It is pleasing to see where that has moved in the seven years or so that we have been in government. I could devote the whole of my speech to the Police Service and law and order issues that are associated with the service, but I will leave that for another time.

Generally speaking, this is a positive budget for the electorate of Wagin. From my point of view and from the electorate's point of view it is satisfying finally to achieve the funding of stage 1 of the major upgrade of the boys' wing of the Narrogin residential college through a \$3.4m allocation. The residential college and I have been working towards that for at least five years. We took the Minister for Education through the college two and a half or three years ago. He saw first-hand the deficiencies and problems in the college, and I thank him for positively acknowledging the need for an upgrade.

It is not often acknowledged that the Narrogin residential college is the largest residential college run by a government department anywhere in Australia, and I understand it is the largest government residential college in the southern hemisphere. It is a significant school facility and makes a major contribution to the education of young people from across a wide area of the central, great southern, and upper great southern areas. Students come to that college from Boyup Brook through to Hyden, Kulin, and Lake King, from further north and even from well outside the area, including the metropolitan area. The college provides first-class support for those children. It is virtually a home away from home and it does a wonderful job. It is the only way that many country students ever achieve a level of secondary education. In many of the places that those students come from there are not even district high schools for years 8 to 10. Those students must leave their districts and families to achieve even a year 10-level of education. The higher level of secondary education in years 11 and 12 is provided at senior high schools and there are very few of those scattered around the country. Senior schools are located in Merredin, Northam, Narrogin and Katanning, and there are also senior high schools in Albany and Esperance, on the coast. Basically, most of the children who do not live close or adjacent to the major towns must leave their homes and districts to achieve any level of secondary education, especially for years 11 and 12. That is why the residential colleges right across the State serve a vital purpose. Narrogin is the largest of those residential colleges and provides an extremely important service to all of those people in the country. It is, I believe, the largest government residential college in Australia; in fact, I understand it is the largest in the southern hemisphere.

It is my belief that education is probably the most vital gift we can give to our young people to prepare them for their future life, whatever that may be. That includes all aspects of their future life - their working and social life. Everything that they will do depends upon the level and the quality of education we are able to provide to them. It is an unfortunate fact that a smaller percentage of children from country areas go on to achieve tertiary education than those from metropolitan areas. Largely, that is a reflection not of the type of children or their IQ but of the isolation and the standards of education we are able to give them. The residential colleges and our district and senior high schools are essential to provide the level of education that we need to give them.

Following on the theme of education, I am pleased to acknowledge a budget allocation of \$2.2m for stage 1 of the technical and further education college at Katanning to establish and construct a major new TAFE facility. TAFE facilities are desperately needed right across rural and non-metropolitan Western Australia. Northam, Bunbury and Albany have good facilities, but there is not much else in the way of good TAFE facilities in inland Western Australia. The move to establish and build a new technical and further education college at Katanning is very important. TAFE colleges are as important as any of the tertiary institutions in our education system. About 60 per cent of all students across Western Australia will not go on to academic - if I may use the term - tertiary education at university level because they are not academically gifted. However, they have numerous manual skills and the ability to do and make things. TAFE colleges are absolutely vital for giving them the opportunity to undertake courses to attain skills to prepare them for going into the work force and making substantial contributions to our communities. The 60 per cent of students who will not go on to university will become mechanics, builders, plumbers and electricians on whom we rely totally because, without them our communities and social existence could not happen. Those students are as important, if not more so, than those who go through university, yet I believe they are often the forgotten and neglected portion of our community, when it comes to our education system.

Mr Trenorden: Mine was the last serviced region in Australia.

Mr WIESE: That further proves the point. It is good to see that the TAFE college at Katanning will go ahead, and I compliment the minister for making that commitment.

The next area that I want to acknowledge as an important part of the budget for my electorate is the commitment the Government has made to transport and to the major program of road construction and upgrading that is taking place across Western Australia and significantly in the Wagin electorate. Transport is the lifeline for all people who live in the country and for industry. Transport in Western Australia takes two forms, rail transport and road transport. The reality is that the rail transport system carries a substantial percentage of rural produce, which is virtually all grain. Substantial areas in my electorate and across the State have no access to rail and rely totally on road transport for everything that comes into their industries and, in the case of the agricultural industry, on to farms which rely totally on road transport for getting all of their farm produce to the ports and markets, because they have no other option. That is why road transport is such an essential part of the infrastructure in rural and regional Western Australia.

I have already touched on the very significant inputs as well as the grain that goes out from the areas. I am referring to fertilisers, fuels, chemicals, all of which come in by road because people have no choice. Some grain goes out of the rail-serviced areas by road because farmers use back loading to bring back, in most cases, their fertilisers to minimise their fertiliser costs. In my area, and certainly further north through the mid west area, there is a growing input to our farms in the form of lime which did not happen five years ago. I bring more lime onto my farm now than I do fertiliser. In most agricultural areas during the March, April and May period great heaps of lime can be seen sitting in paddocks waiting to be spread. It is a very significant input. In virtually all those areas, even if people wanted to bring lime in by rail, they could not because it is found on the west coast and there is no rail access to those places.

Mr Trenorden: The main road runs north-south.

Mr WIESE: Many of the major roads and railway lines run north-south. There have been very serious deficiencies in the road network for bringing lime from the west to the east. That has certainly been the case in my area and in the northern agricultural areas to a significant degree.

I forecast that there will be very significant increases in the volume of the input of lime into agricultural areas in the coming years, which will mean even higher tonnages of heavy transport coming onto our roads. That is why we must make a strong commitment to continuing this high level of expenditure on our roads for the people in rural Western Australia. I want to acknowledge the absolutely critical role played by Hon Eric Charlton, who was responsible for Transport for five years or so. He virtually trebled the amount of money going into roads in Western Australia and played a hugely proactive role in adopting measures for getting finance to carry out the program of the desperately needed upgrading of roads. The Government has already achieved significant improvements, but those improvements have highlighted the huge amount of work that we have yet to do to continue to upgrade those roads and give Western Australia a transport network that will meet the future needs of industry and the travelling public.

In my electorate \$3.6m this year will be spent on the Perth-Albany Highway, virtually all of which will be spent on passing lanes in the Arthur River-North Bannister area. They are desperately needed and more will be needed in the future. Passing lanes are also going in south of Kojonup in my electorate and the areas around Mt Barker and further south. I have said publicly, and to the minister, that in the foreseeable future we will need to virtually upgrade the Albany Highway, certainly north of Arthur River, to a three-lane highway with five kilometres of passing lanes in one direction and five kilometres in the other direction.

Mr Prince: It needs it all the way from Albany.

Mr WIESE: I do not disagree with that. However, the reality is that a very significant amount of heavy transport comes in from the eastern areas through Wagin, and to a lesser degree through Katanning, and then joins the Albany Highway at Arthur River. It goes both ways. We need to bear in mind that there must be significant further expenditure on the Perth-Albany Highway with a view to upgrading the road into at least a three-lane highway so that vehicles can pass. It is not merely a matter of getting transport moving effectively and efficiently but also a matter of safety. I have a very strong belief that the number of accidents is relative to the standard of the roads and their construction. That belief has been with me for a very long time. I have stressed it from way back in my junior farmer days when I lost several of my contemporaries in road accidents on those roads. In most of those tragedies, I believe that the standard of the road was a key factor.

A significant contribution of \$2m has been spent on the Wickepin-Kulin road and \$1.5m has been spent on the link road through Narrogin, all of which are desperately needed. The Government's commitment to transport and the road network is significant and to be applauded.

I acknowledge the substantial commitment in this budget to the health system across my electorate and rural Western Australia. We sometimes fail to acknowledge some of the advances made in health service delivery to regional Western Australia. A commitment of \$3.2m has been made to the Narrogin Regional Hospital in this budget, which is part of a \$6.4m upgrade to proceed in stages 2 and 3 over the next two to three years. A commitment of \$350 000 has also been made for a special rooming-in unit attached to the Narrogin hospital site for people with mental illness and their carers. That is significant in view of the comments made during the debate yesterday, especially by the member for Peel. We are endeavouring to address some of the problems highlighted yesterday.

As part of the multipurpose service health facilities in Katanning, \$3.6m of the \$4.7m project has been allocated in this

budget to upgrade aged care and other facilities, the majority of which will go to Katanning, as well as Kojonup and Gnowangerup. It is all part of the major, ongoing upgrading of health facilities across my area. In previous years we have received substantial allocations for the Wagin District Hospital, the Wickepin Nursing Post, Dumbleyung District Hospital and the Kukerin Nursing Post, as well as some major previous expenditure on the Narrogin Regional Hospital. Health in my electorate has certainly been acknowledged and has received some very good support.

Agriculture is the major industry in the Wagin electorate and most of our rural electorates, apart from those that have a significant mining sector. Substantial commitments have been made to the agricultural area in this and in previous budgets. This year, the new \$6m Katanning regional office for Agriculture WA will be completed. The amount of \$2.1m is in this year's budget to complete it. That will allow a substantial increase in the number of staff coming into the Katanning Agriculture WA facility over the next couple of years.

Again I say a very big congratulations to the minister. He has taken a significant proactive approach to providing facilities and services through his agricultural portfolio, which must be provided to a very wide range of agricultural pursuits. Those efforts have ensured that staff and services are in the regions where they are needed. That did not occur previously. It is a significant change that has seen substantial numbers of Agriculture WA staff moving out of South Perth and into the areas they service. That is significant in two ways. It means they are in the community where they need to be and are not isolated from the very people for whom they are providing service. As a result, significant interaction occurs between those departmental personnel and farmers. It is very much a two-way street. Not only do departmental personnel convey their knowledge and research findings to the farming industry but also there is a substantial flow the other way from the substantial practical knowledge of the farmers. The farming community is becoming increasingly educated and skilled. That is necessary to survive. It is able to provide substantial and worthwhile feedback to departmental personnel. It is a good coexistence of one organisation dependent on the other. Moving those people into the agricultural areas, sometimes in the face of considerable opposition from both departmental people and farming communities, has been worthwhile and we are starting to see the results of those measures.

I want to touch on a couple of other things that are not directly related to the budget but which are significant in my area. The first is that of genetically modified organisms. About eight weeks ago, the farming community in Western Australia learnt for the first time that during the past three and perhaps even four years, trials of genetically modified crops, specifically canola, have occurred on farms in three or four shires of rural Western Australia. One of those shires was the Wagin Shire, which is almost on the southern boundary of my property. My reaction to that discovery was probably fairly typical of most farmers. I was horrified. I like to think I am reasonably tuned in and intelligent, but I had no idea this was happening; nor did anyone else as far as I can ascertain. The shires were supposed to have been notified that trials would be held in their areas. I have yet to find a shire that was notified. My reaction was similar to that of many farmers - horrified and disturbed. The reaction was almost immediate. Shires such as Lake Grace and Williams passed resolutions to ban GM crops within their shires. A huge majority of farmers were concerned their canola would be contaminated or contain GM grain and that they would suffer buyer resistance and financial penalties when they came to deliver their crops. I felt betrayed by the system. I was appalled at the apparent secrecy under which these trials had been conducted. I was also horrified to find out that an application was before the commonwealth body responsible for giving approvals for these trials for trials to occur in this growing season, which would presumably be planted in April-May this year in another 50 shires across the State, including my own Shire of Narrogin.

In view of what I have since discovered, many of my fears were unfounded. I now believe that my big fear of crosspollination and contamination of my canola crops growing somewhere near a genetically modified canola crop was unfounded and that crosspollination and contamination will not occur by windborne pollen or bees, or will be miniscule. I found that out in the eight weeks following the discovery of the GM trials. I now know that overseas markets will accept that grain containing a maximum of 1 per cent of genetically modified grain is considered to be GM free. Our markets for our genetically modified free canola are not jeopardised by any potential cross contamination; at least, not in that way. I am still concerned that the move to genetically modified canola that is Roundup or glyphosate-tolerant may see crosspollination into some of our weed species such as wild radish and turnip. From my questioning of so-called experts it has been verified as a potential problem that could mean a quicker development of resistance in those varieties of weeds. I am greatly concerned that any major move into genetically modified canola that is glyphosate-resistant will also see a much quicker development of glyphosate-resistance in all our weed species, especially weeds such as rye-grass, which is a major problem in the cropping areas. At present, I am told by the agronomists that there are very few cases of Roundup-resistance in Australia. However, the agronomists and the departmental advocates of genetically modified variety trials all agree that this is a major potential problem and something of which we must be aware before we rush into accepting genetically modified canola or any other plant species in our agricultural areas.

I have been quite pleased with the minister's response. There will now be no commercial release of genetically modified canola seed for two years. That has not changed the game because it was not going to occur anyway. However, that is the official stand taken by this Government and I commend it and the minister for that. The minister has set up a committee to assess and advise on future developments in the field of genetically modified crops and seeds. That is very much needed and I congratulate the minister on that. He has agreed that there will be no further secrecy. Farmers will be able to find out where the trials are being conducted, which is absolutely essential as we move ahead with genetically modified plants and species.

I put on record my strong personal opinion of what must happen from now. We must establish a tight testing regime of all canola crops. By that I mean that every load that is grown within some proximity of genetically modified trial crops

should be tested. I suggested to the minister that we need to be carrying out testing from 0 to 500 metres out from the trial plots; from 500 to 1 000 metres; from 1 000 to 2 500 metres and from 2 500 to 5 000 metres. I believe that every load that comes from the crops within those ranges from the GM crops needs to be individually tested. I also said to the minister that it is absolutely essential that the tests are carried out by an independent body. Initially we were told that the only body that had the equipment to do that sort of testing was Murdoch University. Specialised equipment is required to carry out these tests, and Murdoch University has such equipment. I told the minister that whatever happens, the tests should not be carried out at Murdoch University because it has a huge vested interest in the whole question of genetically modified grains and organisms and is a major player in the field of genetic modification research and development. It would not be seen as independent. I suggested that perhaps the Health Department could acquire the equipment to do the testing, because at the end of the day is the federal health minister who has responsibility in this area. I believe that the Chemistry Centre (W.A.) also has the capability. Either of those agencies would be acceptable. I reinforce my strong belief that the test centre must be independent. It is absolutely critical for two reasons: Firstly, we must be able to publish the results of the independent testing widely to show the farmers that no cross contamination of their crops is occurring. If farmers are to accept that genetically modified crops can be grown alongside free crops, they must have access to the testing information. Secondly, it is also critical that we are able to show our markets - the consumers of our canola - that what they are buying is genetically modified free, that there is no contamination. Our overseas markets are now aware that Western Australia has been conducting genetically modified trials over the past three or four years.

I think there will be many heartaches and hiccups along the path towards acceptance of genetically modified crops and possibly even genetically modified animals in Australia and around the world. It is a tragedy that farmers and the wider community have been kept in the dark for at least the past three years. We have lost three vital years which could have been used to educate consumers and farmers about genetic-modification technology and its implications. I have a strong belief that GM technology will be one of the most positive developments in human history and it will have huge potential benefits for mankind, not only in areas of animal and plant development, but also for revolutionary new products in the fields of medicine, vaccines and a range of medical materials and procedures. It is the way of the future but scientists must take account of the community and social issues associated with GM development and they must work with the people. They must take the people with them as they advance down the route of introducing genetically modified organisms into our lives. They cannot lock themselves behind closed doors to carry out their research and then foist it onto an uneducated and unwilling community. It is my observation that ignorance and fear have always been major factors in hindering human development and the adoption and acceptance of new technology. I do not believe that human nature has changed. Our first reaction is to reject the unknown and that is why it is important that in future we acknowledge and accept that and work within those guidelines.

Twenty-four hours ago I received a telephone call from a major stockfeed pellet producer in my electorate, Macco Feeds Australia, to say that they had been totally blocked up all day with wax precipitating out of their diesel fuel. Their whole plant had been out of action for the day. Macco Feeds is a major industry in the Williams area. It is a huge consumer of diesel fuel, using approximately 50 000 litres a month. The company's tank is a 25 000 litre reservoir. It was totally emptied three weeks ago because it had to move the tank into new bunding to meet safety requirements. The tank was refilled at the beginning of May and again last week. The fuel was manufactured in May and met May winter diesel standards; that is, it was manufactured in Kwinana to specified cloud-point standards. That is the temperature at which the wax precipitates out of the diesel, which is normally 2 degrees. In practice, BP Australia Ltd's Kwinana refinery is manufacturing diesel to 1 degree cloud point, which means that the wax should not come out of the diesel until it reaches about minus 1 or 2 degrees. There is about a 3-degree tolerance. On Monday night or Tuesday morning, Macco Feed's fuel totally waxed up. A lot of problems were experienced at the end of April when diesel fuel all across Western Australia precipitated wax. Literally hundreds of tractors, utes and machinery which rely on diesel fuel waxed up and could not be moved for many hours on that day. It cost thousands of dollars to throw out and replace all the filters and, in many cases, to pump the diesel out of existing tanks. That was summer diesel and its cloud point was much higher than the cloud point we are supposed to have in May. The fuel at Macco Feed's was May diesel. It should not have frozen out. The temperature on that morning was 1 degree - it was not even a frost - yet wax precipitated out at that temperature. It is an issue which is of huge importance across the whole of our agricultural area as we are about to go into a cropping season. Temperatures will get much lower during the cropping season over the next month or so than the 1 degree experienced at Williams on Monday night and Tuesday morning. If this wax comes out in thousands of tractors right across the agricultural area, there will be absolute chaos. There will be some very angry farmers wanting to lynch a lot of fuel distributors, especially anyone at BP Australia Ltd which is responsible for manufacturing and distributing this diesel fuel around Western Australia. It is potentially a huge problem, and it must be addressed by BP as a matter of great urgency.

I wanted to talk about rural doctors, but I have almost used up my time. Before I conclude I will take two minutes in my last speech in a budget debate to put on the public record of this Parliament one or two thankyou's. As members of Parliament - I am sure all members would agree with me and support my thoughts - we could not do our jobs without the enormous support we receive from our electorate officers. I put on the record my gratitude and thanks to several persons who have been electorate officers in my electorate over the 13 years I have been a member of Parliament. They have been totally dedicated and absolutely hardworking, far beyond the call of duty and the hours for which they are paid. I could never have done the job I have done without their assistance, especially in the four years I was a minister. For many years at the start of my parliamentary career, Judith Ennis was the electorate officer in my Narrogin office. She was a wonderful person and an enormous help and did a fantastic job for me.

Mr Trenorden: And still is.

Mr WIESE: She still is a wonderful person and is still doing a wonderful job working with the Health Department in the Narrogin Regional Hospital. I suspect that the hospital could not function without her either. Judith was followed by another wonderful and dedicated electorate officer, Chris Timoney, who is still with me in my electorate office today. She is a fantastic person who puts in long hours, does an enormous amount of work and has been a great service to both me and the electorate of Wagin. I could not have done the job without those officers. I also mention two other persons because for many years I ran an electorate office in Katanning at my own expense. The first electorate officer I had was Jo Harrison-Ward. The electorate officers in my Katanning office worked totally on their own, as Jo did as my first electorate officer in Katanning. Jo later moved into my ministerial office and did a fantastic job both for me as a minister and for the whole of emergency services across Western Australia. The other electorate officer I had in Katanning was another marvellous person, Anna Gossmann. She has now moved to the hills as her husband moved from Kojonup, and she now works in the electorate office of the member for Swan Hills. Again, Anna was a wonderful, dedicated person who performed an enormous amount of work for both me and the community based around the Katanning electorate office. I owe them a great debt of gratitude. I am pleased to be able to publicly record my thanks to those girls and to the many others who worked at different times in assistant and fill-in roles in my electorate office.

I thank the House for its indulgence. I am pleased to have been able to serve my electorates and the community of Western Australia in my parliamentary role. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to support the budget Bill before the House tonight.

DR TURNBULL (Collie) [9.56 pm]: I am proud to be standing here tonight as the member for Collie and to be following the speech made by the member for Wagin. The member for Wagin and I have sat next to each other for most of our time in Parliament, except when he was a minister. I very much appreciated his last speech in this budget debate. My speech will focus on the issue of employment. Employment and industrial development in our electorates are a very important part of our role as members of Parliament. Fortunately, as I have told many people before, I represent the best electorate in the world. This is partly because of the varied industries, communities and activities that are conducted in the electorate. When one looks at the issue of employment, one must look at what the Government's role really is. Some people think that the Government can pluck jobs out of the air and can generate employment in that way. I do not see that as the Government's role at all. I see the Government's role as facilitating and assisting the financial situation in which industry can develop and expand.

The electorate of Collie has been very fortunate in the past six years. There has been quite a lot of construction with both the Collie power station and now the Worsley Alumina Pty Ltd expansion. The Worsley Alumina expansion is coming to an end. It will be virtually completed by the beginning of July. As an aside, one of the reasons it must be finished by then is that the huge construction camp, which is large enough to accommodate 1 000 people, will be moved to Sydney to be part of the accommodation for the Olympics. It goes to show that with construction there are no permanent jobs. There will be extra permanent jobs at Worsley, and those people who have been fortunate to be taken on by Worsley are beginning to enter into the permanent employment production phase at Worsley. Therefore, we are left with a situation, particularly in the Collie area, in which there are quite a lot of people, particularly tradespeople, who have a lot of skills, for whom there is no employment within our community at this time. This is a very difficult stage for Collie. There has been downsizing in the mines and the power station. In July there will be another round of redundancies in the power station, and people are unsure about what will happen and how they will maintain their employment.

As members of Parliament, from whatever side of politics, we must give some thought to what is happening in society with a large part of the work force not having permanent employment, but being employed on contract. In the power station some of these contracts run for six weeks during the maintenance programs, and other contracts run for three months, six months or even five years. It is a difficult phase for people employed under those contracts. One of the unfortunate aspects of working on contract is that people do not have the capacity to enter into long-term loans and agreements for purchasing their homes. This is also a very destabilising factor in society. I know this will not be solved by the budget debate tonight or even this year but, as members of Parliament, we must put our minds to this subject and this concern in our communities.

Collie is an area being heavily impacted upon in this regard because the downsizing at Muja power station is related to the fact that tradespeople who were previously employed permanently, but were not involved in productive activities for many weeks of the year, are now employed on short-term contracts which run for the six weeks of the maintenance program. They then have no work for the following six to eight weeks, until re-employed for the next maintenance program. The new Collie power station is very important and it provides a few more opportunities for employment.

I now refer to the next phase of the Collie power station. As the members who are still present in the Chamber know - I very much appreciate their presence - the second phase of the new Collie power station is an essential component of the future industrial development of Western Australia. Many people may snort at that and say that in the current climate we do not want another coal fired power station. However, the absolute fact remains that the cheapest method of producing base load electricity in Western Australia is by a coal fired power station. We must give consideration to the next phase of the Collie power station. It is said that with the growth in electricity load in Western Australia, we shall need 100 megawatts each year for the next three years, including this year, and after that we shall need another 300 megawatt base load generator. That means the year 2003 is a very important year for the development of future base load power generation in Western Australia. Of course, the construction of a coal fired power station - even the second part of the Collie power station when most of the infrastructure has been built in the first phase - needs a lead time of two to three years in which the decision can be made and the contracts assessed and let. It will be interesting to see what type of power generator will be installed for the next phase. Many efficiencies have been introduced into coal-fired power generation, and this facility will need to be a state of the art system. One factor to consider is employment on a larger scale. The extra coal that will

have to be mined and the extra work to be done in the power station will provide no more than 70 to 100 jobs, so we must look at other employment avenues.

Over the past three years Collie has been considering closely the issue of employment through tourism. Collie has many attractions and, as I have said here on many occasions, its greatest advantage over places like Pemberton, Manjimup and Margaret River is that it is only two and a half hours from Perth. Collie has magnificent forests and waterways, a pleasant environment, and is only two and a half hours from Perth. Collie must focus on its assets. I congratulate the Government on the purchase of Worsley block No 4 which surrounds the Wellington Dam. This land is beautiful forest area and will be designated as a national park in the future. The designation as a national park is an important part of the development of tourism facilities and attractions around Collie.

Mr Omodei: It is a magnificent tourism attraction.

Dr TURNBULL: It will be.

Mr Kobelke: Do you consider that the ends justify the means?

Dr TURNBULL: Purchasing that land was vital, because it was the only opportunity the Government would have to place that land within public ownership.

Mr Kobelke: It should have been done properly.

Dr TURNBULL: If the Government had not bought that land the loudest condemnation would have come from the Opposition.

Mr Kobelke: We supported it; we did not expect it to be done by illegal means.

Dr TURNBULL: The Opposition has been bagging that decision the whole time. That is despicable.

Mr Kobelke: Just do it legally.

Dr TURNBULL: It was not illegal, and it was an extremely important purchase. I put on the record that the ministers who were involved - the Minister for Water Resources who has responsibility for the Water Corporation, the Treasurer, the Minister for Regional Development and Commerce and Trade, and the Minister for the Environment - were all supportive of this plan. I congratulate those ministers for recognising the magnificent opportunity that this land and forests provided and for taking advantage of that opportunity.

If Collie is to develop a tourism focus the whole community must develop that focus. Collie must develop this attitude. As I said recently the most important facet of becoming a tourist town is for the people in that area to believe that they are attractive to tourists. Collie people must become actively involved in welcoming visitors to Collie. Until the majority of the people within a district believe Collie is a tourist town we will not have the attitude which will welcome tourists. That is an important area on which we must work. We must also work to educate the people who will be working in the tourist industry.

I note tonight the wonderful entrepreneurial confidence that a group of local Collie people have shown in developing the Banksia lodge concept and the Banksia motel, which opened only a few months ago and has had very good occupancy rates since then. It provides a very good fillip for the employment of women, particularly some who were working out at the Worsley construction accommodation site.

In developing employment, the Government can assist in training and in the Collie electorate the Government is assisting substantially with training. The Donnybrook Junior High School is currently going through the local area planning process as it has determined that it wants to offer a vocational program for years 11 and 12. Currently all year 11 and 12 Donnybrook students go to Bunbury or somewhere else. We want to develop a vocational training program for years 11 and 12 in horticulture, viticulture and orcharding. That is because Donnybrook is a premium orcharding area. We want to work on the strengths of our areas and this development at the Donnybrook Junior High School will be an extremely good way of doing that.

Collie Senior High School has one of the best vocational training programs for trades in the whole of the Western Australian system; that is because we have had magnificent support from small and large businesses in Collie accepting students into their workplaces and giving them the experience they need in order to develop vocational training.

Last Friday I visited the training facility at the Boyup Brook telecentre, which is one of the best examples of a telecentre operation in the whole of Western Australia and is regarded as a model throughout Australia and overseas. Telecentres rely on the Internet and when Scottish and Swedish people chase up this telecentre on the Internet to find out how it works, one realises that it has an international focus. The Boyup Brook telecentre provides Westlink training and other training courses and has focused on new as well as old industries in Boyup Brook. Boyup Brook has been a centre for the wool industry. Many farmers in the Boyup Brook area have been in extremely difficult straits in the past almost decade now of low wool prices. However, most Australian primary industry producers are very innovative and are prepared to embrace new advances in technology to see how they can manage their enterprises to survive the terrible low wool prices. Some of their survival techniques have meant moving into new industries. Vineyards have come to Boyup Brook as they have to many other areas. Boyup Brook therefore is a good area for employment. Blue gum plantations are extensive in the Boyup Brook area and it is my vision, and the vision of a number of other people in the Boyup Brook area, to try to develop it as a town

that provides services to the plantation harvest industry. The Pedricks plantation operation in Boyup Brook is a fine example of a young couple who have moved out and taken an opportunity in a new industry.

These are some examples of the many ways in which industry can be developed in members' areas. Industry is employment. As I said at the beginning of my speech, government is there not to necessarily give people jobs, but to help facilitate the development of employment. The Government has created jobs in a few areas in the Collie electorate. This is mainly through the Minister for Water Resources and the magnificent government infill sewerage program, which provides a very important environmental aspect as well as employment in country towns.

This Government's budget is steady and not spectacular. Some people might think that in a pre-election year it should have contained more sweeteners, but we have focused on good management. I see the majority of the activities in my electorate as maintaining the good progress made.

I now focus briefly on the division of the Department of Conservation and Land Management. As members know, nearly half of my electorate is covered by production and conservation forests. Therefore, the management of the division of CALM is very important to us. I am convinced that the CALM share farm office must not move from Collie. Anyone who wants to move the office from Collie, under the guise of a general rearrangement under the division of CALM into conservation and forest production, is to be well and truly condemned. I have made very strong representations to the ministers involved that the CALM share farm operation must remain in Collie. I will be absolutely frank, and as a country member, Mr Deputy Speaker, you will know what I am talking about: Some people in some organisations, particularly some government bodies, will arrange the organisation to suit themselves. Any suggestion to move this office from Collie to Bunbury will be made purely to suit the officers involved in the organisation. The work connected with the CALM share farms is east and south east of Collie. Why should a person involved in the operation not start his or her work day in the Collie office? There is no reason for starting the work day in Bunbury, and then driving up through Collie and out to the plantations. A gross waste of expenditure would be involved in both salaries and transport costs if the CALM share farm office moved from Collie to Bunbury. I have had no replies yet from ministers in this regard, and I will give them only a few more days before I chase them up on this issue. A Government must ensure that activities and enterprises are located in country areas where the services are required. Decentralisation is not re-centralisation in regional towns - true decentralisation is to place operations in country towns where the activity is taking place. I fully support the budget as presented, and I look forward to another stable year for the community of Western Australia.

MRS PARKER (Ballajura) [10.20 pm]: Since the budget has been handed down, I have met with a large number of constituents in my electorate of Ballajura, both at their door and at various functions that I attend in my electorate. I have met with people from a wide range of backgrounds -

Mr Cunningham: And with me.

Mrs PARKER: Yes. The member for Girrawheen continues to return to his favourite patch of the metropolitan area, and he is welcome any time, Mr Deputy Speaker. It is interesting that the feedback from the people to whom I have spoken in my electorate has been consistent. Their view has been that this is a responsible budget. It is not a big-spending, pre-election budget; it is not flashy; it is not a con; and it is not pork-barrelling. The Government has struck a balance and has been responsible in the way it has prepared its budget. With the cynicism and criticism that people have of politics and of things such as pork-barrelling, the people in my electorate have understood that a Government cannot increase spending and increase the surplus and, at the same time, decrease the revenue that it raises from taxpayers. Therefore, any criticisms made of the Government and its budget that have included those three qualities have not gone down well and have not been accepted as being reasonable or consistent by the people to whom I have spoken.

The people of Ballajura appreciate the substantial amount of money that the Government has invested in important capital infrastructure in the electorate. Recently the Minister for Education advised this House that since 1993, the Government has spent more than \$42m on school infrastructure in my electorate. That is a significant amount of money to spend on school capital infrastructure. This budget allocates another \$4.3m to complete the \$5m commitment to the final stage of the Ballajura Community College. That \$4.3m will be used for the completion of a new performing arts centre, a second gymnasium, a new information technology block and general learning area, and an upgrade of the science and technology areas. Ballajura Community College was one of the first of the middle and upper school campuses to be custom-built in this State. It has a population of some 1 900 students, which is a significant school population to manage. The college has a very professional and committed academic staff, and with the most extensive capital infrastructure spending on any school in this State that is now being undertaken at that college, it is a state-of-the-art facility. This Government's commitment to the young people of this State has been evidenced at that college and across my electorate since 1993 with the spending, and I repeat the figure, of \$42m on school infrastructure. That is an impressive record, and one that I support. I will not rest at that but will continue to lobby for facilities for the schools in my electorate, but that is certainly a record of which we can be proud and one that is appreciated in my electorate.

This Government has committed \$3m for roadworks aimed at reducing traffic delays at the notorious Collier Road-Tonkin Highway intersection in Morley. That intersection is listed as one of the top 10 black spots in the metropolitan area that need to be addressed. As the local member, I have pursued this project since early 1999, when Graham Pittaway, the then president of the Morley and Districts Business Association and now a Bayswater city councillor, first raised this matter with me and with the Premier at a breakfast that I held in my electorate. When I followed up on this matter, Main Roads advised me that a grade separation of this intersection had been deferred until 2009. We felt the time frame in which to deal with the issues of this intersection was unacceptable. I instigated an onsite meeting with the Minister for Transport, Mr Pittaway

and Main Roads officials. Main Roads was prepared to review the situation. It identified a new approach of a possible short-term option which would cost approximately \$3m and would reduce current traffic delays by about 70 per cent. This compromise was certainly strongly supported by the local business community and would solve the problems of delays and safety issues at the intersection. I am delighted that the Government has put the money aside in the 2000-01 budget to implement the project. It will provide substantial benefits to our local community through reduced delays and vehicle operating costs, with Main Roads having estimated savings in the order of \$66m over 10 years. The Minister for Transport has advised me that design works are already under way and will be completed by mid-July, following which tenders for works will be called. I am very pleased to acknowledge the support of the Minister for Transport in this matter, who has been prepared to look at a situation and listen to the concerns of local people. People who met him on site found that to be so and that he would look for a possible alternative. We will certainly be looking forward to that upgrade.

Some other significant capital works initiatives in this budget will benefit people in my electorate, one of which is the new fire station for Malaga which will allow an improved fire safety service for not only the residents in the north east corridor section, but also the light industrial and commercial precinct of Malaga where there are now some 1 300 businesses. Particularly because of the bush that surrounds the area, having a firefighting service close by will improve the service for the residential areas and also for what is becoming a significant and important light industrial-commercial precinct in the metropolitan area.

Another capital works initiative is a \$480 000 allocation to the new animal welfare centre being established by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in Malaga, which will be one of the finest facilities of its type in the nation. Not only people in my electorate own pets and expect us as a humane society to provide a level of care and protection for farm animals and domestic pets, but the majority of people across the State do as well. I welcome this Government's efforts and support them. I advocated for the Government to make a significant contribution to that centre. Many thousands of schoolchildren will visit the education facilities at the centre. All Western Australians can be proud of it.

There is also a \$1.1m allocation for a dental clinic to be built in Morley. Along with other initiatives, these are some of the specific matters in the locality that will benefit people.

Mr Omodei interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mrs PARKER: I have just finished talking about the RSPCA facility. Maybe the Minister for Local Government has just entered the Chamber.

Mr Cunningham: This is pork-barrelling at its worst. We have nothing in Girrawheen.

Mrs PARKER: The member for Girrawheen may visit Ballajura anytime he likes. He will find I have been working on many of these projects for some time. I welcome those projects and the fact that they will complement many of the local government initiatives I have supported over the years. I refer particularly to the swimming pool for Ballajura supported by a \$760 000 state government grant. It will be ready for use at the beginning of July. Local government projects, small though some of them may be, affect people's quality of life. It is important for us in government not to forget the small things that affect the quality of life in neighbourhoods, such as the recreation and playground facilities in Orchid Park in Beechboro, the sports club rooms at Karijini Oval in Ballajura, the provision of lighting and the upgrade of clubroom facilities at the Morley and District Sporting Club, the provision of youth outreach workers by the City of Swan and the rehabilitation of the ecosystem at the Ballajura lakes. The last project has come with the support of the Minister for the Environment, who has just entered the Chamber.

They are small items in one regard, although we cannot call a \$760 000 grant for a swimming pool a small item. A number of those projects are local, neighbourhood issues that affect the quality of life of the residents, and projects that, with the local governments in my area, I have been proud to support.

Mr Cunningham: There is a rumour going around that you are teacher's pet. Are you teacher's pet?

Mrs PARKER: The member for Girrawheen, for whom the people of my electorate have a fond affection, is out of order again! He is always welcome there, but when he is in our patch he is not usually so unruly. Perhaps it is the House that is doing it to him.

I conclude by commenting on some of the services and initiatives announced in the budget that are priorities and that will affect all Western Australians. I first welcome the Government's continued commitment to an effective strategy against drug abuse. It continues to be, either directly or indirectly, a scourge for all of us regardless of which suburb we live in or our religious or cultural backgrounds.

Last week, some 350 people attended a drug forum in my electorate which we called Seeds of Hope. It was organised by the local drug action group in partnership with a range of local people, including members of Parliament and the Western Australian Drug Abuse Strategy Office. It was designed to provide a positive avenue for local people to ask questions and have their say about the issues, but most of all to gather information about problems and issues relating to drug abuse as well as the services that are available. With the increasing range of services provided by this Government it is important that people have some confidence in the array and availability of services.

Drug abuse is a serious issue that can be effectively addressed only if we work together. By "we" I mean the Government, service providers and essentially individuals, groups and the community. As I said, help is available. The most recent initiative of the 24-hour parent-to-parent help line will be of significant benefit to people facing the issue with people about

whom they care. We were able to give out information and provide some optimism to people about things they could do to deal with the situation. This forum was a great example of the kind of partnership people can have between government, its agencies and the community through that local drug action group movement. One of the interesting things about that forum was the large proportion of young people present. That is an indication that we have a community which is prepared to take action to make a difference. It is pleasing to see that the Government is spending more than \$50m a year on initiatives to reduce and prevent drug abuse and to provide support services for those affected by it.

The law and order issue remains a constant concern and a priority. I refer in particular to the sense of security and safety we all like to enjoy in our own homes. Over the coming months I will continue to outline to my constituents the importance of and my support for the mandatory sentencing laws relating to home invasion as just one plank of the Government's efforts to achieve a safer Western Australia. I am also looking forward to the contribution of the almost 100 additional police officers who will be on the beat across the State as a result of the recent budget allocation. I will continue working with my Safer WA committees, the local police and also with the community. We live in a changing world, with different aspects of our suburbs and neighbourhoods changing. Suburbs are very often empty for a major part of the day because both parents in many families are in the work force. Like drug abuse, this problem is not something the Government can solve alone. We must work together to achieve a safer Western Australia.

The budget contains a broad range of initiatives, including the Building Blocks program. Clearly we must respond not only to the symptoms but also to the causes of the problems that we face in our society. I strongly support responding with clear intent to the symptoms of our law and order problems by ensuring that justice is done and seen to be done and that the punishment fits the crime. As I said, mandatory sentencing is an example of that approach. However, as a society wanting to get to the root of the problems, we should also implement some very clear and positive prevention initiatives. While a vast array of those initiatives has been implemented since 1993, I commend the Government for the Building Blocks initiative. Providing every mother of a newborn child in this State with a home visit by a nurse is a strong and important move. I am confident that mothers around the State welcome this support. It is an important way in which to provide support for all mothers, particularly those who might not have the appropriate confidence or skills as they begin parenting. It is one of the most important jobs we do in our life and one for which we are often under prepared. Providing the professional and compassionate support of a home visit is very important. It will be welcomed by mothers and families not only in my electorate but also across the State.

People in my electorate have welcomed this budget. It had no increases in state taxes and allocated a significant proportion of funding to the critical areas of health, education and law and order. People commented that this is not a pre-election budget per se - it does not have the qualities of a pre-election budget. Rather, it has the qualities of a responsible budget that is seeking to strike a balance between all the demands on government. It has allocated taxpayers' funds in what the Government believes is a most responsible manner. I believe that the Government has delivered a budget that focuses on the important areas of health, education, and law and order but has continued the its commitment to good financial management and to initiatives to support strong economic growth. I look forward to continuing to serve in the Government and in the electorate of Ballajura in order to see a consolidation of those initiatives and a continuing prosperity. By prosperity I mean more than just financial prosperity. This budget will see the consolidation of prosperity across economic, social and other factors.

MR TRENORDEN (Avon) [10.40 pm]: I am aware of the enthusiasm with which my speech will be greeted so I will move on quickly. I point out to the member for Nollamara that not one negative word has been said about the budget in the past six hours, which is in contrast to his comments yesterday. I am pleased to say that the Avon is on the move.

Mr Cunningham: The water is running.

Mr TRENORDEN: That is a good point. For the first time in decades the Avon River has not stopped flowing over a 12-month period. That is very unusual.

The Northam area in the Avon has always been said to service the wheatbelt but it has never really got to the heights that have been suggested it might. Recently there have been substantial breakthroughs in the Avon region and we are looking forward to a positive era. One of the key issues that cannot be spoken of too highly is that the Avon bypass will now be built. After a delay of 35 years, 11 kilometres of road will be built at a cost of \$42m and will take 82 weeks to construct. It will be a substantial landmark for Northam and those who live east of it, and other people who want to use Great Eastern Highway. It is a critical development and has broken an attitude impasse within our region. We have had other major roadworks that are important to us. In the 1970s when I first lived in Northam there were many complaints about Great Eastern Highway. I like to steal one of our locals' favourite comments: The only correct term in Great Eastern Highway is the word Eastern - the rest of it is a lie. It has been improved dramatically in recent years, and that is much to the credit of the former minister, Eric Charlton, as the member for Wagin has said. We will soon have a dual highway to the lakes. Those who travel on the highway will know that that is the greatest portion of the road to Northam. Between Northam and the lakes there are many stretches with dual passing lanes. That section of the road has been improved out of sight. The same goes for the Brookton Highway and a whole range of other road services within the electorate.

A particularly pleasing matter is a strong growth in health services in my electorate. We are putting a multipurpose service into the York region. I had a fair bit to do with the construction of MPSs some years ago. We have nearly doubled the delivery of health dollars into York Hospital - a hospital, I point out to the member for Nollamara, which his Government tried to close only eight years ago. The hospital has since received numerous national recognition awards for its quality of service. It is an outstanding hospital that is delivering a first-class quality service to the wonderful town of York.

Just recently, a multipurpose service centre was established in Beverley and the Government is building a new nursing home in Brookton. Mental health services in the region are growing strongly and there has been a reduction in the number of suicides in my electorate. Over the past two days, I have heard opposition members claim that suicide rates are going through the roof. Suicide was a serious issue in my region. I personally know a number of families with children who committed suicide. A program was set up with funding 18 months ago and it is making a difference. That sort of quality of life is beyond description. Even though suicides still occur too frequently, the Government is at least dealing with it in the wheatbelt region - not just in the electorate of Avon. These programs are making a difference. My electorate recently jumped the queue and a drug service has been provided for the inner wheatbelt area. That service was not there a short time ago. Youth outreach in the Avon Valley is growing considerably. These sorts of the services have expanded tremendously over the past four or five years and are among my proudest achievements. I am pleased with the social wins in my electorate.

Nearly all the schools in my electorate have received capital work. As the member for Wagin said, the wheatbelt was the least serviced region in Australia for tertiary education. It was the last region to be looked after. C.Y. O'Connor College of TAFE has grown since the birth of this Government. The college is starting to reach prominence and receive the recognition it deserves. It is literally growing out of the ground where Holden Camp, a substantial military hospital, was established for soldiers wounded during the Second World War. Up to 30 000 displaced people came through Northam and were treated on the site where C.Y. O'Connor College now stands. It is an impressive story and will be told well into the future.

The success of the *AvonLink* train service is through the roof. The Labor Party says it will close this service once it gets into government. That will not win the Labor Party any votes in the Avon region. The *AvonLink* service has been the major catalyst for enthusiasm in the Avon Valley. It has shown people that they can win against all the odds. We were told there was no chance of getting that service; it is there now and delivering a quality of life that did not exist in the past. It is exciting and is opening the eyes of many people. Much of their enthusiasm stems from the *AvonLink* train service.

A new cropping research centre has been established at Northam. Up to 100 specialist people are coming into the town and working on new cropping research. It is a substantial input into the community. New industries are moving into the towns, particularly Northam. I congratulate the people in the Avon region for their role in establishing the Avon industrial park. I also commend the leader of the National Party, in his role as the Minister for Regional Development, and the Minister for Lands for giving the industrial park a kick in recent times. It is a substantial achievement for the Avon region and the first industry is about to move to that site. At least five or six other major industries are seriously considering moving to the industrial park. Urgently needed quality employment will be provided, particularly for youth.

The Avon university is still on the drawing board. Many people say it is a pipe dream, but I do not believe that. Land has been purchased in Katrine, between Northam and Toodyay. The proponents are working at establishing a university that will service between 2 000 and 5 000 people in the Avon area. Combined with the C.Y. O'Connor College of TAFE and the Muresk Institute of Agriculture, Avon will have more tertiary activity for each kilometre than any other site in Western Australia, including Crawley. I do not want the point to be lost on the House. Education is still one of our deficiencies.

Avon is quickly growing as a region and as a destination. I am very proud of that and so are the people of Avon. We pull together to make these things happen. It has not been without considerable effort, but we are over the hill and we will see substantial momentum from here on in. Only a few days ago the Minister for Water Resources, who wandered past and threatened me a few moments ago, came to Northam and handed over \$110 000 for the dredging of the Avon pool, which is a section in the weir on the Avon River in the townsite of Northam. That is very important for the Avon people. We are all very conscious of the Avon River. It is probably the most prized possession in the whole electorate of Avon. It is good to see that that money was made available, again after a considerable number of years of debate and concern.

We are not without problems. We still have a long way to go on education and health, but they have improved dramatically. There is a high level of concern in my electorate about law and order. I survey the people in my electorate every January, and 70 per cent of their concerns were about law and order issues. I must admit that I cannot totally agree with my electorate about the concerns. Most of the issues that are raised do not happen in my electorate; they happen in Perth. For example, elderly people being beaten up and those sorts of issues do not happen in the Avon Valley, but I do not disregard the concerns about law and order matters. We have other concerns, such as road funding. Even though we have had substantial improvements, we are far from where we want to be. The cost of living and the cost of fuel are two issues that are running hot at the moment. There is a very distinct shortage of opportunities for youth. However, returning to where I started, we have made substantial ground in recent times. There is a lot of optimism in the future of the Avon Valley. I cannot say that everyone in the Avon Valley is doing well, because that is not true. At the moment farming is difficult, too many youths are looking for work and many families have only one income earner. Nevertheless, things are improving. I am very happy to support the budget. I point out to several members in the House that I did not take any more than 10 minutes.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Tubby.

House adjourned at 10.53 pm

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Questions and answers are as supplied to Hansard.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES, REGIONAL BUYING COMPACT

1901. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Primary Industry; Fisheries:

- (1) Is the Minister committed to ensuring all departments and agencies under the Minister's control implement the Regional Buying Compact?
- (2) Have chief executive officers of all departments and agencies under the Minister's control been instructed to apply the Regional Buying Compact?
- (3) What processes does each department and agency under the Minister's control implement to ensure that work to be put out to tender in regional Western Australia is packaged in tenders capable of allowing local business to compete for such contracts?
- (4) Does each department and agency under the Minister's ensure, when preparing tenders for work in regional Western Australia, that such tenders are not of a size that preclude regional business from tendering for the contract?
- (5) In preparing and allocating tenders for work in regional Western Australia, does each department and agency, wherever possible and within the financial constraints imposed by the Regional Buying Compact, ensure that -
 - (a) tenders for work in regional Western Australia are allocated to local business in the region; or
 - (b) where tenders are not allocated to a local business, the successful tenderer uses local business to fulfil the contract to the maximum extent possible?
- (6) What procedures does each department and agency use to ensure -
 - (a) all tenders are prepared in such a way as to give local regional businesses a fair opportunity to compete; and
 - (b) contracts allocated to non-regional businesses are properly monitored to ensure maximum regional local content?

Mr HOUSE replied:

- (1) The Regional Buying Compact is applicable to all public authorities, including all government departments, agencies and trading concerns.
- (2) Chief Executive Officers are to ensure that Government policies are complied with and that they fully support local industries and regional economic development.
- (3)-(4) The structure of contracts is a decision for each Government department. However, in designing contracts, the Regional Buying Compact encourages departments to package the purchase of goods and services in appropriately sized contracts to enable regional suppliers to participate.
- (5)
 - (a) Chief Executive Officers are accountable for the conduct of the buying function in their agency and are expected to focus on structuring tenders on a regional basis, where possible, to encourage regional suppliers to participate in government buying.
 - (b) A preference is provided to encourage non-regional tenderers to maximize the regional content within their bid.
- (6)
 - (a) It is the responsibility of Chief Executive Officers to ensure that buying practices, procedures and specifications do not disadvantage local suppliers.
 - (b) Procedures for monitoring contract requirements are undertaken as part of the relevant Public Authorities Contracts Management process. Guidelines for the establishment of contract management processes are available to agencies in the State Supply Commission's Policies and Guidelines Manual. Public authorities, as part of the ongoing contract management process, should ensure that commitments such as regional content in the delivery of the service, are fulfilled throughout the contract term.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES, REGIONAL BUYING COMPACT

1903. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Lands; Fair Trading; Parliamentary and Electoral Affairs:

- (1) Is the Minister committed to ensuring all departments and agencies under the Minister's control implement the Regional Buying Compact?
- (2) Have chief executive officers of all departments and agencies under the Minister's control been instructed to apply the Regional Buying Compact?

- (3) What processes does each department and agency under the Minister's control implement to ensure that work to be put out to tender in regional Western Australia is packaged in tenders capable of allowing local business to compete for such contracts?
- (4) Does each department and agency under the Minister's ensure, when preparing tenders for work in regional Western Australia, that such tenders are not of a size that preclude regional business from tendering for the contract?
- (5) In preparing and allocating tenders for work in regional Western Australia, does each department and agency, wherever possible and within the financial constraints imposed by the Regional Buying Compact, ensure that -
 - (a) tenders for work in regional Western Australia are allocated to local business in the region; or
 - (b) where tenders are not allocated to a local business, the successful tenderer uses local business to fulfil the contract to the maximum extent possible?
- (6) What procedures does each department and agency use to ensure -
 - (a) all tenders are prepared in such a way as to give local regional businesses a fair opportunity to compete; and
 - (b) contracts allocated to non-regional businesses are properly monitored to ensure maximum regional local content?

Mr SHAVE replied:

- (1) The Regional Buying Compact is applicable to all public authorities, including all government departments, agencies and trading concerns.
- (2) Chief Executive Officers are to ensure that Government policies are complied with and that they fully support local industries and regional economic development.
- (3)-(4) The structure of contracts is a decision for each Government department. However, in designing contracts, the Regional Buying Compact encourages departments to package the purchase of goods and services in appropriately sized contracts to enable regional suppliers to participate.
- (5)
 - (a) Chief Executive Officers are accountable for the conduct of the buying function in their agency and are expected to focus on structuring tenders on a regional basis, where possible, to encourage regional suppliers to participate in government buying.
 - (b) A preference is provided to encourage non-regional tenderers to maximize the regional content within their bid.
- (6)
 - (a) It is the responsibility of Chief Executive Officers to ensure that buying practices, procedures and specifications do not disadvantage local suppliers.
 - (b) Procedures for monitoring contract requirements are undertaken as part of the relevant Public Authorities Contracts Management process. Guidelines for the establishment of contract management processes are available to agencies in the State Supply Commission's Policies and Guidelines Manual. Public authorities, as part of the ongoing contract management process, should ensure that commitments such as regional content in the delivery of the service, are fulfilled throughout the contract term.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES, REGIONAL BUYING COMPACT

1908. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Employment and Training; Youth; the Arts:

- (1) Is the Minister committed to ensuring all departments and agencies under the Minister's control implement the Regional Buying Compact?
- (2) Have chief executive officers of all departments and agencies under the Minister's control been instructed to apply the Regional Buying Compact?
- (3) What processes does each department and agency under the Minister's control implement to ensure that work to be put out to tender in regional Western Australia is packaged in tenders capable of allowing local business to compete for such contracts?
- (4) Does each department and agency under the Minister's ensure, when preparing tenders for work in regional Western Australia, that such tenders are not of a size that preclude regional business from tendering for the contract?
- (5) In preparing and allocating tenders for work in regional Western Australia, does each department and agency, wherever possible and within the financial constraints imposed by the Regional Buying Compact, ensure that -
 - (a) tenders for work in regional Western Australia are allocated to local business in the region; or
 - (b) where tenders are not allocated to a local business, the successful tenderer uses local business to fulfil the contract to the maximum extent possible?
- (6) What procedures does each department and agency use to ensure -

- (a) all tenders are prepared in such a way as to give local regional businesses a fair opportunity to compete; and
- (b) contracts allocated to non-regional businesses are properly monitored to ensure maximum regional local content?

Mr BOARD replied:

- (1) The Regional Buying Compact is applicable to all public authorities, including all government departments, agencies and trading concerns.
- (2) Chief Executive Officers are to ensure that Government policies are complied with and that they fully support local industries and regional economic development.
- (3)-(4) The structure of contracts is a decision for each Government department. However, in designing contracts, the Regional Buying Compact encourages departments to package the purchase of goods and services in appropriately sized contracts to enable regional suppliers to participate.
- (5)
 - (a) Chief Executive Officers are accountable for the conduct of the buying function in their agency and are expected to focus on structuring tenders on a regional basis, where possible, to encourage regional suppliers to participate in government buying.
 - (b) A preference is provided to encourage non-regional tenderers to maximize the regional content within their bid.
- (6)
 - (a) It is the responsibility of Chief Executive Officers to ensure that buying practices, procedures and specifications do not disadvantage local suppliers.
 - (b) Procedures for monitoring contract requirements are undertaken as part of the relevant Public Authorities Contracts Management process. Guidelines for the establishment of contract management processes are available to agencies in the State Supply Commission's Policies and Guidelines Manual. Public authorities, as part of the ongoing contract management process, should ensure that commitments such as regional content in the delivery of the service, are fulfilled throughout the contract term.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES, REGIONAL BUYING COMPACT

1909. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Local Government; Disability Services; Forest Products:

- (1) Is the Minister committed to ensuring all departments and agencies under the Minister's control implement the Regional Buying Compact?
- (2) Have chief executive officers of all departments and agencies under the Minister's control been instructed to apply the Regional Buying Compact?
- (3) What processes does each department and agency under the Minister's control implement to ensure that work to be put out to tender in regional Western Australia is packaged in tenders capable of allowing local business to compete for such contracts?
- (4) Does each department and agency under the Minister's ensure, when preparing tenders for work in regional Western Australia, that such tenders are not of a size that preclude regional business from tendering for the contract?
- (5) In preparing and allocating tenders for work in regional Western Australia, does each department and agency, wherever possible and within the financial constraints imposed by the Regional Buying Compact, ensure that -
 - (a) tenders for work in regional Western Australia are allocated to local business in the region; or
 - (b) where tenders are not allocated to a local business, the successful tenderer uses local business to fulfil the contract to the maximum extent possible?
- (6) What procedures does each department and agency use to ensure -
 - (a) all tenders are prepared in such a way as to give local regional businesses a fair opportunity to compete; and
 - (b) contracts allocated to non-regional businesses are properly monitored to ensure maximum regional local content?

Mr OMODEI replied:

- (1) The Regional Buying Compact is applicable to all public authorities, including all government departments, agencies and trading concerns.
- (2) Chief Executive Officers are to ensure that Government policies are complied with and that they fully support local industries and regional economic development.
- (3)-(4) The structure of contracts is a decision for each Government department. However, in designing contracts, the Regional Buying Compact encourages departments to package the purchase of goods and services in appropriately sized contracts to enable regional suppliers to participate.

- (5) (a) Chief Executive Officers are accountable for the conduct of the buying function in their agency and are expected to focus on structuring tenders on a regional basis, where possible, to encourage regional suppliers to participate in government buying.
- (b) A preference is provided to encourage non-regional tenderers to maximize the regional content within their bid.
- (6) (a) It is the responsibility of Chief Executive Officers to ensure that buying practices, procedures and specifications do not disadvantage local suppliers.
- (b) Procedures for monitoring contract requirements are undertaken as part of the relevant Public Authorities Contracts Management process. Guidelines for the establishment of contract management processes are available to agencies in the State Supply Commission's Policies and Guidelines Manual. Public authorities, as part of the ongoing contract management process, should ensure that commitments such as regional content in the delivery of the service, are fulfilled throughout the contract term.

KALGOORLIE-ESPERANCE, ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY LAYOUT PLANS

1952. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Lands:

- (1) Has the Government prepared community layout plans for major Aboriginal communities in the Kalgoorlie/Esperance region?
- (2) If so, are the plans publicly available?
- (3) If not, is work underway to prepare the plans?
- (4) When will the plans be completed?

Mr SHAVE replied:

As this question is the same as Question On Notice 1953 asked of the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and does not relate to any of the agencies in the office of the Minister for Lands, I refer the member to the answer given to Question On Notice 1953 of 16 March 2000.

REAL ESTATE AGENTS AND BUSINESS BROKERS FIDELITY FUND

2005. Mr PENDAL to the Minister for Fair Trading:

I refer to the Fidelity Fund set up to receive funds from the Real Estate Agents and Business Brokers under the laws of the State and ask-

- (a) what year did the fund begin to receive contributions from Real Estate Agents and Business Brokers;
- (b) how much has been received in that time;
- (c) how much has been drawn down from the Fund and for what purpose;
- (d) do agents still contribute; and
- (e) will the Minister advise if the funds will be drawn on by the Government to assist consumers who have lost money in dealings with finance brokers?

Mr SHAVE replied:

I am advised -

- (a)-(b) The Real Estate and Business Agents Act came into operation on 1 December 1979. The Fidelity Fund created under the Act received funds transferred from the previous Land Agents Fidelity Fund (approximately \$380,000). Since that time, sources of further funds have included interest earned on Agent's trust accounts, interest earned on the Fund's balance, income from investments and fees paid by persons granted new licences or certificates of registration. At 31 January 2000, the fund had total assets in excess of \$24 million. Income to the Fund for 1998/99 was \$1,325,130. In view of the number of sources from which the Fund receives money and as payments have been made from the Fund since it was created, to identify the amount received since 1979 would involve an extensive search of archival records and require a significant commitment of staff resources. However, further details can be provided if the member is more specific about information required.
- (c) Funds drawn from the Fund:

1 July 1999 to 20 April, 2000	\$1,175,617 - Board approved claims
1 July, 1999 to 31 March, 2000	\$5,688 - legal and contract expenses.

To identify the amount drawn from the Fund since 1979 would involve an extensive search of archival records and require a significant commitment of staff resources. However, further details can be provided if the member is more specific about information required.
- (d) Yes, new agents and new sales representatives make a contribution to the fund.

- (e) The *Real Estate and Business Agents Act 1978* restricts payments from the fund to:
 payment of claims;
 legal expenses in defending claims against the fund;
 premiums for reinsuring the fund;
 administration expenses; and
 audit expenses.

The Act allows the Real Estate and Business Agents Supervisory Board to make payments from the Fund in relation to a mortgage broking transaction if the transaction was tied to a real estate transaction. The Act also requires that both the mortgage broking transaction and the real estate transaction be conducted by a licensed real estate agent, and the agent was the cause of the defalcation which resulted in the financial loss.

SALINITY, FUNDING

2222. Dr CONSTABLE to the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) How much money has the Government spent over the past 5 years on addressing the problem of salinity in Western Australia?
- (2) How much of this funding is allocated to –
 - (a) land rehabilitation;
 - (b) restoration of public works damaged by salt water; and
 - (c) educative programs about the causes of salinity?

Dr HAMES replied:

- (1) It is calculated that State Government has spent in the order of \$137 million on salinity. This includes ongoing agency funding, re-distributed agency funding and new Government funding.
- (2)
 - (a) The majority of the funding is directed at land rehabilitation and preventing salinity impacting on land, water and biodiversity. The emphasis for State funding is on research and development, collection of information and extension.
 - (b) The Rural Town Program has committed \$2.785 million of State money for the restoration of public works damaged by salt water. The impact of salinity on road, rail, water, drainage, sewerage and other infrastructure is not costed separately.
 - (c) Educative programs about salinity are part of extension work in agencies and no separate costs are available.

LAND TAX, INCORRECT CHARGES

2301. Mr BROWN to the Minister assisting the Treasurer:

- (1) Have there been some instances of the State Revenue Department incorrectly charging individuals land tax?
- (2) Since 1 November 1999, how many individuals have incorrectly been charged land tax?
- (3) What was the reason or reasons for individuals being charged land tax when it should not be charged?
- (4) What steps has the Government taken to ensure this does not occur again?

Mr KIERATH replied:

- (1) Yes. Land tax assessments are issued based on the information available to the Department, however, assessments are amended or withdrawn on a number of instances where further information has either been supplied by the land owner or is subsequently made available to the State Revenue Department.
- (2) 19,103 or around 11% of land tax assessments have been amended during the current year of assessment.
- (3) The major reasons that assessments are amended include :
 - (a) Exemptions/Concession Change for a Land Item: It is not unusual for a land tax assessment to be correct as at 30 June, only to be amended at some future date on the basis of further information being supplied. For example, in the case of a newly constructed residence the owners may be liable at the relevant date of 30 June. However, provided they move into their new residence by the following 30 June they may be eligible for an exemption, in which case the assessment would be withdrawn. A similar situation can arise where a land owner owns two residences in transitional circumstances at 30 June. That is, notwithstanding an assessment is due at 30 June, the owner may subsequently be entitled to an exemption in respect of the property assessed.
 - (b) Land Ownership Change Before 30 June 1999: The Department automatically updates the land tax database with land ownership changes recorded at the Department of Land Administration (DOLA). However, there are cases where land ownership does not get recorded immediately at the Office of Titles,

but effects a change of ownership for land tax purposes; for example, a contract of sale has been settled but DOLA has not received the land transfer notice. In these cases, the Commissioner must rely on the taxpayer advising of such arrangements to enable an amendment to the assessment. Another example is where a purchaser is in possession of land pending finalisation of the sale of that land. In this situation the purchaser is liable to pay land tax. Again, if the sale has not been recorded at 30 June at the Office of Titles an incorrect assessment can issue. In addition to these more common problems, during the current year of assessment, the Commissioner advised that there was a computer system problem in the Department's new Revenue Collection Information System which inadvertently resulted in a number of land tax assessments being issued on the basis of ownership which had since changed at 30 June 1999.

(c) Valuation Change for a Land Item: The unimproved values used for land tax assessment purposes are provided to the Department by the Valuer General in accordance with the Valuation of Land Act. Changes to these valuations can occur as a result of revaluations performed by the Valuer General for various reasons, for example, taxpayer objection.

(4) All land tax assessments are issued from the land database maintained by the State Revenue Department. The system relies on automatic computer interfaces for such matters as receiving land ownership changes from the Department of Land Administration, and valuation changes from the Valuer General's Office. While there have been some teething problems bedding-in the Department's new computer system in relation to these interfaces, the Commissioner of State Revenue has advised that for the next assessment year the system interfaces will operate more efficiently. Nevertheless, as detailed under question 3, there will always be a level of reassessment that will occur due to information being provided by taxpayers that is not available to the State Revenue Department at the time assessments are issued. For this very reason the recipient of a land tax notice of assessment is provided with the opportunity to advise the Department by telephone of any changes in circumstances which may affect the assessment. An information pamphlet that accompanies the assessment sets out the above process. In most circumstances the assessment can be altered on the basis of the above verbal advice.

LANDCORP, DEVELOPMENT SITES

2382. Mr RIEBELING to the Minister for Lands:

Will the Minister list the addresses of the 43 development sites owned by LandCorp?

Mr SHAVE replied:

(1) Development sites owned by LandCorp as at May 2000

Estate	Address	
Albany Mirabeena Industrial Park	Down Rd Albany	1
Canning Vale Industrial Park	Magnet Rd Canning Vale	2
Forrestdale	Anstey Rd Forrestdale	3
Geraldton-Narngulu	Edward Rd Narngulu	4
Geraldton-Oakajee	North West Coastal Highway Oakajee	5
Hamilton Hill-Robb Jetty	Cockburn Rd Hamilton Hill	6
Jervoise Bay Shipyards	Cockburn Rd Henderson	7
Henderson Marine Industrial Park	Cockburn Rd Henderson	8
Jandakot North	Princep Rd Jandakot	9
Mungari Industrial Park	Great Eastern Rd Mungari	10
Kemerton Industrial Park	Wellington Rd Kemerton	11
Kwinana/Naval Base	Risley St Naval Base	12
Kwinana Beach	Conway Rd Kwinana Beach	13
Mount Barker Yerriminup Industrial Park	Albany Hwy Mount Barker	14
Munster Marine Industry Technology Park	Coogee Rd Munster	15
Naval Base-Mount Brown	Clarence Rd Naval Base	16
Neerabup	Mather Dr Neerabup	17
Northam-Meenaar	Leeming Rd Northam	18
Postans	Hope Valley Rd Postans	19
Rockingham Industrial Park	Patterson Rd Rockingham	20
Spearwood	Cockburn Rd Spearwood	21
Stakehill	Lakes Rd Stakehill	22
Wangara Enterprise Park	Hartman Rd Wangara	23
Alkimos	Wanneroo Rd Alkimos	24
Atwell Beeliar Parklands	Armadale Rd Atwell	25
Atwell South	Bartram Rd Atwell	26
Banjup	Barfield Rd Banjup	27
Bunbury Marlston Hill	Casuarina Dr Bunbury	28
Carine Gardens	North Beach Rd Carine	29
Carnarvon North Water Estate	Babbage Island Rd Carnarvon	30
Clarkson Ocean Keys District Centre	Marmion Ave Clarkson	31
Currambine The Crest	Connolly Dr Currambine	32
Eglinton	Wanneroo Rd Eglinton	33
Joondalup CBD & Business Park	Joondalup Dr Joondalup	34
Joondalup City North	Grand Boulevard Joondalup	35
Joondalup Lakefront	Lakeside Drive Joondalup	36
Leda Forest Glades	Dalrymple Dr Leda	37
Mandurah	Mandurah Rd Mandurah	38
Mosman Park	McCabe St Mosman Park	39
Mt Claremont St Johns Wood	Montgomery Dve Mt Claremont	40
Mt Claremont (Area F)	Fortview Rd Mt Claremont	41
Salter Point	Cloister Ave Salter Point	42
Thornlie Forest Lakes	Haigh Rd Thornlie	43

ANIMAL WELFARE, FUNDING

2387. Ms WARNOCK to the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) How much support does the Government give to organisations such as the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA), the Cat Haven and the Swan Animal Haven on an annual basis?
- (2) Does the Government annually fund any of the community organisations which provide animal welfare shelter and rehabilitation?
- (3) If not, why not?

Mr OMODEI replied:

- (1) Through the Department of Local Government, an amount of \$480,000 has been allocated to the RSPCA for the 2000/2001 financial year for capital works.
- (2) The Department of Local Government provides \$2,500 per annum to the Ruby Benjamin Foundation for animal sterilisation.
- (3) Not applicable.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

KING EDWARD MEMORIAL HOSPITAL FOR WOMEN, UPGRADE

828. Dr GALLOP to the Premier:

- (1) Does the Premier agree with Dr Andrew Child and Ms Pauline Glover who, in their report on King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women last month, warned that it was evident from a tour of the hospital that the infrastructure for services was inadequate, and much of the equipment was old and malfunctioning?
- (2) Can the Premier explain why he has ignored pleas from senior medical staff at King Edward Memorial Hospital for an additional \$25m for an urgently needed upgrade?
- (3) Will the Premier join with the Labor Party today in supporting King Edward Memorial Hospital as a centre of excellence for women's health in Western Australia, and allocate the much-needed funds to upgrade that hospital?

Mr COURT replied:

I thank the Leader of the Opposition for that question, because I do not get too many questions from him these days. I get about one question a fortnight from the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Brown: Do you want a few?

Mr COURT: Yes, I would love some. As they say on television, "Wake up, Jeff".

- (1)-(3) I have said repeatedly said that King Edward Memorial Hospital is regarded internationally as a hospital of excellence, and it certainly has the Government's full support. One of the reasons we have insisted that outside independent people provide an assessment of the difficulties reported is that we want the people of Western Australia to have every confidence in this hospital.

Dr Gallop: You have the report; where is the money?

Mr COURT: As the Minister for Health said, the funding has been increased for King Edward Memorial Hospital and Princess Margaret Hospital for Children from roughly \$100m to \$140m. The Leader of the Opposition said that the Labor Party would spend \$25m -

Dr Gallop: Answer the question.

Mr COURT: I will answer the question.

Dr Gallop: Answer it now.

Mr COURT: The Leader of the Opposition said the Labor Party would spend \$25m over the next four years.

Dr Gallop: Extra.

Mr COURT: That is basically the rate of growth the hospital has had since this Government has been in office. In other words, the Leader of the Opposition is saying publicly that the status quo remains at King Edward Memorial Hospital.

BUDGET, NET DEBT

829. Mr BLOFFWITCH to the Premier and Treasurer:

Yesterday the Deputy Leader of the Opposition said that the information on net debt as a proportion of gross state product in the budget handouts was presented in a misleading way because it was for the next four years and did not go back to earlier years. How does the current position compare with the position that was inherited in 1992-93?

Mr COURT replied:

I was amazed when the Deputy Leader of the Opposition said that the Government's graphs went back to 1993-94 except for debt, and that was shown only for the next four years. The line on the graph starts at more than 20 per cent and goes down to 8 per cent.

Mr Kobelke: You are too embarrassed to put it in your propaganda.

Mr COURT: Too embarrassed to include it! This Government has brought down net debt in this State from more than 20 per cent of GSP down to approximately 8 per cent. I want to go further; members opposite have a political history and they need to be reminded of that political history. As the federal Treasurer spelt out last year, net debt in the last five years of the former Federal Labor Government increased by \$80b. However, at the same time it sold off Qantas and part of the Commonwealth Bank. Despite selling major assets, in five years its debt increased to about 20 per cent of gross state product. The current Federal Government has reduced that debt by \$50b by allocating asset sales to bring down debt levels. The Leader of the Opposition yesterday criticised this Government by saying the debt position would be significantly higher if we did not take asset sales into account. That is pretty smart thinking! If that thinking had been applied to the former Federal Labor Government's debt level, instead of bringing down debt levels by selling off assets, it would have blown them out. Whether or not the Opposition likes to hear it, it has a political history on these matters for which it must be accountable. We have applied the proceeds of asset sales to bring down debt levels. Whether or not the Opposition likes to hear it, our debt levels are now around 8 per cent of GSP; the Labor Party had them at 20 per cent of GSP, and that was when the Leader of the Opposition was the Assistant Treasurer.

One of the issues we had to address in government was cleaning up the mess of debt left to us by the Opposition. There is a very good article in *The West Australian* today about the Bell litigation. I suggest members, particularly those members opposite, read the article. A few months ago in this Parliament this Government was criticised by the Opposition for continuing this expensive litigation and trying to recover those funds. We are coming under a great deal of pressure from the banks to back off. They want us to pull out of the litigation and are running an extensive lobbying campaign, obviously working with the Opposition -

Dr Gallop: That is an absolute untruth. The Premier should withdraw that statement.

Mr COURT: The Leader of the Opposition should talk to his spokesman in the other House. The article states -

A win would be testament to the success of the coalition Government's effort to claw back losses made when the Labor government of Peter Dowding enmeshed the State Government Insurance Commission in Alan Bond's takeover of Robert Holmes à Court's Bell empire.

We are talking about attempts to recover hundreds of millions of dollars. This Government will not buckle under pressure from the banks to pull out of this action. The article goes on to quote the liquidator as follows -

Mr Woodings said the banks were attacking the litigation funding in attempt to stop the main action.

"The more the banks do things like attack the funding and proceeds mechanism, the more certain about the case I become," he said.

It is encouraging that the liquidator has increasing confidence in the case. However, I say to members opposite that this is expensive litigation. We have implemented mechanisms to try to limit the cost to taxpayers of trying to recover those funds. However, we will not give up trying to get back hundreds of millions of dollars of taxpayers' money that, yes, should be in King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women, Princess Margaret Hospital for Children and high schools.

POLICE STATIONS, TELEPHONE CALLS UNANSWERED

830. Mrs ROBERTS to the Minister for Police:

- (1) Is it not the case that about 25 per cent of calls to local police stations in the districts of Joondalup, Fremantle and Cannington go unanswered?
- (2) Is it not the case also that almost 30 000 calls to local police stations went unanswered last year?
- (3) Why are there not enough police officers to attend to all these calls?
- (4) Is it not about time that the minister properly resourced our Police Service so that it can get on with the job of serving the public in an appropriate and timely manner?

Mr PRINCE replied:

- (1)-(4) I am delighted that the member for Midland asked me whether the Police Service is properly resourced. Its budget for the coming financial year is \$440m.

Dr Gallop interjected.

Mr PRINCE: The Leader of the Opposition is out of date. The figures for the last year show the crime rate, particularly in the areas of motor vehicle theft, burglary and armed robbery and some other areas, is coming down. The Leader of the Opposition will find that an enormous amount of money was put into building and equipment. Equipment is absolutely

critical, particularly in a State of two and a half million square kilometres, to enable proper communication, use of data, and information to pass across this State in a way that is recognised internationally as being a world leader. The 4 800 police officers in Western Australia are the best paid in Australia, and they will get another pay rise in July. As if that were not enough, they do a superbly good job. Nothing will ever be perfect, and it can be done a lot better. It is done a lot better, particularly when we give them better equipment, facilities and organisation. I will ask the member for Midland a question: Will she push the Police Union (WA) line for another 400 police officers? Is that the Labor Party platform? If the Labor Party wants 400 more police officers, where will it find the \$35m to do it? Will the Labor Party take that \$35m out of health, education or roads?

Mrs Roberts interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have allowed a lot of interjecting. Minister, perhaps we can get on with the answer.

Mrs Roberts: What are you hiding?

Mr PRINCE: I am not hiding anything. I will investigate the member's accusations, as I have tried to do with the accusation she made yesterday. Does the member for Midland know how many schools there are in the western suburbs? There are dozens.

Mrs Roberts: You could have asked.

Mr PRINCE: To which school did the member for Midland refer?

Mrs Roberts: Loreto Primary School.

Mr PRINCE: When was this telephone call made? Was it in the past few weeks, three months or three years?

Mrs Roberts: Why don't you ask the principal of Loreto?

Mr PRINCE: Does the member for Midland want me to waste the time of the police to find out something she already knows? Does the member want me to get the staff from the Nedlands police station lined up, so the Commissioner of Police can ask which one made that comment?

WALPOLE WILDERNESS AREA

831. Mr MASTERS to the Minister for the Environment:

Yesterday, the minister referred to the latest Labor Party proposal to create a Walpole wilderness area. Is the minister in a position to elaborate on the proposals and their various impacts?

Mrs EDWARDES replied:

The Leader of the Opposition did not read his media statement. Yesterday when I referred to the Australian Labor Party's claim that it would create a wilderness area larger than the internationally renowned Yellowstone National Park, he was at pains to say he did not say that. However, his weekend media statement said exactly that. It said that the proposed 330 000 hectare Walpole wilderness area would be larger in size than the internationally renowned Yellowstone National Park. When I reminded the Leader of the Opposition that Yellowstone National Park was 900 000 hectares, he said that he meant to say Yosemite National Park. However, that is only 310 650 hectares, which is about one-third of the size of Yellowstone. It is clear he does not have his facts right. One other fact in his media statement that was incorrect was his claim that the proposed Walpole wilderness area will incorporate all of Western Australia's yellow, red and rate tingle forest. He conveniently forgot to tell the public that 1 100 hectares of jarrah tingle and 1 700 hectares of karri tingle are on private property in the Walpole region. How will the Leader of the Opposition fulfil this promise to the public? The point is that the Labor Party cannot honour its commitment to meet existing logging contracts to 2003, its commitment to a 12-month moratorium on logging in high-conservation areas while it carries out a review, as well as its weekend commitment to four new national parks. One and one do not make four. Members opposite cannot do all they promise the public in an endeavour to get green votes. The question must be asked of the Labor Party: How will it meet its commitment to the existing contracts, as well as the commitment to the preservation of old-growth areas?

FINANCE BROKERS' FIDELITY FUND

832. Mr McGINTY to the Minister for Fair Trading:

- (1) Can the minister advise when he was first made aware of the problem which might arise from the lack of a fidelity fund for finance brokers?
- (2) When was the minister first made aware that the Finance Brokers Supervisory Board was powerless to act regarding conduct towards lenders?
- (3) Why has the minister not brought forward legislation to protect victims of unscrupulous finance brokers by establishing a fidelity fund and extending protection to lenders?

Mr SHAVE replied:

- (1)-(3) The member for Fremantle knows it is inappropriate to ask for specific dates without giving any notice; however, I will provide that information for the member. It is interesting to follow the history of the fidelity fund situation. I will take members through history, although I will not take a lot of your busy time, Mr Speaker. A member of

the then Finance Brokers Supervisory Board, Mr Tim McComish, wrote to the Minister for Consumer Affairs, Peter Dowding, in 1984 urging him to introduce such a fund, but that approach was not progressed. The prospect of finance brokers participating in the real estate and business agents fidelity fund was again raised in 1987 with Labor minister Mr Ian Taylor. The matter of a separate fidelity fund for finance brokers was again raised with the then Minister for Consumer Affairs, Hon Graham Edwards, and that was not progressed. I will table the three approaches which those people received.

The classic after 10 years of this activity was a letter to Mr John Bell from Yvonne Henderson, who was the Minister for Consumer Affairs in 1992. She wrote the following on the issue -

I appreciate the disappointment of the Institute over progress of these matters. You can be assured that I have made every effort to finalise these issues.

I am also confident that you would appreciate the efforts I have made to review the bond issue.

The reference is to the fidelity bond. It continues -

It was not that long ago that there was no support outside of your Industry for this proposal and we have now moved to the position of cautious optimism by careful negotiations with all of the parties involved.

This letter was written on 6 November 1992, which was just before an election. It was cautious optimism from the lot opposite! The letter further read -

However, I can only reiterate the previous advice to you that the current legislative program has already been decided and it is unlikely that an opportunity will occur that would allow amendments this year. However, it is my intention that legislation including establishment of a composite fidelity fund would be placed before the Parliament early in the 1993 Autumn Session.

What a great result! Members of the Opposition do not like listening to this. They were totally incompetent. When I became the minister, I was concerned about coverage for the public and on several occasions I wrote to the Finance Brokers Supervisory Board to urge it to introduce compulsory indemnity insurance as a condition on all finance brokers licences. The Finance Brokers Supervisory Board has been negotiating with insurers to identify a professional indemnity insurance scheme which would include an element of fidelity cover. The reason that I suggested the Government go the way it has been going and not the way the dills opposite have been going is because, with an indemnity fund, there will be limited financial resources to satisfy claims because of the small number of brokers in the industry. It should have been done the proper way, which is the way I have done it, not the way -

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! I understand members will interject on a hot political issue but I want to hear the minister's answer and I ask the minister to conclude.

Mr SHAVE: The way I have proposed the changes take place is the appropriate way and the Opposition's record speaks for itself. The Opposition had 10 years to do something, but it did absolutely nothing.

Point of Order

Mr KOBELKE: In responding to the question, the minister purported to quote from a number of letters which he suggested were official correspondence. That being the case, he is required under standing orders to table them if requested and I request that they be tabled.

The SPEAKER: There is a question mark about whether the minister was quoting from them or referring to them. However, if the minister has been quoting from the, he should table them.

[See paper No 918.]

Questions without Notice Resumed

FINANCE BROKERS SUPERVISORY BOARD, CONDUCT TOWARDS LENDERS

833. Mr McGINTY to the Minister for Fair Trading:

Will the minister answer the second part of my question which related to when he was first made aware of the fact that the Finance Brokers Supervisory Board was powerless to act on conduct towards lenders and what he has done about that?

Mr SHAVE replied:

For a legal person, the member for Fremantle is very slow on the uptake. I responded to his question. I told him that I would get the specific date and provide him with it.

GETACCESS WEB SITE, TRAINING COURSE

834. Mr OSBORNE to the Minister for Employment and Training:

A professional development training course is being run in my electorate today for the GetAccess web site. Will the minister explain the purpose of these courses and outline the level of success the GetAccess web site has achieved?

Mr BOARD replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

It is relevant that today, the Government launched as a single window on the Internet an opportunity for the community to access government information and a range of services from government departments. The GetAccess web site has just won the Year 2000 Yellow Pages Asia-Pacific Award for the government category. The site has attracted 650 000 visits since March. The site is important because it helps a great range of people, particularly those in remote and regional areas, access training and employment information. People in regional areas, particularly young people seeking training and other opportunities as they leave school, often find it difficult to access the job profiles of those providing information. This site provides that information. The seminar being held in Bunbury will assist trainers. It is a prominent program. The site has attracted recognition around Australia and other States are accessing it. There is opportunity for it to become the national site for employment and training.

FINANCE BROKERS, LEGAL ACTION

835. Mr McGINTY to the Premier:

Yesterday, the Premier told the House it was appropriate for the Government to fund legal action against finance brokers Grubb Finance Consultancy and Global Finance Group Pty Ltd because they are in liquidation and people have lost money. The Government is also funding legal action against St George Bank Limited, which is not in liquidation. However, the Premier refuses to fund legal action against MFA Finance Pty Ltd, which is no longer in the mortgage broking business after it caused dozens of mainly elderly investors to suffer massive losses. Why will the Premier not be consistent by funding legal action against his brother? Is the answer one of self-interest?

Mr COURT replied:

I said yesterday that individuals have taken legal action.

Mr McGinty: Will you fund it?

Mr COURT: No, they have taken legal action.

Mr McGinty: The question is about funding.

Mr COURT: Those individuals have taken their own legal action. That is appropriate if it is what they want to do. Why would the Government fund legal action that has already been taken?

COMMERCIAL CENTRE, ESTABLISHMENT AT CURRAMBINE

836. Mr BAKER to the Minister for Lands:

I refer to LandCorp's plans to establish a small commercial centre within the Crest subdivision on lot 998 Connolly Drive, Currumbine. Can the minister advise of the steps LandCorp has taken to ensure the residents of Currumbine are properly consulted about the proposed development?

Mr SHAVE replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question. LandCorp's initial plan was a neighbourhood centre incorporating a service station, fast-food outlet, tavern and community sites.

Mr Brown: What about a prison?

Mr SHAVE: No, we have one of those at Pyrton. The residents' association and a number of individual residents raised concerns with LandCorp and the local member about the potential of a large shopping centre development. LandCorp responded to this in 1999 by conducting a number of studies on the commercial viability of the development options. These indicated a limited demand for the type of shopping centre proposed. Of the alternative plans, LandCorp's preference was the "super deli" option. All property owners in LandCorp's Currumbine development were advised in writing in early April 2000 of the alternative plans and invited to comment. They were also advised that if the majority of residents in the Crest subdivision supported the change, LandCorp would lodge the relevant applications to amend the structure plan. If the City of Joondalup agrees to the proposed modifications, residents will have a further opportunity to formally comment on the structure plan through the town planning scheme amendment process. A LandCorp officer was available on site for two days between 4.00 pm and 6.30 pm to hear residents' comments. As a result of those initiatives, it became clear the proposal to reduce the size of the neighbourhood centre is not supported by the vast majority of residents. LandCorp will soon meet with the City of Joondalup to discuss the modifications to the structure plan, which will be advertised to allow residents further opportunity to comment.

I compliment the local member on his assistance with the variation. I also compliment LandCorp on the way it operated when the Leader of the Opposition was chewing on his Mogadons and sleeping through the State Government Insurance Commission fiasco.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SHAVE: At 30 June, LandCorp will record a massive increase in profit to more than \$60m. This Government will use that money on hospitals such as King Edward Memorial Hospital and others. It is difficult to listen to the dills on that side of the Chamber.

NORTHBRIDGE TUNNEL, REVISED ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

837. Ms MacTIERNAN to the Minister for the Environment:

Yesterday the Deputy Premier representing the Minister for Transport claimed that the Department of Environmental Protection wrote to the contractor constructing the Northbridge tunnel endorsing the contractor's revised environmental management plan. Yet in responding to a freedom of information application, the DEP claimed that this letter related to a sludge management plan. Will the minister now table that correspondence so we can see whether the Deputy Premier has misled the House or whether the DEP has misled the FOI applicants; and, if not, why not?

Mrs EDWARDES replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

The Deputy Premier representing the Minister for Transport did not mislead the House yesterday in his answer to parliamentary question 820 and correctly quoted from correspondence provided by the Department of Environmental Protection. I am advised by the Department of Environmental Protection that the FOI application referred to required examination of 13 volumes of the one file comprising approximately 600 folios. The Department of Environmental Protection inappropriately abbreviated the document descriptions in the FOI document schedule as referring to a sludge management plan and it was therefore not requested by the FOI applicant. I table the document. I am sure that even the member will see that although it was inappropriately identified, it was caused by an innocent mistake when dealing with that very large number of folios.

[See paper No 919.]

NORTHAM BYPASS, CONSTRUCTION

838. Mr TRENORDEN to the minister representing the Minister for Transport:

Now that the Northam bypass has been funded and is due to commence, what efforts have been made to ensure as much local content in works as possible?

Mr COWAN replied:

The construction of the Northam bypass and associated works are to be delivered as a major works contract. The contract is being competitively tendered and is currently at the request for proposal stage. Award of the contract is expected to occur in October this year. As for all government contracts of this nature, tenderers will be required to provide details on the use of local services and suppliers and this will be taken into account in the tender assessment process, in accordance with the Government's regional buying compact. It is Main Roads' experience on projects of this nature that the contractor will make use of local services. Such services are likely to include activities such as subcontract works, skilled and unskilled labour hire, plant and equipment hire, materials supply and haulage, consumables including fuels and oils, accommodation, catering and use of local facilities. The contract period is approximately 85 weeks to June 2002, thus providing a significant long-term opportunity for benefits to flow through to the local community, including local businesses.

NORTHBRIDGE TUNNEL, REVISED ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

839. Ms MacTIERNAN to the minister representing the Minister for Transport:

Yesterday the minister claimed that Main Roads WA prepared an internal review of the Northbridge tunnel contractor's revised environmental management plan, that these comments were submitted to the contractor on 25 November 1997 and that the contractor responded on 3 March 1998.

- (1) Why were the documents recording these events not even listed as being in existence when the affected residents requested all such documents under a freedom of information request?
- (2) Will the minister now table all documents recording these events; and, if not, why not?

Mr COWAN replied:

- (1) The documents in question were not discovered at the time the FOI request was processed as copies were not retained on Main Roads' files. The documents came to light only last month when Main Roads initiated a further review and obtained copies from a consultant providing technical advice to the project. Those documents will be made available to the affected residents.
- (2) I will table a copy today for the benefit of the member for Armadale.

[See paper No 920.]

MANDURAH, ESTUARY BRIDGE TRAFFIC SNARLS

840. Mr MARSHALL to the minister representing the Minister for Transport:

Every long weekend, and especially at the Easter run through Mandurah, traffic snarls on the estuary bridge are created. Will the minister inform the House what Main Roads is doing to relieve the congestion at this dangerous spot?

Mr COWAN replied:

During 2000 it is planned to extend the dual carriageway from the north, where it currently finishes at Leslie Street, to the northern abutment at the estuary bridge. It is also planned to add a second southbound lane leading away from the southern abutment of the bridge. These measures will assist in allowing vehicles to clear the bridge as quickly as possible during periods of heavy traffic flow.

BUDGET, EATON HIGH SCHOOL

841. Mr CARPENTER to the Premier:

I refer to the Premier's response to my question of yesterday regarding the false claim by the member for Mitchell that the budget included a new high school for Eaton, and his claim that last year's budget included no allocation for East Eaton Primary School, but that the school would be complete within a few months anyway.

(1) Page 385 of last year's budget papers under the heading on capital works program states -

The Education Department's planned capital works expenditure for 1999-2000 is \$152.16 million and relates primarily to the provision of adequate infrastructure for government schools throughout the state.

The program includes:

The construction of new primary schools at Carey Park (Bunbury), East Eaton (Bunbury), Mindarie, South Port Kennedy and Swanbourne.

Is the Premier aware of that?

(2) What explanation does he have for his false statement to the Parliament yesterday?

Mr COURT replied:

(1)-(2) I did not give a false statement to the Parliament yesterday; what I said was that in every budget we have capital works programs for the next four years, but we do not spell out the expenditure on individual schools. We did not say that East Eaton Primary School would be completed this year, but it will be completed in a few months. I reinforce the point that every year this Government has been building new schools and maintaining the old schools. We have the runs on the board. The Labor Party, including the Leader of the Opposition who was a Minister for Education, neglected schools.

Mr Carpenter: You should withdraw what you said.

Mr COURT: Is the member saying that he does not want the East Eaton school finished this year?

Mr Carpenter: Read what you said.

Mr COURT: I do not know what was said on page 300 or whatever of last year's budget papers. I do know that we gave commitments for the building of new schools. Not only are they built but also we have opened them.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Someone said "disgrace". I was thinking that myself when I was reflecting on the performance of people in this place.
