



Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

THIRTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT
THIRD SESSION
2000

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 3 May 2000

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 3 May 2000

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

TWO ROCKS, BEACHFRONT STENCH

Petition

Dr Edwards presented the following petition bearing the signatures of 431 persons -

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

The undersigned residents of Two Rocks, Western Australia call upon the State Government to provide further action -

- (1) Into the reasons why there is an overpowering stench emanating from the beachfront and making Two Rocks a very unpleasant place in which to reside and to do business.
- (2) This stench will eventually have an adverse effect on real estate in the area.
- (3) And tourism, which is the lifeline of this area.

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

[See petition No 110.]

CRIME, GERALDTON AND GREENOUGH

Petition

Mr Bloffwitch presented the following petition bearing the signatures of 46 persons -

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

We, the undersigned people of Geraldton/Greenough ask the Premier of Western Australia - the Hon Richard Court MLA to stop the crime and give us more police to stop the breakdown of law and order.

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

[See petition No 111.]

GNARABUP BEACH, DEVELOPMENT WEST OF WALLCLIFFE ROAD

Petition

Ms MacTiernan presented the following petition bearing the signatures of 1 631 persons -

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

We, the undersigned residents of Western Australia and visitors to Western Australia, oppose all development on the coastal landscape west of Wallcliffe Rd, Gnarabup, because such development:

* contravenes the independent legal advice of Augusta Margaret River Shire Council, and the PWPA that development cannot proceed beyond a maximum of 243 lots, and has already been exceeded.

*contravenes the objectives of Town Planning Scheme 18, Gnarabup, gazetted June 30th, 1995 with the Ministry of Planning, which are written to protect the ecological, Aboriginal Heritage, community, health, social and economic values of this pristine coastal region.

*contravenes the expressed wishes of the direct and broader community to protect the integrity of this land, adjacent to the ocean shoreline, for future generations.

We request an immediate stay on further developmental approvals West of Wallcliffe Rd, Gnarabup and an investigation into best planning practices to ensure the protection of all the values mentioned above.

Furthermore, your petitioners therefore respectfully request that thorough research into the ecological, Aboriginal Heritage, geomorphological, speliological, community, social and economic values upheld in Town Planning Scheme 18, Gnarabup be undertaken to ensure the protection of these values.

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

[See petition No 112.]

PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE

Report on Persons Referred to in the Legislative Assembly

MR BLOFFWITCH (Geraldton) [12.06 pm]: I have for presentation the Procedure and Privileges Committee report on persons referred to in the Legislative Assembly. I move -

That the report be adopted.

The report is as follows -

The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly referred to the Procedure and Privileges Committee a letter from Wally and Robin Hinricks seeking to use Standing Order 114 to respond to statements made by Hon Monty House MLA, Minister for Primary Industry.

The Committee has agreed to the attached response proposed by Wally and Robin Hinricks.

In accordance with Standing Order 114 the Committee has not considered or judged the truth of any statements made in the Legislative Assembly or in the submission.

Recommendation

Your Committee recommends -

That a response by Wally and Robin Hinricks in the terms specified in the Appendix to this report, be included in *Hansard*.

Question put and passed.

Mr BLOFFWITCH: The response reads as follows -

Response by Wally and Robin Hinricks

Agreed to by Wally and Robin Hinricks and the Procedure and Privileges Committee pursuant to Standing Order 114

On 30 June, 1999, the Minister for Primary Industry, Mr Monty House, made a statement in Parliament relating to the finalizing of the Distribution Adjustment Assistance Scheme.

The Minister referred to seven former milk distributors who claimed they had not received adequate recompense.

The name Hinricks (one of the seven) appears on an information schedule tabled at that time. A column on that document headed 'licensed product volume (%)' lists a figure of 84.2 against our name. On page 3 of his statement the Minister claims "the licensed white milk component of their businesses averaged over 80%".

We (Hinricks) have maintained since 1993/94 that the income of our business derived from the white milk component was 61%. This figure can be proved by invoices from that time. Figures on the document tabled, relate to volume (not income) and are therefore misleading.

We stand by our statement that the income derived from the white milk component of our business was only 61%.

As well as the statement made in the House on 30 June, 1999, the Minister for Primary Industry tabled 27 pages entitled

CHRONOLOGICAL EVENTS RELATING TO THE DEREGULATION OF THE MILK DISTRIBUTION SECTOR AND TO THE DISTRIBUTION ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE SCHEME (DAAS).

This document again refers to a small group of seven milk distributors (ourselves Hinricks included).

"1999
31 May"

"The small group of seven distributors appear not to be interested in receiving further DAAS payments but instead continue to pursue political recourse in the belief that they will force the government to pay them an amount over and above what is clearly documented as a fair and reasonable and indeed legal requirement".

It is untrue that we (Hinricks) were not interested in receiving further DAAS payments. We believed however that these DAAS payments should have been accurate and accountable. We believed that the government offer (1998) ignored the true intent of the Recommendations of Reports 3, 6 and 10 from the Standing Committee.

The calculation whereby household vendors received more than nine times their original offer was an obvious error and lacked accountability. In comparison, the calculation whereby shopround distributors received only one and a half times their original offer was not "in accordance with the guidelines of the Committee's Sixth Report" and was neither fair nor equitable.

Our objective was not "to force the government to pay us an amount over and above what is fair and reasonable" but rather to point out to the government that the offer for our houseround business was far in excess of its proven value and the offer for our shopround business was far below its established proven value.

The tabling of the information schedule with figures relating to just seven of the 48 participants in DAAS schemes B and C was not only discriminatory but could be seen as a slur on the honesty and integrity of the seven distributors named (ourselves Hinricks included). We believe this document together with the statement made by the Minister for Primary Industry on 30 June, 1999 have adversely affected our reputation as honest citizens and business owners.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE - RESPONSE TO REPORT ON THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT IN AN ONLINE ENVIRONMENT

Statement by Deputy Premier

MR COWAN (Merredin - Deputy Premier) [12.06 pm]: As required under standing orders, the Government has prepared a response to the Public Accounts Committee Report on the Role of the Government in an Online Environment. The committee requested responses from the Premier, the Minister for Health, the Minister for Education and me, as Minister for Commerce and Trade. As the minister responsible for information and communications, I have been given the responsibility of developing the response to this report on behalf of government. Accordingly, I have sought advice from those ministers in the preparation of a whole-of-government response.

The Government supports the majority of the recommendations of the report. The recommendation that the Government provide leadership and guidance to foster a sense of confidence in online technology and the delivery of services online is supported and is the basis of the Government's direction in service delivery. Progress is being made across many areas of information and communications technology in the existing ministerial framework, and in accordance with the online services strategy developed by the Office of Information and Communications.

The Government's response to the committee's report contains information about a range of government initiatives and progress made in e-commerce and online service delivery. Agencies are making use of a number of facilities offered by the Department of Contract and Management Services. CAMS has already developed the first phase of the Western Australian Government electronic market, which enables government buyers to access details of all common use contracts online.

The Government's response includes information about agencies' online and e-commerce activities, including information on the statewide telecommunications enhancement program; telehealth; tele-education; tele-law; initiatives by Western Power and the Office of Energy; and the Department of Commerce and Trade's business and investment gateway web site.

Equitable provision of government services and information online is a priority for this Government. I table the Government's response to the Public Accounts Committee report.

[See paper No 858.]

GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS (ACCESS) AMENDMENT BILL 2000

Introduction and First Reading

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

Second Reading

MR COWAN (Merredin - Deputy Premier) [12.10 pm]: I move -

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Members will be aware that the Western Australia rail access regime provides third party access seekers with a legislated right to negotiate access to the Westrail network. The regime consists of the Government Railways (Access) Act 1998 and the Government Railways Access Code. To oversee the access process, the Act designates a regulator to monitor and enforce compliance with the provisions of the regime, including the administrative arrangements that Westrail is to have in place for the purposes of implementing the code. This includes the power to make directions with respect to the effective segregation of Westrail's access-related functions.

In addition to the monitoring and enforcement role, the regulator is responsible for -

reviewing the effectiveness of the code after three years and then every five years;

establishing panels of persons who may act as arbitrators - on the recommendation of the Chairman of the WA Chapter of the Institute of Arbitrators and Mediators Australia;

appointing suitable persons from the above panel to act as arbitrators to hear and determine disputes related to the negotiation of access agreements;

approving a number of elements in the regime such as Westrail's floor and ceiling prices for each route, costing principles, network management principles, train path allocation policies and capacity transfer policy;

registering access agreements and arbitrators' determinations; and

annually determining and publishing the weighted average cost of capital for use in calculating the capital costs used in setting access ceiling prices.

The regulator is currently defined in the Act as the person who holds or is acting in the position of Director General of Transport. The Act also provides for the independence of the regulator, who, in the performance of his or her functions, is not subject to direction by the minister or any other person. Recent developments have prompted the need to reconsider whether the Director General of Transport should be the regulator or whether it is more appropriate to establish an independent office to oversee the implementation of the access regime. The National Competition Council in reviewing the WA application for certification has indicated that it does not consider the regulator, being the Director General of Transport, as sufficiently independent and that it is of the view that there are potential conflicts of interest with the Department of Transport's overall role in transport policy and advice as well as rail safety. This view has also been expressed by other stakeholders.

In order to satisfy the NCC on the level of regulatory independence, either very extensive and prescriptive information on how the regulator will undertake his responsibilities in an independent manner would need to be incorporated in the regime, or an independent office of the Rail Access Regulator would need to be established. Industry is supportive of the sale of Westrail freight so long as an effective access regime is in place to facilitate on-rail competition. An independent office of the regulator is now seen as necessary to provide confidence in the effectiveness of the access regime and to advance the NCC certification process. After extensive discussions with the NCC, and consideration of the most efficient and effective way to ensure the level of regulatory independence sought by the NCC and the industry, the Government has reconsidered the establishment of such an independent office of the Rail Access Regulator and agreed to amend the Government Railways (Access) Act 1998 to establish this office.

Members would be aware that these amendments were printed and placed on the Legislative Council Supplementary Notice Paper No 10, to be moved in committee as part of the consequential amendments to the Rail Freight System Bill 1999. This was done as the Government considered that the sale of Westrail's freight business necessitated the acceleration of the implementation of an effective access regime, including the enhanced regulatory oversight arrangements agreed with the NCC. The Government initially received advice that the Legislative Council could not consider the specific amendments which established and provided for the staffing of the office of the Independent Rail Access Regulator and that the correct course would be for the Legislative Council to send a message to the Legislative Assembly requesting that those specific amendments be made by the Assembly.

Mr Speaker, you have subsequently ruled that the requested amendments were out of order as the request was contrary to section 46 of the Constitution Acts Amendment Act 1899. In accepting your ruling, the Government agreed not to move these amendments and advised Parliament of its intention to reintroduce them in a separate Bill, and that it reserved the right to introduce them as a matter of urgency. The amendments to establish an independent office of the Rail Access Regulator are now introduced to this House as the Government Railways (Access) Amendment Bill 2000.

It is proposed that an independent Rail Access Regulator similar to the Independent Gas Pipelines Access Regulator be established. The Rail Access Regulator would report to the Minister for Transport but be appointed, and removed in certain circumstances, by the Governor. He or she would not be a public servant, would be appointed for a term of office of three to five years, and, on the expiration of a term of office, would be eligible for reappointment. The Governor would also determine the conditions of office of the Rail Access Regulator and be able to suspend the regulator in certain circumstances. The suspension must be confirmed by both Houses of Parliament before the regulator can be removed from office.

The Rail Access Regulator will be required to take an oath or make an affirmation that he or she will impartially perform the functions. The Rail Access Regulator will be entirely independent of direction or control by the Crown or any minister or officer of the Crown in the performance of the regulator's functions and powers, and from industry. The minister will be able to give directions to the regulator, but those directions may relate only to the regulator's management responsibilities and will not constrain or impair the regulator's independence in fulfilling his or her functions. Such directions must be published in the *Government Gazette* and tabled in both Houses of Parliament. The regulator will be required to inform the minister of potential conflicts of interest, and the minister will be empowered to direct the regulator to resolve a conflict of interest; or, if the conflict is not resolved to the minister's satisfaction, the Bill provides for the Governor to appoint an acting regulator. Administratively, the Rail Access Regulator will be able to delegate functions or powers, and appoint an acting regulator and other persons whose terms and conditions of employment are also to be determined by the Governor. Public service officers are to be appointed or made available under part 3 of the Public Sector Management Act 1994.

There will be provisions for government agencies to be engaged to perform administrative and support services and also for the regulator to engage persons under contracts for professional, technical or other assistance. Accompanying these authorities for such an office will be corresponding responsibilities associated with the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1985. As the Rail Access Regulator is regulating a single entity, the track owner, and has no revenue raising powers, funding from the consolidated fund will be required.

The Government Railways (Access) Amendment Bill also contains consequential amendments to three Acts: The Constitution Acts Amendment Act 1899, the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1985, and the Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1971. The consequential amendments are necessary to ensure that those Acts recognise the existence and status of the Rail Access Regulator.

In conclusion, the amendments the Government is making to the Government Railways (Access) Act 1998 are another important step towards instilling confidence in the rail industry that the regulatory framework for rail access in Western Australia has the necessary independence to ensure its overall effectiveness. The Government is committed to continue rail reform for the benefit of both the transport industry and its customers. I commend this Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Cunningham.

COURTS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2000

Introduction and First Reading

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

Second Reading

MR PRINCE (Albany - Minister for Police) [12.19 pm]: I move -

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill deals with a number of administrative issues requiring amendments to the Supreme Court Act, the District Court of Western Australia Act, the Liquor Licensing Act and the Local Courts Act. Specifically, the Bill proposes reform in the areas of, first, mediation in the Supreme Court; secondly, establishment and review of court fees in the higher courts; thirdly, judicial support staff in the higher courts; fourthly, appointment of commissioners to the District Court of Western Australia; fifthly, the Liquor Licensing Court; and, sixthly, the payment of judgment debts in the Local Court. For the benefit of the House, I will set out the key features of each of these reforms.

Mediation in the Supreme Court: It is proposed to insert a new part VI into the Supreme Court Act dealing with court annexed mediation in the Supreme Court. The amendments give statutory force to the principle of confidentiality and the "without prejudice" evidentiary privilege which are the cornerstones of the mediation process. Mediation conferences were introduced in the Supreme Court in 1993 as part of the case management initiatives designed to reduce delays and costs to litigants, and are now an integral component of the court's case flow management program. Mediation is a highly developed and successful avenue for resolving disputes in the court and an important step in the process by which a matter proceeds to trial. It has brought substantial benefits to the parties to litigation in earlier settlements and the savings of legal costs. It has also brought benefits in saving court trial days, estimated at 670 days in 1998. Currently, the confidentiality of the mediation process and its "without prejudice" status have been underpinned by the Rules of Court and by the terms of the common form mediation order. This is now seen to be problematic, as recent cases indicate that these matters cannot be adequately addressed other than by amendments to the Supreme Court Act.

The amendments will reinforce the integrity of the mediation process in the Supreme Court by, first, imposing on parties and/or mediators a statutory obligation of confidence; secondly, clearly defining and extending the scope of the "without prejudice" basis of the mediation; thirdly, conferring on mediators who conduct mediation conferences under the director of the court, the obligations, privileges and immunities of a judge; and, fourthly, making clear the scope of the court's rule-making powers in respect of mediation. These are non-contentious amendments derived substantially from model legislation drafted by the Law Council of Australia and endorsed by the Standing Committee of Attorneys General.

Establishment and review of court fees in the higher courts: The Bill also deals with changes in responsibility for the court fee fixing and review processes. Within the administration of the courts two completely different procedures for the fixing and review of court fees have evolved, with the lower court process being controlled by the Executive and the superior courts by the judiciary. Within the lower courts, responsibility for fees rests with the courts' administration personnel who formulate recommendations as a result of annual reviews in accordance with the requirements of the Financial Administration and Audit Act. In the superior courts, however, the fees can only be prescribed or changed upon the recommendation of the majority of judges of the court, as approved by the Treasurer. This process provides a potential for conflict between the court administrator's statutory requirement to annually review fees and charges and the views of the judges of the court on appropriate fees and charges.

The Bill simply proposes that the superior courts' process be brought in line with that in the lower courts. Under the amendments, consistent with practice in relation to the lower courts' fees, proposed variations will still be subject to scrutiny by the parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation. Again, these amendments are regarded as non-contentious as the proposals bring the State in line with the practice in other States, with the exception of Tasmania, which still retains the fee setting power with the judiciary.

Judicial support staff in the higher courts: The third area of reform relates to judicial support staff in the higher courts. The background to this is that the Supreme Court Act 1935 provides for the appointment by the Attorney General of associates and ushers but does not include other personal assistants of the judiciary, such as the courts' public information officer and the Aboriginal liaison officer. To date, appointments to those other positions were considered to be personal assistants to the judiciary, and not therefore subject to controls arising from appointments under the Public Sector Management Act.

However, as a result of recent further research in the course of establishing workplace agreements and enterprise bargaining arrangements, doubt has been raised as to who is the employer, and the employment status of such staff. The Bill clarifies these matters, in part by providing for the various types of judicial support staff not to be subject to the provisions of the Public Sector Management Act. As such, it will also remove any doubt that such employees may otherwise be responsible to two authorities. The Bill also provides authority for public service officers to be seconded into these positions and effects minor changes in terminology.

Further amendments relate to the power to appoint associates, orderlies and other assistants to the judiciary in the District Court. Currently, provisions of the District Court Act are silent with regard to the appointment of such officers. Among other problems, the process is unnecessarily cumbersome as it requires the Governor to make appointments. In addition, the section provides that they shall be appointed under and subject to the Public Sector Management Act 1994, which is inappropriate as appointments are to the positions of personal staff to the judges. Reflecting this, the Bill simply provides for a process consistent with that sought to be established under the Bill for appointment of personal staff to the judges of the Supreme Court, and existing in the Family Court. The amendments to both Acts are considered non-contentious, as they merely rectify procedural shortcomings and provide for a simplified and standardised process of appointment across the superior courts.

Appointment of commissioners to the District Court: The District Court Act presently contains different qualification requirements for appointment as a judge against appointment as a commissioner. The Bill amends the qualification requirement for appointment as a commissioner to include the same requirement for appointment as a judge. This amendment is another non-contentious reform, merely standardising the qualification requirements.

The Liquor Licensing Court: As noted earlier, the Bill also deals with aspects of the Liquor Licensing Court - specifically its current status as a separate entity. In July 1998, administrative responsibility for the Liquor Licensing Court was transferred from the Ministry of Racing and Gaming to the Ministry of Justice, where for administrative purposes it was appended to the District Court of Western Australia. To formalise this transfer, the present provisions of the Liquor Licensing Act relating to the appointment and conditions of the judge, or acting judge, of the Liquor Licensing Court are repealed.

The provisions of the Bill enable the Chief Judge of the District Court to nominate, from time to time, a judge or commissioner of the District Court to be the Liquor Licensing Court judge, or the acting Liquor Licensing Court judge. The Bill also provides for the present Liquor Licensing Court judge to continue to hold that position so long as he continues to hold a judicial appointment. Consistent with other provisions of the Bill, these amendments are also considered non-contentious. In short, they do little more than provide flexibility in allocation of judicial resources between the District and Liquor Licensing Courts.

The payment of judgment debts in the Local Court: The final area of reform dealt with by the Bill relates to an aspect of the payment of judgment debts in the Local Court. Specifically, the Bill will allow for payments, in full or by instalments, to be made direct to the plaintiff or the plaintiff's solicitor. This amendment will allow judgment creditors to receive payments sooner than they do now by removing the double handling of payments through a Local Court.

Conclusion: The proposed amendments in the Bill have been identified as a result of an ongoing review of court processes, and relevant legislation, by the court services division of the Ministry of Justice. The Bill reflects a continuing public interest in a more efficient and effective justice system, and does no more than seek improved accessibility to justice through increased efficiency and effectiveness in the operation of the courts. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Cunningham.

FIRST HOME OWNER GRANT BILL 2000

Third Reading

MR KIERATH (Riverton - Minister assisting the Treasurer) [12.28 pm]: I move -

That the Bill be now read a third time.

MR RIPPER (Belmont - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [12.29 pm]: The Opposition has supported this legislation, but it has drawn attention to a number of injustices and anomalies which accompany the scheme. The first injustice is that the scheme provides inadequate compensation to first home buyers faced with the increased cost of housing and land packages as a result of the application of the goods and services tax. The independent forecaster BIS Shrapnel Pty Ltd has said that the cost of a house and land package in Perth suitable for a first home buyer will increase by \$9 800 as a result of the GST. The compensation provided under this legislation is only \$7 000. The Ministry of Housing has said that the average cost of \$110 000 for a house and land package for first home buyers in Western Australia will rise by an additional \$7 370 as a result of the GST. That again is in excess of the \$7 000 compensation provided under this legislation.

The situation is much worse in regional Western Australia as this legislation will not help people in regional Western Australia buy a house for the first time. The Ministry of Housing told the Minister for Housing this fact when it stated that a house in the north west of the State costing \$220 000 today will cost an extra \$14 740 under the GST. In other words, the impact of the GST in the north west of this State will be more than double the compensation to be provided by this legislation. What is the Government's defence to the Opposition's argument? The Government states that the compensation applies to the increase in the price of the house only, as though one could buy a house without land. People who are outside home ownership at the moment are outside the residential property market for both housing and residential land, and need to be compensated because entry to the market for housing and residential land will be more expensive following the application of the GST. They will not be compensated adequately by the legislation.

If the land component is the problem with the estimates put forward by independent forecaster BIS Shrapnel and the Ministry of Housing, where is the compensation for the increase in the price of land? Where can that compensation be found by the average first home buyer? Undoubtedly, the federal Treasury estimate of the increase in housing costs faced

by first home buyers of 4.7 per cent will prove to be as inadequate as the other estimates put forward by Treasury to support the Federal Government's attempt to sell the GST when it faced an election on the issue.

The Opposition also criticised the legislation regarding the eligibility criteria for the receipt of a first home owners grant. It argued that an advantage will apply for people who have owned a residential property in a family trust structure. If one owns a home in that structure, one will not be subject to the exclusion criterion which will normally apply to owners of residential property if they apply for a first home owners grant. If someone, or his or her spouse, has owned residential property, that person will not be eligible for a first home owners grant. However, if the residential property is owned in a family trust structure, despite it being the principal place of residence for the applicant or his or her spouse, that person can take \$7 000 from taxpayers for a property purchased in his or her name.

The second anomaly to which the Opposition drew attention was the advantage given to same sex couples under this legislation. People in de facto relationships cannot apply for a first home owners grant if they or their de facto spouse have had an interest in residential property. People in same sex relationships, provided the applicant has not had an interest in residential property, can apply for a first home owner grant in his or her name despite the fact that the same sex partner had, or still has, an interest in residential property. The Government's defence to that aspect was that the eligibility criteria were determined by the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Reform of Commonwealth-State Financial Relations. We had the absurd position of the minister, when asked to defend the anomalies, pleading the Fifth Amendment: "It is all out of my control." I have looked at the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Reform of Commonwealth-State Financial Relations as it applies to the first home owners scheme. I have learnt that it is wise to check everything this minister puts before the House, and I checked his assertion. The first home owners scheme principles are described in appendix D in schedule 1 of the agreement. Under "Principles" it reads -

The States and Territories will make legislative provision for the First Home Owners Scheme . . . by 1 July 2000 which will incorporate program criteria consistent with the following principles:

One then scans down the principles to paragraph (iv), which reads -

To qualify for assistance, neither the applicant or the applicant's spouse (or defacto) must have previously owned a home, either jointly, separately or with some other person.

Nothing in that principle states that beneficial ownership through a family trust cannot be put into the legislation to exclude someone from gaining assistance under the first home owners scheme. Nothing in the principle states that a same sex partner cannot be considered for the exclusion criteria for application for the first home owners grant under the legislation. The Government, consistent with the principles in appendix D of the intergovernmental agreement, could have legislated to prevent people with family trust arrangements from abusing this scheme. Consistent with that principle, the Government could have legislated to treat same sex couples on the same basis as that applying to opposite sex de facto couples. The Government chose not to insert those provisions in the legislation.

That choice was not made by every other Government implementing this legislation. I obtained a copy of the Queensland First Home Owner Grant Bill 2000 introduced into the Queensland Parliament on 12 April this year. Section 9 of the legislation defines "spouse" for the eligibility criteria in the Queensland scheme. Section 9(2) of the Queensland Bill reads -

For subsection (1)(b), a de facto spouse is either 1 of 2 persons, whether of the same or opposite sex, who are living or have lived together as a couple for at least 2 years.

The Queensland Government, consistent with the principles in the intergovernmental agreement, can legislate to treat same-sex couples on the same basis as that applying to de facto couples of the opposite sex, but the Western Australian Government cannot do so. I find it extremely surprising that the Western Australian Government would arrange in its legislation for same sex couples to have a financial advantage over de facto couples of the opposite sex. It is extraordinary, given the Government's head-in-the-sand approach to these issues, that it cannot adopt a legislative regime which treats de facto couples of all types on the same basis. Queensland can, but this Government cannot do so. This Government does not want to give any recognition in law to the acknowledged existence of same sex couples in our society. Therefore, the Government gives a financial advantage to same sex couples over opposite sex de facto couples in this community.

To be consistent with the intergovernmental agreement, it would be possible for the Government to amend the eligibility criteria to deal with both of those issues. I do not think there would be a problem for the Government to do that. It could amend clause 6 of the legislation to include reference to family trust ownership arrangements as a relevant interest from the point of view of the eligibility criteria for the legislation. At the very least the Government could give a commitment to the Parliament that it will use clause 6(1)(h) of the legislation, which allows an interest prescribed by the regulations to be a relevant interest, to deal with this family trust issue. The Bill contains a regulation-making power which the Government could use to deal with the family trust issue. What is required of the Government is either an amendment to the legislation or a commitment to this House or the other place that it will introduce a regulation under clause 6(1)(h). If the Government does not do this, it will allow wealthy people in this State who have a family trust arrangement for their principal place of residence to rot the first home owners grant. The \$7 000 is a significant sum of money. It is an incentive for those people to purchase another property, this time in their individual name, and to claim the first home owners grant. The Government might ask why the other States have not done what Labor is arguing should be done in Western Australia. My answer to that is that there is a reason we must take this action in Western Australia. In the past, the principal place of residence land tax concession has not applied to people who own their principal place of residence in a family trust structure. However, this coalition Government amended the land tax legislation to allow that principal place of residence

concession to apply even though the residence is owned by a family trust. This Government removed one of the disadvantages of a family trust ownership structure for the principal place of residence. By doing that the Government has encouraged people to put their principal place of residence into a family trust. The problem is worse in this State because of previous actions of this Government. If the Government really wants to stop wealthy people rorting this system and taking advantage of a grant which is supposed to be for battlers buying their first homes, it must take some action on the family trust problem, which it has created as a result of the amendments to the land tax legislation sponsored by the minister's predecessor, Hon Max Evans as Minister for Finance. We support this legislation but we believe it has two categories of fault: First, the legislation does not adequately compensate battlers purchasing their first home, particularly people in regional Western Australia; and, secondly, it allows some people to achieve an unjustified benefit, particularly those people who have taken advantage of the Government's encouragement to have their principal place of residence owned within a family trust structure.

MR KIERATH (Riverton - Minister assisting the Treasurer) [12.43 pm]: I was not going to comment but in light of the member for Belmont's comments, I feel I should put something on the record. Obviously the member was not listening to the explanation I gave last night because he has been very selective in his use of statements today. I never said that the same sex couples provision was in the intergovernmental agreement; in fact, I said quite the opposite. About seven times I said that it was consistent with other state government legislation, in particular section 75C of the Stamp Act. At no stage did I purport that that was part of the intergovernmental agreement. I completely reject the assertions of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

The second point is that clearly the best form of advice we have from the Commonwealth Treasury is that the effect of the 4.7 per cent will be on the construction of a house. It is clear that the first home buyers scheme is not intended to compensate for land, and I raised the land issues last night. Most land in the system will not be subject to the goods and services tax or it will have small amounts of GST, even land which is in stock in the system which is retailed after 1 July. Only in future years will a GST have any material effect on land. This scheme has a number of arrangements, of which fee simple is a major part. However, in other land arrangements fee simple does not come into it. The Commonwealth Government decided that it would not reimburse people for land GST; it was only for the construction of a house. The figures supplied by the Commonwealth Government indicate that the 4.7 per cent allows for the construction of a house valued at \$150 000. The average median price of a block of land is \$75 000, bringing a house and land package to a total value of \$225 000. That covers most of the regional areas in Western Australia to which the member referred, even those in the high cost areas where houses must be cyclone proof. Again, I reject those comments.

The member also was not listening when I gave the explanation about family trusts. I did not say that it was part of the intergovernmental agreement initially; I said that the Treasurers of all the States tried to find a scheme to track beneficial interests, but no-one could come up with a satisfactory scheme. I note that the member did not mention it when he looked at the Bill from the Queensland Parliament. He did not mention that there were no provisions relating to beneficial interest. He conveniently forgot that point, because he knows that not one jurisdiction in the country has been able to put in provisions relating to beneficial interests. No-one has a scheme to track beneficial interests. If somebody comes up with a way of tracking that interest, we would be delighted to look at it. However, no-one has at the moment, and all of the Treasurers around Australia agreed that they would not include those provisions because there was no satisfactory way of doing it. If the member for Belmont thinks about what he would have to do to track it, he would understand. I think he does understand deep down; he is just trying to score cheap political points. From the comments made by the members of the Labor Party, no-one would have guessed that they were supporting this legislation. I am delighted that it has had their support. I note that the Opposition did not divide on any aspect of the Bill. Although it may not go as far as opposition members or other people may like, in the end this will be better than what we have at the moment, which is virtually nothing. It is a vast improvement on the existing scheme and both Labor and coalition States have agreed to it.

Mr Ripper interjected.

Mr KIERATH: I am glad the member for Belmont has interjected. We know that the federal Labor Party has said that it will not repeal the GST. Most of this total package will stay in place. It might fiddle around the edges and make some adjustments, but we all know that once it starts exempting items, there will be a corresponding reduction in income. I am pleased that members have supported this Bill, and I look forward to its introduction by 30 June.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

ROAD TRAFFIC AMENDMENT BILL 1999

Third Reading

MR COWAN (Merredin - Deputy Premier) [12.49 pm]: I move -

That the Bill be now read a third time.

MS MacTIERNAN (Armadale) [12.50 pm]: During the second reading debate we raised real concerns about the emasculation of the owner-onus provisions that were contained in this piece of legislation. The improved owner-onus provisions were indeed supposed to be the linchpin for a lifesaving plan called the cap speed program. It was a plan apparently which would see the Government reaping something like \$1.57m in consolidated revenue and which would have a massive impact on the saving of lives. It has been estimated that it might save up to 218 lives per year. Notwithstanding

that, the Government decided that it would water down the owner-onus provisions. When we debated this matter, the Deputy Premier, showing his great faith in his fellow man, said that he did not believe that it would be a problem because people were honest enough to accept that once they have been caught speeding they would pay the fine and that we did not really need to have a particular enforcement provision because everyone was like him - the sort of guy who would say that he had done wrong and would pay the fine. We know of course that is absolute rubbish. Already at least 20 per cent of people do not accept the fines when they are issued to them and thousands of people each year simply do not pay speed camera or red light fines.

We said at the time that we believed the whole debate surrounding this legislation could put the matter back even further because now the public has become aware of just how flawed the system is and how flawed has been the Government's response in addressing this supposed loophole. The public has become more aware that it is well worth trying to contest a fine because only 55 per cent of photographs of speeding cars show an identifiable picture of the driver.

Mr Bloffwitch: Perhaps we should improve the cameras.

Ms MacTIERNAN: That certainly could be one aspect but it should not be the only device used. At the moment we have a problem with 20 per cent of people who are basically thumbing their noses at the law and who are not the wonderful, honest individuals that the Deputy Premier seems to think exclusively populate the State of Western Australia.

The Deputy Premier seemed to have some difficulty accepting some of the problems that we outlined. It is unfortunate the Deputy Premier has vacated the Chamber during this debate because we want to make some important points.

Mr Barnett: He will be back in a second.

Ms MacTIERNAN: I will not get onto those points now, but will wait until the Deputy Premier returns because these issues have come to our attention since the last debate. I am very keen to get a response from the Deputy Premier. It makes a bit of a nonsense of parliamentary debate when one wants to raise some points and get some answers.

Mr Barnett: I am listening, and now the Deputy Premier is listening.

Ms MacTIERNAN: We raised those various issues and particularly expressed concern as to whether a system that relied on signing statutory declarations, saying that one could not identify the photograph or was unaware or could not recall who was the driver, was basically unworkable. We have had some support since the second reading debate. Grant Dorrington of the Road Safety Council has said basically that it was unworkable. Probably of more significance is the opinion advanced by Assistant Police Commissioner Mel Hay, who said that this amendment is impossible to police. He said -

If someone fills in a stat dec and lies it is a serious offence. But we would need to prove that beyond a reasonable doubt.

If the numbers of people not paying fines remains anywhere near what it is now there is no way we could investigate every single stat dec we got in.

He went on to say that he supported owner onus in its purest form; that is, where the onus is on the owner to say who was the driver and to establish why it is that he cannot say who was the driver. He said that it has worked well in all other jurisdictions and why would it not work here? We have here the Assistant Commissioner Mel Hay basically supporting our proposition.

We have set up an unworkable system, which will not in any way, shape or form address this problem of people basically not responding to their fines, and which will not address the problem of people who drive corporate vehicles, simply because it will be impossible to police. The police will not have the resources to check the statutory declarations that they receive. They will have to accept them as a matter of principle. It is not simply a question of people lying in statutory declarations. It would be possible to phrase a statutory declaration in such a way that even if it were investigated, it would be virtually impossible to prove that it was wrong. Simply the statement, "I cannot recall who was driving the car at that time" -

Mr Cowan: People on that side of the House know a lot about that sort of prefacing remark.

Ms MacTIERNAN: The Deputy Premier's leader and others have had a lot of problems recalling a whole heap of stuff.

Mr Cowan: Not as many as the people on your side of the House who have had a problem with using the expression that they cannot recall.

Ms MacTIERNAN: That is because some of the members on the Deputy Premier's side are prepared to go even further in some of the evidence that they give and perhaps give evidence where they do not simply say that they do not recall but make statements that one might, if one were being critical, say were direct untruths. I do not think it will be useful for us to get into whose predecessors were worse.

Mr Cowan: A lot of people on your side of the House are very familiar with the expression "I cannot recall."

Ms MacTIERNAN: I accept that. I am saying et tu brute. The Deputy Premier might find it instructive to read the evidence the then President of the Legislative Council gave to the royal commission. He seemed to have similar lapses in memory. Perhaps the royal commission did not apply the same focus to him as it did to members of the Labor Party. However, those memory lapse problems are not confined to this side of the House. Maybe when we have a few royal

commissions when we get into government we will be seeing that some of the present government members will be pleading Alzheimer's disease. However, that is not the issue.

The issue is that we have a problem with statutory declarations. It is obvious the police will not have the capacity to process and check those statutory declarations. Further, even if they did have the resources, and we know they do not, it is possible to frame a statutory declaration in such a way that it would be almost impossible to establish that the contents were not true. It would be possible to make statements like, "I do not recall who was driving the car on that day," and it would be very difficult to establish that the person could recall who was driving the car on that day. Even if the identity of the driver could be established, one could not establish the fact that the person could recall who was driving the car.

The statutory declaration system is based on a fallacy. It is based on a misunderstanding, first, of police resources and, secondly, of how a statutory declaration might be framed without perjuring oneself. Before we vote on the third reading of this Bill, given this was such a crucial part of this legislative package, does the Deputy Premier believe that Assistant Commissioner Mel Hay has got it wrong, or is he correct and the police will not have the resources? It would be a major concern if the Deputy Premier believed the assistant commissioner misunderstood his role and his resources. Everyone in the community says that this system will not work, except government members who have been beaten around the head by a few car dealers and who have rolled over saying that this system will work. The weight of evidence indicates that this legislation will not address the problem of owner onus and the statutory declaration system is incapable of delivering a return to this State and will put in jeopardy the cap speed program which was predicated on receiving sufficient revenue from the speed cameras. The cap speed program will upgrade the computer system to incorporate vehicle licensing and registration details. It is estimated cap speed will improve the efficiencies of fine collection and reduce the number of unlicensed drivers. We will have a double whammy: The owner-onus system will not work, and will result in a reduction in money available for the cap speed program that in turn will ensure that the new resources that were to be devoted to improving licensing and enforcement of fines will not be available.

I would appreciate the Deputy Premier advising the Opposition why it should support this Bill at the third reading stage, given its obvious flaws, and how he proposes to overcome these profound concerns that have been raised about the impact this will have on the cap speed program.

MR COWAN (Merredin - Deputy Premier) [1.03 pm]: I commend the member for Armadale for doing something which she does not usually do; that is, confine her remarks in the third reading debate to those matters that have already been canvassed in the second reading and consideration in detail stages. However, when one recalls the breadth and scope of the debate, particularly during the consideration in detail stage, her boundaries were quite wide.

Ms MacTiernan: I have learned that with National Party members it is best to focus on one issue to improve their concentration.

Mr COWAN: I am pleased the member for Armadale has learned that because it makes my task easier.

The concerns that were expressed by the member for Armadale were the major thrust of the debate that came from the Opposition; that is, in the pure sense this legislation does not give the level of responsibility to the owner of a vehicle to the extent of comparable legislation in other States or to the satisfaction of the Opposition.

Ms MacTiernan: Or to the Commissioner of Police

Mr COWAN: Or to the satisfaction of the police. I will deal with the police and Mr Grant Dorrington, who keeps labelling himself as the independent chair of the Road Safety Council, and so he is. He likes to demonstrate his independence as often and as regularly as he can, and so he should. I do not have any difficulty with his doing that. As everybody knows one of the designs of the lesser penalties in the Traffic Code is to place in law a provision that removes from the individual that one bastion of a democracy that one is innocent until proved guilty. Once a police officer writes on an infringement notice it is deemed that one has committed that offence. I understand from comments made by the member for Armadale that she wants that type of responsibility handed to the police, so that whatever they say is what has occurred and a person is guilty of committing that offence.

Ms MacTiernan: No, I have not.

Mr COWAN: That is the outcome of what the member says. Effectively, all Assistant Commissioner Mel Hay is saying to the world at large is that it will make it easier for the police if the owner-onus provisions say that if the police declare someone has committed an offence they are guilty. Therefore, they are guilty until they can prove otherwise. I understand all of that.

Ms MacTiernan: Does the Deputy Premier support those provisions in the fisheries legislation which are the same?

Mr COWAN: Now the member for Armadale is transgressing from the standing orders. We have made some progress down the path towards moving the onus of proof onto those people who have offended or infringed the Traffic Code by speeding when that is recorded by a speed camera, or by travelling through a red light at an intersection when that is recorded by a red light camera. However, we have not reached the position that Assistant Commissioner Hay, Grant Dorrington and the Opposition would like us to reach.

Ms MacTiernan: The problem with that argument is that the Government has probably taken us backwards, because this debate has made the community more aware of the holes in the system and so it will attract less money rather than more.

Mr COWAN: That exposes the cynical view that the member for Armadale has of the general public of Western Australia. I do not agree with that conclusion. The member has drawn a number of inferences that can be challenged. First, the extent to which the public listens to or takes notice of what goes on in this place and, secondly, that they take a great deal of notice of what is said in the media. An example of that is the tunnel project. After two and a half years of negative criticism in the media, on opening day tens of thousands of people came to look and wanted to be part of it. Who was right?

Ms MacTiernan: What about the belltower? Do you reckon you'll get the same response?

Mr COWAN: When it is constructed people will say that it probably does contribute to this city.

The member for Armadale wants the legislation to contain those provisions she thinks would be more satisfactory to meet the views that she has expressed. The Government does not accept that. The Government acknowledges that it has not taken this legislation as far as the Road Safety Council or the Assistant Commissioner of Police would have liked. However, the Government has taken it as far as it thinks it needs to go, and there is no question that people must accept some responsibility for their actions. I will always contest with the member for Armadale the extent to which the public in Western Australia will accept responsibility for their actions. She indicates they will not; I disagree with her and I argue, on behalf of the Government, that they will. There is no doubt that the real proof of this will be seen after the enactment of this legislation and its enforcement. When a review takes place after a certain period, I have no doubt that if the Government is proved to be wrong, and the public are not as responsible as I and the Government claim they will be, the member for Armadale will join with Assistant Commissioner of Police Mel Hay and Grant Dorrington in saying loudly that they told us so. Then the Government must do something about it.

In the meantime let us pass this legislation, enact and enforce it, and then conduct a review. If the review shows that the member for Armadale was right, that will be acknowledged and the Government will seek to make changes to the legislation. However, from I doubt that will be the case.

Ms MacTiernan: In the meantime 20 per cent of people are getting away without paying their speeding fines, lives are being lost and those driving corporate vehicles have carte blanche.

Mr COWAN: I am sure that will change and that this legislation will effect that change. I ask all members to support the third reading of this Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

CORONERS AMENDMENT BILL 1999

Second Reading

Resumed from 22 March.

MR McGINTY (Fremantle) [1.13 pm]: The Opposition supports this amendment to the Coroners Act. It is fairly straightforward and deals with matters substantially of a procedural nature. The major change in this legislation is that it provides for rationalisation of the two current offices of coroner in the metropolitan area of Western Australia. Presently, there is the State Coroner and a separate office of the Perth City Coroner. While that has its origins in historical matters, it does not reflect today's needs. The Opposition supports the proposal to appoint a State Coroner and a Deputy State Coroner in one integrated system. In country areas of Western Australia there is a role for magistrates in the coronial system, although increasingly coronial work is being done by the State Coroner regardless of where the death occurs. The Opposition supports the provision of one coronial service rather than a more fragmented service.

We note that the legislation provides for the Deputy State Coroner to be a person who is already a stipendiary magistrate. Therefore, that appointment will come from among the ranks of the magistracy, and it will be made by the Attorney General on the recommendation of the State Coroner. While that limits the number of people from among whom the appointment of Deputy State Coroner may be made, that person will come from among existing magistrates. The Opposition believes that is an appropriate move. I hope this will provide for a more integrated service in which the Deputy State Coroner can act for the State Coroner and provide better coordination in this matter.

This legislation also makes changes to the time limits for applications to be made to the Supreme Court. First, it contains a provision to extend the period during which an application may be made to the Supreme Court in respect of a coroner's refusal of a request for a post-mortem examination to be performed on a body, from the current two days to two clear days. Generally speaking, requests for a post-mortem operation to be performed on a body are made by relatives, and if the coroner refuses that request the relatives can appeal against that decision to the Supreme Court. For obvious reasons, significant time restraints are imposed, and the minor relaxation in the time limit within which that application can be made to the Supreme Court will allow a marginally greater degree of flexibility. That will apply particularly for people living in country areas, but also generally for people who are often under great stress when the circumstances of a death are such that there is debate about whether a post-mortem examination should be performed. In those circumstances a marginal increase in the time within which an appeal can be made to the Supreme Court is an appropriate relaxation of the current time limits.

Secondly, the legislation will extend the period during which people may make applications to the Supreme Court when

they do not agree with a decision by the coroner that a post-mortem examination be carried out. The coroner may decide that a post-mortem examination is to be conducted bearing in mind all the circumstances of a death, despite a request from the senior next of kin that no such direction be given. If the next of kin does not like that decision, that person will have two clear days, rather than the current two days, in which to appeal to the Supreme Court against the decision. That additional time might be an extra day, depending on when the application is made. Quite clearly, delays beyond two clear days would be inappropriate, particularly when one envisages the circumstances which could give rise to a desire for a post-mortem examination of a body.

The third area in which time limits for applications to the Supreme Court are to be extended is for the exhumation of a body. When the State Coroner directs that a body be exhumed and that proposal is opposed by the senior next of kin, the time limit for an appeal to the Supreme Court has also been extended from two days to two clear days. In each of those three cases involving a decision to conduct a post-mortem operation, a decision not to conduct a post-mortem operation -

Mr Prince: It is actually an examination.

Mr McGINTY: I have had the misfortune of sitting in on a post-mortem.

Mr Prince: So have I. It is an examination.

Mr McGINTY: Technically it may be an examination.

Mr Prince: Surgeons may take issue with you if you refer to it as an operation.

Mr McGINTY: An operation might have the effect of healing someone, which is too hopeful a view in the case of a post-mortem! A post-mortem is very much a surgical procedure.

Mr Prince: Absolutely.

Mr McGINTY: The current legislation provides a time limit of two days for making each of the three applications I referred to: A decision to hold a post-mortem, a decision not to hold a post-mortem and a decision to exhume contrary to the wishes of the senior next of kin. That time limit will be extended to two clear working days by this legislation. Obviously, that will involve an extension well beyond two or three days when weekends are taken into account.

I would appreciate the advice of the minister, but the legislation does not appear to refer to the problem of delays in handing down decisions by a coroner.

Mr Prince: It does not, unfortunately.

Mr McGINTY: It is an acute problem and has surfaced recently in that the time taken by a coronial officer to hand down a decision was well beyond what anyone would regard as appropriate. That raises the question of how delays can be overcome at a time of great grief for a family. The last thing a family needs at the time of an unexpected death, or a death in suspicious circumstances which warrants the involvement of the coroner, is insensitivity from a coronial officer. The hurt and mourning of that family is made worse by a coroner who fails to deal expeditiously with the matter, or who deals with it in an insensitive way. That problem has emerged recently and if the legislation does not deal with it, I would appreciate an indication from the minister as to how that matter will be dealt with in future. Although we acknowledge the very important principle of judicial independence - this is one of those circumstances where that principle applies - the obligation that goes with accepting that principle is for the duties and functions entrusted to that judicial officer to be discharged diligently. The inability to discharge that duty appropriately warrants the consideration of this Parliament to impose upon the relevant officers a responsibility to perform their duties in a reasonable time limit and in an appropriately diligent fashion. As a Parliament we cannot sit idle while functions are not performed properly and while relatives have additional harm inflicted upon them by the way in which coronial officers discharge their functions. I say that not only of coronial officers but also of judges.

Other incidents have occurred recently when judicial officers have failed to properly fulfil their functions. For example, in the Industrial Relations Commission many years can transpire between a hearing and a decision being handed down in matters that should take only a matter of weeks to be properly resolved. That type of negligent behaviour by officers who are appointed to undertake a duty puts them outside the protection of judicial independence. Members will remember the very rare move taken by the New South Wales Parliament to remove a judicial officer from his position, again in similar circumstances, because there were enormous delays involved in his handing down decisions. In Western Australia some coronial cases have been waiting far too long for a determination. In my limited experience of these matters, if a coronial inquiry is warranted, most families want it to occur as soon as possible so that the matter can finally come to an end.

Coroners who do not accept the sensitivity and importance of their functions create a number of problems by the way in which they handle matters. Somewhat similar comments can be made about the time delays in general proceedings before our courts. It is heartening to see that there is no current waiting list problem in the Supreme Court, particularly in civil and criminal matters. Unfortunately, that is not the case with the District Court criminal list. Its waiting list is accounted for substantially by changes to the jurisdiction of matters commenced in the District and Supreme Courts, and perhaps even the Magistrate's Court, which have brought a significant extra workload to the District Court, and it calls for a response from the appropriate judicial officers on a way in which to handle the problem, rather than simply allowing waiting lists to blow out.

I take the opportunity in this debate to foreshadow the need for a cooperative approach between the appropriate courts,

judicial officers and the Government in dealing with the delays in handing down decisions and bringing on matters for hearing so that we can eliminate the current problems with coronial decisions and some District Court criminal matters.

A few weeks ago I had the benefit of a briefing on this matter by the Home Office in London and it appears that similar time delays arise in various jurisdictions in England. One of the essential elements in coronial and criminal courts is that justice be expeditiously administered. That is not occurring currently in District Court criminal matters, and problems also arose with coronial matters earlier this year. The approach being pioneered in some jurisdictions in the United Kingdom is to require courts to deal with matters in a particular time frame.

Mr Prince: Who can issue that requirement?

Mr McGINTY: I will be dealing with this matter in greater detail in other legislation. However, it is a statutory requirement for cases to be dealt with in a particular time frame so that there is certainty about the matter. There will always be an exceptional case which cannot be dealt with in that time frame and which must be dealt with in open court. This UK experience involves the notion of a Parliament demanding that judicial officers deal with matters expeditiously. I was advised by the officers from the Home Office that a measure of success has been achieved, particularly with juvenile offenders. The meting out of justice approximate to the offence is important when dealing with juvenile offenders, perhaps more so than other offenders, as they need to appreciate the swift administration of justice by the penalties related to their misbehaviour.

This is an issue that people in England have come to grips with, and this is an issue that we may need to look at in Western Australia, where we do have problems in our coronial system, and also with more serious crimes, which are waiting far too long to be dealt with by the District Court. The changes in the jurisdiction of the District Court mean that today, most serious crimes are dealt with by the District Court. There was a time when a raft of sexual assaults and other matters were dealt with by the Supreme Court. Today the Supreme Court deals with only a small number of the most extreme crimes, and the bulk of the criminal jurisdiction is vested in the District Court. The District Court is not managing to handle those cases, for whatever reason. It may be a question of resources. It may also be that the Law Reform Commission's recommendations on the reform of the civil and criminal justice systems in Western Australia need to be hurried along considerably so that the processes can be streamlined. A series of things need to be looked at.

The Opposition will be looking closely at what I gleaned from my visit to the United Kingdom a few weeks ago and its experience with trialling the operation of directives as to the time within which matters must be dealt with. I do not accept that the notion of judicial independence means that the Parliament should sit by idly while judges are not doing their job properly within acceptable time frames. If measures can be introduced by the Government or proposed by the Opposition which will have the effect of imposing that requirement on judges, that will be quite appropriate, because we cannot stand by idly while waiting lists in the District Court's criminal jurisdiction and in other jurisdictions are blowing out to unacceptable levels. An essential element of justice is that it be dispensed quickly. This Bill has the support of the Opposition, and hopefully some of the comments that I have raised will be taken into account, if not in this legislation then in other legislation dealing with the operation of our courts, so as to avoid significant delays in this matter. I hope this Bill will lead to a more streamlined and effective operation of the Coroner's Court.

MR McGOWAN (Rockingham) [1.32 pm]: Having had considerable time to examine the Coroners Amendment Bill, I am happy to provide some comments on behalf of the Opposition. As the member for Fremantle enunciated, the Opposition supports this Bill to amend the Coroners Act 1996, which was in response to a coalition commitment in the 1996 state election that the Parliament would deal with the issue of dead bodies. I am pleased that the Government has put in place an amendment Bill to improve that 1996 Act. I have not had the opportunity of examining that Act, but the amendment Bill contains some provisions which will improve the law in this area. The procedures that are put in place to examine the cause of death of people's next of kin have the potential to arouse a great deal of emotion. This is an issue with which the law needs to deal expeditiously and sensitively, and I am pleased that the minister is attempting to deal in that way with this issue.

It is a good idea that the coroner act with swiftness. However, we need to have regard to the size of Western Australia and the requirements of people who live outside the metropolitan area and who may make an application to the court with regard to a post-mortem investigation. People are often in a considerable state of shock when a loved one passes away and need to have some time in which to make a decision about what should happen to the body of that person. People often make that decision based upon a range of emotions. It is important that the coroner be very responsible in making a decision about whether to examine a corpse. The coroner will need to examine the circumstances surrounding the death of an individual and whether there are any suspicious or any other relevant factors.

When the Whip asked me to speak on this Bill, he suggested that because I had a law degree, I would be an expert on coroners law. However, I can honestly say that my experience with dead bodies is very limited. I have heard historically that in some preselection battles, dead bodies have been involved in terms of assisting some candidate on his or her way to political stardom, but my experience has been very limited, although I once did visit a room at a university where a lot of dead bodies were being dealt with by medical students in a very unbecoming way, and I believe there must be some restriction on the way in which medical students deal with dead bodies. Therefore, I support the concept of a coroner, because the role of the coroner is to ensure that we ascertain the reasons for death and get to the bottom of any ill dealings with people who have passed away. The Opposition supports this Bill, and I am sure we will not try to hold up the passage of this Bill, because -

Mr Brown: We do not want to be dead in the water.

Mr McGOWAN: The member for Bassendean raises a very good point. I feel very strongly about this Bill and support it wholeheartedly.

MR BROWN (Bassendean) [1.38 pm]: I wish to speak on the Coroners Amendment Bill because of some comments that I made in this House two or three years ago about a number of suicides that had occurred in this State following from medical reports that had been given by one psychiatrist in this State who had used weird and unusual theories to denigrate the people whom he had examined. As a result of complaints that were made in this Parliament and to the Medical Board of Western Australia, that person stopped practising for some time, and because of that other people were spared the sorts of theories that he practised.

I raise this matter because I believe that a matter will come before the coroner in due course which relates to the death of a young woman who had been subjected to the type of examination and critical comments made by that psychiatrist. I understand that in the proceedings that will come before the coroner, there will be an application for the coroner to examine not only the circumstances of this death but also whether there is a pattern of deaths that have occurred following the type of medical opinions that have been expressed by that psychiatrist, who is a member of the medical profession.

Prior to coming into this Parliament, I had the opportunity to represent people involved in the workers compensation system. As a result of that representation, I read various medical reports from people in the medical profession, whether they be orthopaedic surgeons, rheumatologists or whatever. It is true that within the medical profession there are differing opinions among the specialists and that different specialists will arrive at different conclusions based on the condition or perceived condition of the person whom they are examining. However, it is equally true that although members of the medical profession may differ on the facts of a case - that is, whether a particular patient was receptive or non-receptive to certain treatment and so on - they generally agree on the theory; that is, the theory and the principles are settled. That is not the case with the psychiatrist to whom I refer. He has some unusual beliefs about conditions from which people suffer. Although I do not have before me at the moment the very detailed and thick file I have on this matter, my recollection is that, for example, in some of the medical reports that he issued, which were contrary to medical reports issued by other members of the medical profession, he referred to someone being unable to work because of suffering from a sick syndrome and various other matters. In many instances his reports were extremely damaging to not only the compensable claims of the person who was injured but also to the self-esteem of the person who was subject to his reports in that they were different from those of other members of the medical profession and were quite derisory.

I raise this because I hope that when this matter next comes before the coroner he will take an expansive view of it and he will not only look at this narrow case that will come before him for consideration but also look at the wider question, because if a person is using not only unorthodox but also untested theories upon which he is diagnosing, or allegedly diagnosing, patients in such a way as to cause psychological damage to a patient in that the patient's confidence in himself is undermined, that person must be brought to account. Members of the medical profession are reluctant to speak up, be heard and express an opinion on other members of the medical profession who may not act professionally and competently, but now is the time to be strong on those matters when there is such a large amount of debris from what appears to be the way in which this person has practised.

When I raised this matter previously, the minister dealing with this Bill may have been the Minister for Health.

Mr Prince: I remember it, but not well.

Mr BROWN: Yes. I raised it with the Medical Board of Western Australia, and from my recollection - I will stand corrected - there was, first, a difficulty at that stage in getting the Medical Board to look at the matter and, secondly, when it looked at the matter, there was difficulty obtaining from it exactly what its conclusions were. Suffice to say that at the end of the day I recollect that the person agreed to desist.

Now there has been another death. This cannot now be put to one side. I do not know what the pattern of deaths is for people who have psychological problems and who might be under psychiatric treatment by various members of the profession, but this seems to be an extraordinary situation when there is a further suicide. Various notes have been left, and I understand that a note left by the young woman in question referred to the way she was dealt with - I will not say "treated by" - by this member of the medical profession.

If this Bill seeks to provide additional resources and to put some steel in the arm of the coroner in investigating these matters, it is certainly worthy of support, because the State has an obligation to a number of people in these types of investigations. In this case, it has an obligation to those who are left behind and who must now live with this unfortunate death to thoroughly investigate the matter. Through the coroner's office, the State has an obligation to investigate whether this is part of a pattern of matters that have occurred because of the way this member of the medical profession has treated other patients or other people who have been referred to him. Most importantly, the State has an obligation to thoroughly investigate this to ensure that it does not happen again and that we do not see a further trail of damage being caused by this person, if indeed it has been caused by him.

People have been hurt as a result of the suicides that have taken place and their lives have been crippled. They have a clear view about where the fault lies. It may well be argued that sometimes when people have suffered such a great loss they are looking for something that sometimes may not exist. Nevertheless, those people feel that great hurt and great loss. They are not so blinded as to be looking for a scapegoat, but they are looking at what has occurred. The fact that a number of these people have independently reached the same conclusion - admittedly, they are not members of the medical profession but are lay people - is a cause for concern.

I have raised these matters. Obviously, it is not appropriate for me to canvass the facts of this case in detail, and I do not wish to do so. However, I place on record that this matter will come before the coroner. It has now been determined that it will be investigated. When it is, I understand that an application will be made for the coroner to take a wide view of the matter. I hope that the coroner takes that wide view and that he conducts a very broad investigation into the allegations being made to ascertain whether they have any substance. If they do not, then obviously the member of the medical profession concerned can stand above them and say that it is a matter of coincidence. However, until such time as that happens, there will be grave doubts.

I raise these matters in the hope that my comments add some weight to the evident public clamour for this matter to be thoroughly investigated when it next comes before the coroner. I hope to avoid the circumstances I faced two or three years ago when, in difficult circumstances, I met parents of people who had committed suicide. I recently went again through that traumatic experience. I do not wish to avoid it for my sake, but for that of the people involved. The State and the State Coroner have an obligation to avoid those circumstances. I support this Bill if it enables the coroner to take a wide view of matters which appear before him.

MR PRINCE (Albany - Minister for Police) [1.52 pm]: I thank the Opposition for its support for this measure. This amending Bill deals with a number of relatively small but important matters which have become evident since the Coroners Act was passed in 1996, when a major rewrite was conducted of the coronial legislation under which the State operated for some time. As indicated by the member for Fremantle and others, this Bill will establish one State Coroner and create the potential for a Deputy State Coroner to be appointed. A number of consequential provisions flow from that arrangement.

The member for Fremantle and others referred to the delay in handing down decisions. Clause 5 contains an amendment to section 21 of the Act which provides that the State Coroner can give to another coroner directions about the manner in which investigations into a death are to be conducted. That is a straightforward exercise. It outlines how things should be done in a general sense. The amendment will empower the State Coroner to make directions regarding possible findings concerning a death by a specified date. Therefore, the State Coroner will have the power to direct other coroners handling inquiries to make findings to be handed down by a certain date.

Some complaints have been made - the member for Fremantle went into them at some length - about delays in coroners or magistrates exercising coronial functions. This amendment is designed to explicitly give the State Coroner control and power to ensure others who carry out coronial inquests, inquiries and investigations do so expeditiously. I hope that will resolve what some people in the past saw as excessive delays in making decisions and giving details and findings on causes of death.

The other amendments concern time. The Coroners Act 1996 provides a period of two days for an application to be lodged by the next of kin with the Supreme Court regarding various decisions made by the coroner. However, the Act did not give the Supreme Court the power to extend that period. It was probably an oversight at the time. The amendment gives the power to extend the time by two days, and for the Supreme Court to extend in certain circumstances. Although the justification in large part is the difficulty of distance when people live in far-flung parts of the State, and the time involved in flying backwards and forwards, we hope in time that the problem will be overcome, particularly through telecommunications technology. The tyranny of distance in the State can be reduced. Nevertheless, it will be appropriate on occasions for the time limits to be extended and to remain extended. Differences of opinion arise among family members, particularly with the high divorce rate in this State, and between parents of a young person who has died. Parents do not agree on the circumstances of the post-mortem examination of the body, funerals and so on. Difficulties arise with notification and communications between people who have severed their matrimonial relationship and do not want to communicate.

However, we will conquer the tyranny of distance in the future - as the police have done already through their new IT system. From the courts' point of view, a host of problems arise at a difficult time when someone has died, and an extension of time may be necessary.

I remember, although imperfectly, what the member for Bassendean raised two or two and a half years ago. The coroner's power to inquire or investigate will not be altered by the amendments in the way the member suggested. The coroner has a discretion regarding what he or she may inquire into and the breadth of the inquiry. Some of the matters the member raised are for the medical profession, through the Medical Board, to inquire into; namely, the way the practitioner operated. That matter was taken up once, and perhaps the member should take it up again. Maybe it would be desirable to wait and see what the coroner does regarding the application the member foreshadowed would be made for a wide-ranging inquiry to be triggered by the investigation into the death of one person who died apparently as a result of suicide.

Mr Brown: It would be good if you supported it.

Mr PRINCE: I cannot say whether the Government will support the application because I do not have the information. However, I will endeavour to find out about the matter. If it is appropriate for the Government to support that application, I will indicate that to the member. I commend the Bill to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time, proceeded through remaining stages without debate, and passed.

PLANT PESTS AND DISEASES (ERADICATION FUNDS) AMENDMENT BILL 2000*Second Reading*

Resumed from 5 April.

MR GRILL (Eyre) [1.58 pm]: The principal legislation, which is well known to most wheat farmers in Western Australia, has been in place for a long time and, by and large, has stood the test of time. It is regarded as desirable legislation by the industry, which has contributed funds to the eradication of skeleton weed and, before that, the eradication of other pests and diseases. This process has been ongoing for 20 or 30 years.

The expiry date in the principal Act is 31 October of this year, and this simple legislation proposes to extend the Act for a further two years. In that interim period, a review of the legislation will be conducted from a scientific and operational point of view. The legislation also needs to comply with national competition policy, and all parties want to ensure it is efficient and effective for the future and returns benefits to wheat growers and others in the wheatbelt. The Opposition supports the legislation.

MR HOUSE (Stirling - Minister for Primary Industry) [1.59 pm]: This legislation will renew existing legislation that has been debated in this Parliament on a number of occasions. I thank the Opposition for its support.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time, proceeded through remaining stages without debate, and transmitted to the Council.

[Questions without notice taken.]**MISUSE OF DRUGS AMENDMENT (CANNABIS CAUTIONING NOTICES) BILL 1999***Receipt*

Bill received from the Council.

HEALTH, GOVERNMENT'S MANAGEMENT AND PRIORITIES*Matter of Public Interest*

THE SPEAKER (Mr Strickland): Today I received a letter from the Leader of the Opposition seeking to debate as a matter of public interest the following motion -

That this House notes with concern the State Government's financial mismanagement and its mistaken priorities which are jeopardising the health and safety of Western Australian citizens.

If sufficient members agree to this motion, I will allow it.

[At least five members rose in their places.]

The SPEAKER: The matter shall proceed on the usual basis.

DR GALLOP (Victoria Park - Leader of the Opposition) [2.33 pm]: I move the motion.

Next week the Government of Western Australia will bring down its state budget and the Opposition will focus on two aspects of that budget. The first is the overall financial framework within which the budget is pitched, which has been the subject of debate in this Parliament not only today, but also in recent times because of the failure of the Government to be honest about what is in the current budget. The Opposition has exposed the Government in relation to its commitment to its stated targets.

The second important issue is the priorities this Government sets for revenue and expenditure. Those issues will have a significant impact on the health and welfare of our people. In the end, budgets are about people; they are about the people of Western Australia and how their life chances, health, welfare and conditions are affected by the budget. In Western Australia today a number of issues are of real concern to the people, and we want to know whether the budget to be brought down next week will assist the people to deal with these important issues.

The first issue, of course, is the pressure currently being placed on family budgets in Western Australia. Interest rates have risen, taking an additional \$1 300 a year from the average family, the inflationary impact of the goods and services tax will be felt from 1 July, and the State Government's increased fees and charges have been announced. All these matters are putting pressure on the budgets of ordinary families, and the Opposition has made and will make that a big issue impacting on the future of Western Australia.

Secondly, I refer to the quality of services being delivered by the Government to the people. We will raise that issue today. It is very important that all members understand what is happening in our community today; not the theories or the figures, but what is happening to people in the community. We shall illustrate the state of Western Australia today with two case studies. The first deals with the health system. Currently the health system is disorganised, demoralised and dispirited. There have been four major changes in the structure of health delivery. Any dollar currently spent in the Health Department that goes through the system is not delivering results for the people, because of that disorganisation and low morale in the system. The result is a system that cannot cope with the demands placed upon it. As a result, individual Western Australian families are experiencing great stress because the system cannot respond to their individual needs.

My colleague the member for Thornlie will illustrate this today with a very good case study of one Western Australian family and its encounters with the health system in 2000. This health system has had the misfortune to be governed by a coalition Government since 1993. That Government has left the system punch drunk with change, under funded, demoralised, disorganised and dispirited. As a result, people in Western Australia are not getting what they should in 2000, and the Opposition will illustrate that with a very good case study.

The second issue that is of crucial importance to the people of Western Australia, relates to the Western Australian road toll. Western Australia has the highest per capita rate of road accident fatalities of all the States in this country. Over the past decade, Western Australia has gone from having one of the lowest fatality rates of any Australian State to having the highest. Road accidents and road fatalities are preventable, and we must look at the record of the Government in this area. My colleague the member for Armadale will bring to this debate evidence that this Government is not taking its responsibility in respect of the road toll seriously enough. The road toll is preventable and the Government should take steps to reduce the toll for the citizens of our State.

When considering the budget next week, the Opposition wants to make sure that this Parliament understands what is going on in the community when Western Australian citizens present themselves to public hospitals and public health facilities. What response and treatment do they receive? How long must they wait for treatment? Our second case study relates to road fatalities in this State, and how this Government is sitting on material and recommendations that could make a difference to the citizens of this State. The Opposition today wants to bring the human reality back to the budget debate. It should bring the people of Western Australia back into the equation, so that when we debate the budget next week we are under no misapprehension about what is happening in our community with the unacceptable road toll and the unacceptable treatment of people in the public hospital system.

MS McHALE (Thornlie) [2.39 pm]: I bring to the attention of the House a specific case which graphically illustrates the real problems that people are facing when they seek treatment at our public hospitals. The case involves Princess Margaret Hospital for Children and a mother who raised her concerns with me and who is angry, aggrieved and upset. She is not upset at the hospital but at this Government for spending precious taxpayers' money on the wrong priorities. Mrs Herbert's daughter, Daina, was born three years ago and was diagnosed at 11 weeks with neuroblastoma, a form of cancer. She had constant chemotherapy treatment from the age of 11 weeks to six months for an enlarged liver and spleen, one main tumour and 35 subtumours caused by the cancer. Therefore, on and off for the past three years Mrs Herbert has experienced the difficulties of Princess Margaret Hospital. Her experiences are not good; they reflect the types of difficulties that other parents have which cause them to feel completely let down by this Government.

At six months, Mrs Herbert's daughter was sent home. She has had monthly tests and treatment since then and has been in remission for the past few months. However, that is not the problem faced by Mrs Herbert. Her problem is the clear under-funding and under-support received by Princess Margaret Hospital from this Government which severely affects the health and wellbeing of her daughter. One example by way of illustration was when Daina required a platelet transfusion a couple of years ago and because a pump was not available, as the pumps were either in use elsewhere or not working at all, her mother had to hold the bag of platelets and rotate it to keep it warm and moving so that it did not coagulate while her daughter had the transfusion. She stayed in the day surgery for 25 minutes holding the bag of platelets because her daughter required the treatment and the equipment was either not there or out of order. She could not return for the treatment when the equipment was available; she needed it there and then. However, that is not the problem facing Mrs Herbert now.

Dr Gallop: Mind you, \$1m spent on lawyers for privatisation advice would have been put to good use in that hospital.

Ms McHALE: Absolutely, that would have bought many much-needed replacement cots. It is a very clear and stark example of the Government's priorities when it spends \$1m on one legal firm for privatisation advice. Incidentally, Mrs Herbert is a country mother who lives in Kojonup and who has travelled to Perth on a regular basis for Daina's treatment. Mrs Herbert's biggest problem now is that her toddler's teeth are rapidly decaying and are in urgent need of treatment because of the effect of chemotherapy. The chemotherapy affected her little daughter's saliva glands, which consequently affected her teeth.

About a year ago, Daina had five teeth capped. Even then, there was a waiting list but it was shorter than the waiting list she now confronts. Daina must wait 12 months to have the majority of her teeth capped so that she can eat, so that she is not in pain and so that she can sleep at night. The pain is particularly bad when it is cold at night. I am not talking about a family member who has eaten excessive lollies or not looked after her teeth; that is far from the truth of this case. I am talking about a three year old who has had cancer virtually from birth, who has had chemotherapy and who is now facing severe and rapid tooth decay as a result of that chemotherapy. It is intolerable that she must wait 12 months. It is unimaginable that the mother must watch her daughter's teeth rapidly and visibly decaying. As a result of the treatment, Daina is typically low weight anyway and eating is difficult for her. The cavities are getting bigger, the teeth are chipping and the enamel is weakening prematurely because of the treatment. Her teeth are decaying virtually in front of her mother's eyes, yet she cannot receive treatment for 12 months.

Dr Edwards interjected.

Ms McHALE: As my friend and colleague pointed out, the delay also puts her at risk of other infections as her condition further weakens her physical state. Mrs Herbert has tried other avenues for treatment. She has contacted the Central Wait List Bureau. However, because of the underlying medical problems of the cancer and the treatment and difficulties that Daina may have, she has been rightly told that she must have the treatment at Princess Margaret Hospital. Her mother has

tried private sources but the family is not wealthy; they do not have private cover and cannot afford private treatment. However, Daina must still attend Princess Margaret Hospital so her mother would need to find a private practitioner who could practise at PMH; those practitioners are few and far between, if not impossible to find.

Therefore, the quality of this three-year-old girl's life in the past three years has been severely affected by the cancer. However, the quality of her life now is severely affected, not by the cancer, but by this Government's lack of funding to a major and our only children's hospital and by this Government's priorities for spending taxpayers' money. As a result of that, Daina, Mrs Herbert and many others experience the same kind of heart-wrenching difficulties.

When Daina required her first lot of teeth capped about a year ago there was a three-month waiting list. In 12 months there has been pressure on the hospital and PMH has been squeezed to a point where it now has a waiting list of at least 12 months. If Daina stops eating because the pain is so bad and if she cannot sleep because the pain is so bad, the hospital may reassess her. However, even then, there will be months to wait. Can members imagine a mother being told that if her child stops eating the hospital may be able to reassess her? Is that the sort of society in which we want to live? This is an appalling indication of the very real problems faced by our hospitals.

Mrs Herbert has travelled from Kojonup to Perth to be in the Chamber to listen to the debate to ensure that I represent her case fairly, factually and in the way in which she asked me to and also to listen to the response from the Government. I thank Mrs Herbert for travelling four hours to hear what I have to say and what the Government has to say in response and I welcome her to the Chamber. When Mrs Herbert asked why there was a waiting list of 12 months, she was told it was because of the pressure on the hospital theatres, which were all booked out. That is a further indication of the pressures on the hospital. The situation is unimaginable. How would members feel if they were looking after a child day in, day out, cleaning her teeth three times a day because the decay is such that it requires that kind of management, knowing that even cleaning causes pain for the child? Daina can no longer eat ice cream, which is something most children like to do at that age, because it affects her teeth. She has difficulty sleeping at night, particularly when it is cold.

This is a graphic and telling illustration of what is so very wrong about the pressures on our health system. We now have a situation in which the waiting lists for children are no better. In fact, the length of time that Daina now has to wait for her teeth to be capped demonstrates that the waiting lists are worsening. The alternative for Daina is that her teeth decay and fall out. We are talking about a three-year-old child whose adult teeth may not come through until as late as the age of seven or eight. I am talking about a mouthful of teeth, other than the five teeth that have been capped already. What sort of society do we have when we cannot provide three-year-old Daina with the dental treatment that she needs, given what she has gone through over the past few years? Just how under-resourced is Princess Margaret Hospital when the mother has to stand for 25 minutes and hold the bag of platelets so that a transfusion can go ahead? This is not an isolated case. We have all heard similar experiences from many of our Western Australian families, particularly our country families. This mother is angry. She feels let down; she feels for her child; and she feels that she and her husband have worked and paid taxes, and that they are justified in expecting and demanding a better health system than the one we are getting.

In the mother's words, it is not the fault of Princess Margaret Hospital, but it is very much the fault of this Government. This Government knows about the difficulties that Princess Margaret Hospital has been experiencing. Case after case has illustrated the difficulties and the squeeze on that hospital, yet the Government has done nothing. It is the fault of this Government and its wrong priorities. I want this young girl to receive the treatment that she needs, not wants. It is not a question of want. I want some urgent intervention to ensure that Daina's teeth are properly fixed in a time frame that will allow her to have some quality of life; in other words, her teeth need to be fixed in the next month, not in the next year. This is a shameful illustration of the problems that are facing many of our families, and the minister should be shamed into taking action.

MS MacTIERNAN (Armadale) [2.53 pm]: I express my sympathies to Mrs Herbert. A dreadful and quite scandalous story has been set out for us by the member for Thornlie, and I hope there is some resolution of that matter. However, I am not optimistic generally, and I certainly am not optimistic about the future of road safety in this State. As the Leader of the Opposition has said, in the past 10 years Western Australia's relative performance in road safety has gone from being the best in Australia to being the worst. In 1990, the WA average was 12.15 deaths per 100 000 residents. The national average at that time was 13.66 deaths per 100 000 residents. Western Australia has virtually not moved forward at all. We are now at 11.55 deaths per 100 000, and most of that improvement is due to improvements in medical technology, yet the national average has dropped dramatically to 9.42 deaths per 100 000. We are about 30 per cent above the national average. That is a disgrace and something of which this Government should be profoundly ashamed.

Why has the death rate in this State remained virtually static while the rest of the nation has moved forward? It seems very surprising. We hear endless diatribes from the Government; it produces glossy brochures at a rate of knots; the minister grasps every feelgood media opportunity to pontificate on road safety; endless committees, councils and offices of road safety have been formed; and we have had to listen to an enormous amount of rhetoric from this Government about road safety. However, WA is simply not performing. Why is that so? It is evident that this Government is prepared to talk the talk but not walk the walk. When it comes to a proposal that requires some real action and some money - something other than a brochure, a web site or a media opportunity - this Government will not deliver. It squanders the money on belltowers, tunnels, lawyers, consultants and expensive and pointless privatisations.

A specific proposal is the Government's vision document. The Government is very good at putting its name to vision documents. This vision document says that the Government wants to reduce by half the number of traffic accidents and

fatalities within this State. The Government then commissioned a report from the Monash University Accident Research Centre. However, the public has been given only a sanitised version of that report, which does not have all the meaty bits in it. Nevertheless, a real report has been done, and that real report contains real recommendations about how to achieve the motherhood commitments that the Government made in its 1996 glossy. One of the primary suggestions in that report is that we need to spend \$34m a year on black spot funding. Traditionally, black spot funding has come from the Commonwealth Government. It has trickled through to the State at a measly rate of about \$4m per year, and all the local authorities in the State have been fighting each other and have been trying to fight off Main Roads to get their hands on this black spot funding so that they can do something about the areas in which there is an increasing number of the State's accidents. The report states that that is not the way to deal with this issue. The way to deal with it is to allocate \$34m of state government money each year to black spot funding. The report states that over five years, this will save 76 lives; and, on extrapolation, it will lead to a reduction of 1 000 in hospitalisations and of 3 000 in medical treatments. The Monash report, which we have not been able to see, states that that is probably the most effective way of targeting the road funding dollar to achieve road safety objectives and is one of the ways in which we can dramatically reduce the number of road accidents.

Mr Court: Is that to improve the roads which have black spot problems?

Ms MacTIERNAN: Yes - to address, through black spot funding, the accident sites. The research that we have dug out, because we have not been able to get the full copy of the Monash report, indicates that in Victoria, the number of serious injuries and accidents was reduced by 50 per cent when black spot funding was applied; and, in New South Wales, the number was reduced by 64 per cent. The research is clearly there, the report has been commissioned, and the report states that an expenditure of \$34m per year on black spot funding will save 76 lives over five years. This report has now been backed by the Road Safety Council. It has also, as I understand it, been to the beaut ministerial council on road safety, because the Government likes to set up councils. That council was set up in this 1996 glossy, and it comprises the Ministers for Health, Police, Transport, Education and Local Government. Apparently they endorsed this report in February. However, three months later the concern is that this has still not made its way to Cabinet. The concern is that it has been flicked passed to a cabinet subcommittee chaired by the Minister assisting the Treasurer, and it is the real fear of the industry that this represents the death knell of this proposal.

This Government is prepared to spend small amounts of money to make it look like it is interested in road safety, but when it receives tangible proposals which require a modest amount of road funding - I believe \$34m is a modest amount of funding to be spent - it is not prepared to sign off on that proposal. We know that the fines from speed cameras and red light cameras are attracting around \$40m a year. Only \$14m of this amount goes into the road trauma trust fund. There have been numerous calls for government to be prepared to devote a much greater proportion of the money that is collected from those kerbside cash registers to deal with the problem of road safety, and in particular to address the issue of black spot funding. On several occasions previously the Opposition has pointed out the great irony that kerbside cash registers are not placed at black spots but, rather, are placed in locations that appear to favour the maximisation of income rather than the reduction of accidents.

Mr Wiese: Don't you like Multanovas?

Ms MacTIERNAN: I support Multanovas absolutely, but they should be placed in such a way that they are primarily designed to reduce accidents, not primarily to generate revenue. Is it true that the ministers on this ministerial council have endorsed this program?

Mr Prince: The RAC of WA, local government and others decide where the Multanovas will go.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Okay. Is the minister prepared to make a commitment to provide the resources to deal with road trauma in this State? Here is a proposal -

Mr Court: You just said we put the cameras in the wrong places. What a ridiculous thing to say!

Ms MacTIERNAN: A proposal that is before the minister will see 76 lives saved over five years. It will cost the Government \$34m, which is less than the amount received from revenue from the red light and speed cameras. The Opposition wants a commitment that the Government is prepared to put that money into road safety. If it is not prepared to do that, only one conclusion can be drawn; that is, that the Government is more interested in balancing its budget than in saving the lives of Western Australians.

MR COURT (Nedlands - Premier) [3.03 pm]: I will make some brief initial comments on this matter of public interest. The motion states -

This House notes with concern the State Government's financial mismanagement and its mistaken priorities which are jeopardising the health and safety of Western Australian citizens.

I will put on record what financial mismanagement is. Financial mismanagement is blowing \$1.5b of taxpayers' funds on blue sky - moneys that could have gone into hospitals, schools and the like. That is what a previous Government did. Financial mismanagement is when a Government is not prepared to fund its liabilities; for example, superannuation, for which the Leader of the Opposition had some responsibility. Financial mismanagement is when a minister refuses to take advice on premium levels for a third party insurance fund and sends it broke, the Leader of the Opposition being the minister responsible for that. Financial mismanagement is when a Government allows debt to blow through the roof so that taxpayers spend more on interest payments, and it is when a Government is in power for 10 years and does not build one new hospital.

Mr Kobelke: What are you talking about?

Mr COURT: I am talking about the Labor Government.

Mr Kobelke: That is not true. Come back to reality, Premier.

Mr COURT: The member can tell us which hospital his Government built.

Mr Kobelke: The north wing of Royal Perth Hospital.

Mr COURT: My friend, one need look no further than the members opposite to know what financial mismanagement is about.

Ms MacTiernan: You cannot continue to justify your record by an exercise in ancient history. You tell us about what you have done and what you will do. That is what people want to hear.

Mr Cowan: Shut up and he will be able to tell you.

Ms MacTiernan: He is not interested in talking about this Government's record.

Mr COURT: I will talk about health funding, if the member wants to listen. Since coming into government, we have increased the Health budget by \$500m plus each year. We have made sure that we have built new facilities in Bunbury for the South West Health Campus, at the Peel campus and at the Joondalup campus, and we are currently building the Armadale campus, yet all the Opposition can do is criticise that facility.

Dr Gallop: Let us get down to the human reality.

Mr COURT: I will.

Dr Gallop: Let us talk about deaths on the road and Mrs Herbert.

Mr COURT: If the Leader of the Opposition sat quietly, as I did when he spoke, I would be able to make my points. The first point I made is that health funding has been given our top priority, and we have put more than an additional half a billion dollars a year into that budget. In building those four new hospitals, one of which is currently under construction, we have ensured that state-of-the-art children's facilities have been put in place. Therefore, we will not rely exclusively on Princess Margaret Hospital for Children, because we have put magnificent facilities into Bunbury, Mandurah and Joondalup, and we will do the same at Armadale.

I refer to the specific case that has been raised concerning Mrs Herbert. I cannot comment on the detail because I am not aware of it, but the Minister for Health will. In any case that is brought forward in which a person is not getting satisfaction, the Government will make sure that questions are asked and that the person receives satisfaction. Princess Margaret Hospital for Children is an outstanding institution. It provides the clinicians, the nurses and the support staff, and they do a superb job every day. Hundreds of procedures are carried out every day. That hospital is in my electorate and I visit it on a regular basis. I am nothing but supportive of it. However, the Government's strategy is also to make sure that it can provide more of those services. People should not have to travel from the outer metropolitan and country areas into the metropolitan area. We should provide more of those services in those outer areas, particularly for children and the elderly, and that is exactly what we are doing. We are proud of the support we have provided to the Western Australian Research Institute for Child Health.

Dealing with the individual case which has been raised, the Minister for Health, as he does with every case that is brought forward, will make sure that the matters are properly handled. The Government is proud of the fact that its public hospital system, with all of the pressures on it, is still one of the finest in the world.

Ms McHale: It is deteriorating like your Government.

Mr COURT: It is not deteriorating. The member should not talk down what those people are doing. We are building magnificent new facilities and staffing them.

I will deal with the comments of the member for Armadale on road safety and road funding and the need to spend money on black spots. This Government is doing just that.

Ms MacTiernan: How much?

Mr COURT: We have more than doubled the amount of money that we are putting into road programs, which includes programs to get rid of black spot problems. The Opposition thought it was clever to boycott the opening of the Graham Farmer Freeway, but it has solved a number of traffic accident problems in the city. That is just one example. Members opposite then said that the Government locates speed cameras where they make the most money. The member for Armadale knows that the cameras are located on the advice of bodies such as the RAC and local government where specific problems are identified, and that the key priority is to make roads safer.

The best that members opposite can do is make pathetic statements in Parliament that the Government does not spend money on road black spots and puts speed cameras in the wrong place. It is nonsense!

MR DAY (Darling Range - Minister for Health) [3.11 pm]: As the Premier indicated, it is a complete joke for the

Opposition to accuse this Government of financial mismanagement and of not getting its priorities right, particularly in relation to health spending. The Government has made a genuine attempt to expand the health system in a substantial way, both in the quantity and range of services provided around the State. New facilities have been, and are being, built by the Government. The reality is that this Government has increased funding for our health system from \$1.2b when the Labor Party left office to \$1.8b -

Dr Gallop: Let us talk about real people like Mrs Herbert.

Mr DAY: We are talking about real taxpayers' dollars which have gone into the health system and which the Leader of the Opposition will not acknowledge. I am happy to talk about people, as the Government provides satisfaction to many thousands of people who receive very good treatment through our public hospital and health system each year. The Opposition can pick out only a few cases here and there on an individual basis, raise them in here or run them through the media as part of a stunt to try to drag down our public hospital system.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! It is rare for the member for Girrawheen to interject in such a manner.

Dr Gallop: Are you going to apologise to Mrs Herbert for saying that? What a disgrace!

Mr DAY: The Leader of the Opposition is excited today. I was making no comment on the clinical case, the patient or the patient's family. My point was that if the Opposition had a genuine interest in dealing with these issues, members opposite would have made contact with my office or dealt with the issue fully with the hospital. When I or my office are made aware of such issues, we follow them through fully and take them very seriously. I have a strong interest to ensure that high standard clinical treatment is provided to everybody who genuinely needs it in this State, particularly in such a case, given my dental background. I will return to the case in a moment.

The reality is that many new facilities have been put in place and developments have been made by this Government for children and adults. It is time that the Opposition made some acknowledgment, even if credit is not given, of the extensive developments around the State. I refer to the new hospitals built, for example, at Joondalup, Mandurah and Bunbury; the major extension at Broome; and the major hospital being built in the Armadale-Kelmscott area. These hospitals all include new children's facilities which are in addition to the new facilities provided at Princess Margaret Hospital, such as the new cardiac theatre which has been described by the main surgeon using it as the best in Australia and one of the best in the world. It is state of the art and cost more than a million dollars. It was funded by the Government to ensure that we can provide paediatric cardiac treatment in this State which has not been possible in the past.

The Opposition can only continually knock our public hospital and health system. Members opposite drag it down for their political reasons. I know they are running a political campaign to create a perception that our hospital system is being underfunded and crumbling; however, the facts speak for themselves.

The opposition spokesperson gets around the State to a certain extent, and I know she was in Fitzroy Crossing last week. She might have been told by staff there about the new facilities to accommodate health service staff at Fitzroy Crossing, and such facilities provided at Warmun, Oombulgarri, Port Hedland and many other remote and rural areas of Western Australia. What can the Opposition tell us about its health plan, its funding and where the money will come from?

Dr Gallop: We will fix up your mess!

Mr DAY: Give us the plan. What will it cost to do that? Members opposite claim to be the alternative Government, yet they do not come up with one positive idea.

Mr McGinty: What are you going to do for the child? Talk about the specifics presented to you.

Mr DAY: Members opposite spoke about the general state of our health system, and I speak about that also. I will come to the specific case in a moment. The Opposition does not like me focusing on its lack of a plan. Members opposite should tell us what the Labor Party will do about our public hospital and health system, how much additional funding will be provided, and where it will come from.

Dr Gallop: Our policy is to fix up your mess. It will be very difficult, and will take a long time because you have created such havoc out there.

Mr DAY: How much will that cost? The Leader of the Opposition does not have an idea. He is as exposed on this issue as his federal counterpart is on the GST. The federal opposition leader talks about not increasing other taxes, not reducing payments to the States and not reducing the surplus, yet still rolling back the GST. Everyone knows after 30 seconds of thought that that cannot be done. Members opposite claim they will improve the health system, but will not say where the money will come from or how much will be put into the system.

Mr Kobelke: We will not give one law firm a million dollars to advise on something that is a waste of money. That will release money to the young people to get better. It was one million dollars on one consultant going nowhere!

Mr DAY: The silence is deafening; I rest my case!

The Opposition raised today the specific case of Daina Herbert. I am told that she was originally provided with some

surgery in May of last year. A checkup was provided in June of last year which indicated that her dental situation was satisfactory at that time. She was recalled for a further examination in December last year which indicated no cavities, and that her overall health was good. She was seen again on 15 March this year, or about six-weeks ago, when it was determined that one tooth had a cavity which needed restoration. An attempt was made to treat that, I gather, under local anaesthetic, or certainly in a dental chair. It was not successful. Following an appointment on 4 April this year, a decision was made to undertake the surgery under general anaesthetic, which is sometimes necessary, particularly for young persons who require complex treatment.

A decision was made by Daina's mother, I understand, to seek private treatment at that stage. She was informed there was a fairly long waiting list at that time, so she was not put on the waiting list. Daina's mother contacted the Princess Margaret Hospital parent advocate on 28 April - last Friday - to indicate that she was not able to pay for the private provision of the treatment and that Daina was suffering some pain when her teeth were brushed. The parent's advocate consulted both the orthodontist and the dental therapist, and has tried on five occasions to make contact with Daina's mother with the information that the dental clinicians at PMH would be happy to see her to reassess the case. Therefore, attempts were made on five occasions since Monday of this week to make her aware of this situation. If Daina's mother is here today, and if she were not previously aware of that, I suggest that she contact the hospital. It has been made clear that staff are happy to see Daina to reassess her situation based on the additional information which has been provided to the hospital; that is, she has been suffering some discomfort or pain when her teeth are brushed. There has been no success in contacting Daina's mother prior to this time, even though five attempts have been made since Monday. An amount of \$373 000 from our elective surgery funds has been made available for increased dental treatment in this financial year. Of that amount, about \$56 100 has been made available specifically to Princess Margaret Hospital for Children for the provision of additional treatment to patients such as Daina who have had to wait longer than is ideal. I do not believe this is a funding issue. The funds are there to provide this sort of treatment.

Mr McGinty: Why does she have to wait 12 months?

Mr DAY: I agree that 12 months is longer than desirable for this sort of treatment. I will be having further discussions with the hospital. I believe the issue emanates from an insufficient availability of clinical staff to do the work, but I will clarify that.

Dr Gallop: But that is not a shortage!

Mr McGinty: You are not paying them enough. You are thick, minister. Has the penny not dropped? There is not enough clinical staff to do the work.

Mr DAY: We know the member has selective hearing, but I said that the funds are there to deal with cases like this. We have made that funding available. I believe that insufficient clinical staff are available to deal with this issue from a time point of view. However, I will investigate the matter further from a more general perspective.

This Government has allocated additional funds for elective surgery generally and specifically for increased dental surgery at Princess Margaret Hospital for Children. I agree entirely that that funding should be used. It is an absolute joke for the Opposition to accuse the Government of not adequately funding our public hospital system. We have increased funding from \$1.2b to \$1.8b - a greater funding increase for our health system than was ever the case under a Labor Government.

Ms MacTiernan: Where has it gone? You have wasted it!

Mr DAY: Where has the \$600m gone? I will tell members where it has gone. It has gone into providing renal dialysis in Armadale for patients who, in some cases, are constituents of the member for Armadale. It has gone into providing increased obstetric surgical services at Armadale-Kelmscott Memorial Hospital. Some of it is going into building a new \$48m hospital for constituents of the member and surrounding electorates.

Ms MacTiernan: You have not spent the \$48m; you are going to.

Mr DAY: Of course we have not spent the \$48m. If the member for Armadale drove out to her electorate occasionally and looked on the left hand side of Albany Highway, she would see some major construction works on the site of Armadale hospital. The work is being undertaken and the money is being spent as quickly as possible to build a high-quality and substantial new hospital in Armadale. It is the sort of thing that the member's Government talked about for 10 years. It knew that a new hospital was needed at Armadale. What did that Government do about implementing new plans to build a new hospital at Armadale? What is the Opposition's plan for health in the event that it happens to be elected to government?

Ms MacTiernan: We have policies and they will not involve three year olds waiting 12 months to have their teeth fixed.

Mr DAY: If the Opposition has policies, it should start telling us about them, because we have not heard much. I will investigate this case further to see what can be done. The hospital has been attempting to get in contact with Mrs Herbert to indicate that staff are happy to see Daina with a view to providing the treatment which is needed based on the additional information available to them.

MR COWAN (Merredin - Deputy Premier) [3.24 pm]: Before I deal with some of the general issues that have been raised by the Opposition in this matter of public interest, I will reinforce the comments of the Minister for Health about that individual case. Most members who heard the story told by the member for Thornlie and the response of the Minister for Health would have heard two completely different stories. It is not for us to stand in judgment. All I can do on behalf of

the Government is to ensure that the words of the Minister for Health are reinforced; that is, the parent who made the complaint to the member for Thornlie must ensure that she is available to be contacted. There is no doubt that the Minister for Health will carry out the undertaking he gave. It is necessary that we differentiate between the individual case that has been put today and the general expenditure that the Government might appropriate to the different services that the Government is expected to deliver to the people of this State. There is no doubt that during our time in government, we have seen a significant increase in the outlays for all those areas that are the core business of government - health, education and law and order issues. Those figures cannot be disputed.

I will return to some of the issues that were raised by the member for Armadale. The member for Armadale wanted to know whether we would be spending money on black spots. The level of state government expenditure on roads as a whole, which includes black spots, has increased substantially. In 1992-93, local government received \$31m in road funding from the State Government. That funding has risen to \$163m. I could list a number of other areas for which the level of funding has increased by significant amounts. In the case of local government, five times the amount of money has been spent on roads. The same thing can be said for secondary roads, or roads of importance; there has been significant expenditure on all roads. That is a core responsibility of the Government. Funding has been made available to those areas for which the Government is expected to deliver services. It has occurred in health, education, law and order issues and transport. I acknowledge that the member for Armadale has been carrying on the argument that she used during the debate on the amendments to the Road Traffic Amendment Bill. There are three major causes for crashes in Western Australia, and we all know what they are: Drink driving, speed and fatigue. Like every Government, we undertake to maintain a high profile program to overcome those issues. We spend a lot of money on improving the road system in Western Australia so that people can feel safe and on ensuring that the rules under which drivers operate on the road are changed to administer the needs of the community; for example, the speed limits which are set around schools.

We must acknowledge that these issues are never resolved solely by government, the police in this case, or the Health Department in other cases. They are always resolved by a cooperative effort between the government agency and the individuals within a community or the community as a whole which may be involved in these issues. Unless we can have all three involved, we are bound not to achieve the success we want. I ask members not to keep blaming the Government and government agencies but to accept that we all have individual responsibility and community and social obligations. Perhaps we can get together, and between the lot of us we might resolve some of these problems that members opposite love to talk about.

MRS HODSON-THOMAS (Carine) [3.31 pm]: Like the member for Thornlie, I have spent some time going through the Princess Margaret Hospital. I want to draw on a recent experience I had when I went there, which involves a nine-year-old child. Wonderful doctors and nurses are working in that facility. It is a shame that the Opposition constantly carps about what is not happening. The nine year old was involved in a serious car accident and was in an induced coma. Her mother was at her bedside, obviously wondering whether her daughter would survive. The daughter was in a critical condition. I am pleased to say that she is now on her way to recovery because of the services provided. In my locality in the northern suburbs the Joondalup Health Campus has a wonderful facility. The minister is committed to providing services closer to people's homes so that they can access those wonderful services.

I express my concern to Mrs Herbert and Daina. My wish is for Daina's continued good health. I know that the minister has a commitment and an interest, and he will certainly give his commitment to Mrs Herbert.

MR MARSHALL (Dawesville - Parliamentary Secretary) [3.33 pm]: I want to finish this debate on a good note, not a sour or negative note trying to pull down a group of people who should be held in the highest esteem in the State. Last year my wife had a boating accident. We were swimming with the dolphins. She stepped out of the boat and the ladder chopped off her finger.

Mrs Roberts interjected.

Mr MARSHALL: Is the member interested in this? She should stop thinking about herself and listen to this. This is important.

Mrs Roberts interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr MARSHALL: She lost the finger in the water but we were able to get her onto the boat and with the valuable help of a mobile phone, we were immediately able to ring the magnificent new Peel Health Campus at Mandurah. When we arrived people were waiting for us at the door. She was wheel-chaired in for inspection. They checked out the finger. I went home to get all the necessities to take to the hospital in Perth. I was told when I returned to the health campus that they were waiting for us at Murdoch. It took us 20 minutes to get to Murdoch. As we were filling in the paperwork in the administration area, the word came through that they were waiting in theatre for Mrs Marshall. I was told that the paperwork could be filled in later and that my wife should get to the theatre. Two hours later my wife was out of theatre, having undergone an operation by the hand specialist at Murdoch. She received the most perfect, professional attention that one could ever imagine might be experienced. That is only one of the many stories going around about the hospital services of Western Australia.

Question put and a division taken with the following result -

Ayes (16)

Ms Anwyl
Mr Brown
Mr Carpenter
Dr Edwards

Dr Gallop
Mr Grill
Mr Kobelke
Ms MacTiernan

Mr Marlborough
Mr McGinty
Mr McGowan
Ms McHale

Mr Riebeling
Mr Ripper
Mrs Roberts
Mr Cunningham (*Teller*)

Noes (30)

Mr Ainsworth
Mr Baker
Mr Barnett
Mr Board
Mr Bradshaw
Dr Constable
Mr Court
Mr Cowan

Mr Day
Mrs Edwardes
Dr Hames
Mrs Hodson-Thomas
Mr House
Mr Johnson
Mr Kierath
Mr Marshall

Mr Masters
Mr McNee
Mr Minson
Mr Nicholls
Mr Omodei
Mr Osborne
Mrs Parker

Mr Pendal
Mr Prince
Mr Shave
Dr Turnbull
Mrs van de Klashorst
Mr Wiese
Mr Tubby (*Teller*)

Pairs

Ms Warnock
Mr Bridge
Mr Thomas

Mrs Holmes
Mr MacLean
Mr Barron-Sullivan

Question thus negatived.

DAIRY INDUSTRY AND HERD IMPROVEMENT LEGISLATION REPEAL BILL 2000*Second Reading*

Resumed from 5 April.

MR GRILL (Eyre) [3.38 pm]: The Opposition has some considerable misgivings about this legislation. I see the minister looking at me slightly quizzically.

Mr House: No, so does the Government.

Mr GRILL: That concern should not surprise anyone. Initially we took the position, I think at a caucus meeting in Bunbury at which I was not present, that we would oppose the deregulation of the dairy industry in this State. My colleague in the upper House Hon Kim Chance put out a number of press releases indicating that we would oppose the deregulation.

Mr Bradshaw: He has also said publicly that he would not oppose it.

Mr GRILL: Did he? The official press release indicated quite clearly the Australian Labor Party's position.

Mr Bradshaw interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr GRILL: I have already said that we have considerable misgivings about the legislation and that we were inclined to oppose it. However, we have considered the position. Although we are not prepared to support the legislation, we are prepared to say that we will not oppose it. That is primarily on the basis that although the situation that will transpire is not a good result for Western Australia, we do not want to see Western Australia miss out on the federal restructuring package. As a result, the Opposition will not oppose the legislation.

Essentially the Bill has two parts. The first part completely deregulates the WA dairy industry. That industry has already been partially deregulated by a process that took place over some years. The second part of the Bill will privatise the herd improvement service. Generally speaking, the Australian Labor Party is not enamoured with privatisation, but it does not have a problem in this case. The Opposition supports the privatisation of the herd improvement service in Western Australia and in due course will wish the new operators of that cooperative or company - depending on which structure it takes - the best of luck in managing it from here on in. The Opposition has had considerable concerns in the area of deregulation, which is not a matter that we can minimise. It is a big step for Western Australia, which has had a successful dairy industry in many ways - not in terms of the export performance - and has probably been the most successful dairy industry in the whole of Australia. This legislation, and the deregulation that will spring from it, will severely hurt a lot of farmers right across Australia and particularly farmers in Western Australia. That is putting the best light on it. Putting the worst light on it, we could be facing a ruinous situation. A range of scenarios has been put forward by different groups in the dairy farming community, and I do not have enough knowledge to say where this situation will end up. Although the Opposition is hopeful that farmers in this State will not be too badly hurt by deregulation, our suspicions are that a number of them will be badly hurt.

Today we debated part of an Australia-wide change. There has been deregulation in the dairy industry across Australia for some decades both at a commonwealth and state level. Each State has its own legislation and the Commonwealth has had legislation in place for some time. The dairy industry Australia-wide is not a small industry. I read a report recently which thoroughly went into the proposals relating to the regulation. I picked up some of this information from that report. The dairy industry is a big industry. In terms of value adding, it is Australia's largest rural industry and employs 60 000 people.

In terms of the export achievements, it has done reasonably well - some would say very well - and exported about \$2b worth of product in 1998-99. It supplies about 12 per cent of the world dairy trade, which is a surprisingly large amount. It is third after the European Union and New Zealand. It is Australia's third largest rural industry in terms of value at the farm gate behind beef and wheat. It is the largest rural industry by wholesale value in Australia at about \$7b. Australia has efficient milk production costs by world standards and exports about 50 per cent of its total milk product. The industry generated about \$1.5b of new investment, mainly to expand the manufacturing industry, in the five years to 1998. That industry competes in Australia on the domestic market against imports that are allowed free access into this country. That appears to be one of the factors behind the push for deregulation. The Australian dairy industry, at least that part that exports overseas, operates under unfair terms by virtue of the fact that it has restricted access to many Asian markets, it must compete against heavy subsidies from the European Union, and it also competes against highly subsidised products coming out of the United States under the US farm Bill. It operates in a corrupted world market, much like many of our other farm producers.

The prognosis for the industry depends on what sort of report one reads. Some reports forecast a bleak future and others forecast a reasonably rosy future. The truth is that the industry has been fairly successful in exports over the past several years. There has been a downturn in the Asian market which has caused some falling off in prices. There have been problems in Europe in terms of access to the Russian market with buttermilk. The export market in that arena has tended to deflate. There are problems on the world scene, but there are hopes that the Asian market will begin to expand again now that it is over its economic crisis.

When one considers the volume of milk production around Australia, it is clear that Western Australia is not a big player. We produce about 4 per cent of Australian milk. The big player on the Australian market is Victoria which produces 63 per cent of Australian milk, followed by New South Wales with 17 per cent, Queensland with 9 per cent, South Australia with 6 per cent, Tasmania with 6 per cent and Western Australia with 4 per cent. So that members understand the debate which is under way and which will ensue, milk in all the States is divided into two products - market milk and manufacturing milk. Many of the members listening at the moment will appreciate the difference, but for those who read this debate later on, market milk is processed into whole or low fat milk for drinking, and manufacturing milk is processed into products such as cheese, butter and yoghurt. Market milk has a price premium in most States. By virtue of this legislation, we will in many respects abolish the price premium for market milk in this State.

I know there is debate about that and, depending on who is talking, there is a different version of the facts. Only time will tell. However, I do not believe any member on either side of the House will dispute the fact that in the long term, by virtue of this legislation, we shall destroy the premium on market milk in Western Australia and across Australia.

How much of that milk is market milk and how much is manufacturing milk? Currently in Australia 21 per cent of the milk produced is market milk and the balance - the great majority - is manufacturing milk. Victoria dominates the manufacturing milk market with 73 per cent of Australia's milk. The growth in the market milk arena has been very slow over the past decade - about 1.5 per cent per annum; however, in the manufacturing milk market the growth has been much higher. This has allowed Victoria, which historically has produced most of the milk in Australia, to dominate the export milk program. In Victoria 83 per cent of its milk goes into the export trade and in Western Australia less than 1 per cent goes into that export area.

In Victoria the manufacture of milk is controlled by two major dairy cooperatives; the first is Bonlac Foods, and the second is Murray Goulburn. In Western Australia there are three manufacturers, namely, National Foods Limited (WA), sometimes known as Masters; the Peters and Brownes Group; and George Weston Foods Ltd, known as Wesmilk Pty Ltd.

Mr House: You have forgotten your favourite one. Did you not want to mention it?

Mr GRILL: Harvey Fresh is a player, but it will not be a big player.

Mr House: I remember a minister who hoped it would be a big player.

Mr GRILL: The company was innovative and small, and it had a lot going for it. It had some financial problems, but it had a good product and I am told it is doing reasonably well these days. I should not have overlooked Harvey Fresh, but it is not a big player in the market.

The Commonwealth has regulated the dairy industry in Australia through the domestic market support scheme. Initially it was known as the Kerin plan when it was put in place in 1986. I was one of the state ministers who made a contribution towards that plan. Many people believe that plan was the turning point in the fortunes of the industry. Once again, it depends on one's point of view, but it is a strong belief in many parts of Australia that the Kerin plan was good for the Australian industry and good for our export performance.

Mr House: Did you support it when you were a minister?

Mr GRILL: Yes. It is very much like the proposition before us now, where all the States must be part of the program because all producers had to be levied and each State had to consent to the legislation. It was a similar situation to that facing us with this legislation. Most of the industry favoured the Kerin plan and said it turned the industry around from an inward looking industry to an export oriented industry. People in Victoria would certainly adopt that view, but perhaps not those in Western Australia. The Western Australian industry has always been a very self-contained industry, which has done well and has not relied on the export market. Market milk has been very important in this industry. It is a very different situation from that in Victoria.

Statistics on the export performance tend to bear out the view that the Kerin plan turned around the industry for the better, because they indicate that we have dramatically increased the amount of product exported from Australia, most of which comes from Victoria. However, there is another view that the world market into which we export is corrupted, it does not represent fair value, we are putting too much into the market for the return received, and, by that process, we drag down the rest of the domestic producers. That is one argument.

The domestic market support scheme operates on the basis that all milk used on the domestic market is levied, and the proceeds are redistributed to the producers of manufacturing milk for export. It is a straight take from the domestic market to the export market, and that has enabled Victorian farmers to chalk up the export performance to which I have referred. In 1986, when the plan was put in place, it supported dairy industry returns at 44.2 per cent above world parity prices. The transfer of funds from the domestic market to the export market allowed industry returns to be at that level. It was always intended that the level of support would be reduced, and the target for 1992 was 22 per cent. That was achieved. When the scheme was renewed in 1992, a target was set of 10 per cent by 2000, and that has largely been achieved. When the scheme ceases operation on 30 June this year, there will be no export support for the Australian industry.

At the same time that it supported the Australian export effort, that scheme put in place an impediment to domestic producers, in that those countries that exported dairy products to Australia did not have to pay the levy. As a result, they had a 3.6¢ a litre commercial advantage on the Australian market. Our major competitor on our market is New Zealand, and the New Zealand dairy farmers have been able to take a fair slice of our market during that period. The DMS has been a contributing factor towards the success of the New Zealand farmers on that market, and it picks up about 15 per cent of the cheese market at present.

In WA we have been progressively deregulating the dairy industry, under Governments of both persuasions, and we have deregulated it beyond the farm gate in previous years. We continue to regulate the industry in this State by quotas fixed by the Dairy Industry Authority, which are traded on the open market. The quotas are transferable on the market, and many farmers have paid large sums of money for quotas. We should have some considerable concern for those farmers. The Dairy Industry Authority sets the price for market milk in this State at a substantial premium to manufacturing milk. If this legislation is passed, we need to give careful consideration to the fact that the substantial value of those quotas will be wiped out. In most cases, the value of those quotas in the hands of dairy producers runs into the hundreds of thousands of dollars. In many if not most cases the dairy producers have borrowed from the banks to finance the purchase of their quotas. It could well be that, by wiping out the value of those quotas, we will place many of these producers in a very parlous economic position. Not only will the value of the quotas be wiped out if we pass this legislation, but the average price of Western Australia milk will also drop substantially. There will be an argument about how far it will drop, and some indicators exist in the market. Once again, time will tell. Whatever way we look at it, as a result of deregulation, dairy farmers in this State will be hit with a brutal double whammy: First, the loss of the value of their quotas for which they will not be compensated; and, second, the very substantial drop in the average price of milk.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING, COST

Motion

DR GALLOP (Victoria Park - Leader of the Opposition) [4.00 pm]: I move -

That this House notes the increases in taxes and charges being imposed on the people of Western Australia and -

- (a) condemns the Government for wasting millions of dollars on promotional advertising; and
- (b) calls for the tabling of the full details of all expenditure on advertising and promotions across government in the current financial year.

As we approach the next state budget, which will be brought down in this House next week, it is important that we reflect on the priorities the Government of Western Australia has been setting for taxes and charges collected from the people of this State. In doing that, it is important to provide a context to the discussion. It is not as though we are dealing with a Government that has not had enormous revenue raising possibilities. Indeed, between 1992-93 and 1999-2000, taxation revenue in Western Australia has increased by 75 per cent, which is \$1.5b. In real terms, the increase has been 62 per cent. Of course, the taxation increases have been across the board. The Government has been collecting record levels of revenue.

In its pre-budget submission, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry stated that real per capita revenue had increased by 1.6 per cent since 1992-93. In the previous seven years, annual revenue growth was 0.1 per cent. On top of that revenue growth, the Government's privatisation policy has involved selling off over \$4b of assets. It is clear that the Court Government has not suffered from a shortage of revenue.

The Opposition has questioned how that revenue has been used and whether the Government is meeting all its financial targets. In important respects, it is not. The core services of government are under real pressure. As my colleague the member for Nollamara will illustrate, this Government seems to be able to find easy money to spend on advertising its own products, if I can use that term. Much of that advertising is political propaganda. There is no debate about that. This Government is using taxpayers' money to attempt to prop itself up.

Before dealing with that I will detail the reality of the increased taxes and charges. I will first refer to the last state election

campaign, during which the Government promised a social dividend for the people of Western Australia. That promise was made when the economic cycle was working very favourably for state revenue. In 1997, the Government increased typical household charges by \$236 per annum. The calculation the Opposition uses is based on the one-car family, which is conservative. These days, most Western Australian families have two motor vehicles because of the necessities of life in a city such as Perth. In 1998-99, the charges for an average household increased by \$136 per annum; and in 1999-2000 the increase was \$55 per annum. This year's budget will introduce a range of increases including some associated with the goods and services tax, leaving a one-car family \$221 worse off.

Let us consider what the recent announcement means for the average Western Australian family. Third party insurance will increase by 7.5 per cent, including a 3.6 per cent GST impact; public transport charges will increase by 6.2 per cent due to the GST; electricity charges will increase by 9.3 per cent due to the GST; gas charges will increase by 9.3 per cent due to the GST; water, sewerage and drainage charges will increase by 2 per cent; and motor vehicle registration will increase by 3 per cent in line with the consumer price index. The GST will also be applied to home contents and motor vehicle insurance and stamp duty will be applied to the GST-inclusive price of insurance premiums. All up, as a result of all those increases over the past four budgets, a typical one-car household is \$640 worse off. That is the social dividend that has been delivered to the average household in Western Australia.

Mr Wiese: How much have their incomes increased?

Dr GALLOP: Members opposite should not mention earnings in Western Australia because our record compared to that of other States is not good as a result of the policies of the member for Riverton, which include workplace agreements. They have had an impact on the ability of Western Australians to earn wages. My friend the member for Nollamara might provide the comparative figures for all the States.

If we calculate the figures based on a two-car family, the increase over the past four budgets would be \$785. The Government claimed that typical family costs would increase by only \$166 as a result of the increases announced last week. The Premier conveniently forgot the fact that insurance costs would rise as a result of the GST and that stamp duty would be applied to the GST-inclusive premiums. In fact, the model he produced this year did not include the additional costs involved in insurance even though in an answer provided on 11 May 1999 he claimed that his average household model included representative home contents and motor vehicle insurance. The table issued last week did not include those costs, and that is one of the reasons his figures represent an underestimate.

I mention those taxes and charges because we must put them in the context of what is happening today given the forthcoming GST. The Opposition has illustrated very clearly that everything said about it in 1998 has not turned out to be true. First, the Opposition made claims about the impact of the GST package on revenue collected by the Government of Western Australia. Members on this side said that the Government had seriously overestimated the revenue that would be collected in Western Australia as opposed to that which would be collected if the current system were retained. We were right and the Government was wrong. We are still not convinced that the promises made by John Howard to compensate for that loss of revenue will be adequate. The recently published Access Economics report proves what we have said.

The second claim made in 1998 that has been blown out of the water is that the inflationary impact of the goods and services tax would be about 2.9 per cent. Independent economic analysis indicates what has happened to petrol and beer prices and we know that the impact of the GST will be much more significant than that. Some economists put it at 4 per cent and some go up to 6 per cent. These are the real impacts of this tax which the Labor Party voted against in the Parliament. They went through the Federal Parliament only because the Australian Democrats made a deal with the Government.

Mr Court: Yes, but you have now publicly said that you will support it.

Dr GALLOP: The Premier's twisting and turning will not get him anywhere. The Premier today did a complete and utter 180 degree backflip from where he stood six months ago on the budget deficit in the general government sector cash account. The Government has been caught out with a serious deficit. Its number one strategy was to deny the deficit, which denial did not last too long as there was a deficit. We therefore had to drag the Premier kicking and screaming to acknowledge that deficit. Then the Government had a problem about how to justify the deficit, given all the revenue that it has received. It justified the deficit by saying that it was normal, it has been in Western Australian history forever, it does not really mean anything and, in any case, it has an ongoing capital works program. Unfortunately for the Premier, his Government has a target which is a cash surplus in the general government account and that has not been met. The Premier is embarrassed about that so he is trying to twist his way out of it.

The fact is the GST will have a bigger inflationary impact than was assumed in the 1998 debate. First, the effect on Western Australian finances will be more serious than predicted; secondly, the effect on inflation will be more serious than predicted; and thirdly, and very importantly, the impact of the GST on state taxes and charges has been seriously underestimated. The increases in electricity, gas, public transport and third party insurance are much higher than the increases predicted by the Howard Government before the last election. The Prime Minister claimed that electricity would increase by 6.6 per cent, gas by 3.9 per cent, transport by 5.8 per cent and insurance by 0.8 per cent. The figures announced last week indicate that electricity and gas will increase by 9.3 per cent, public transport by 6.2 per cent and third party insurance by 3.6 per cent. The Government claimed that the GST impact on the consumer price index would be 1.9 per cent - I said 2.9 per cent earlier - and now we know that it will be between 4 per cent and 6 per cent. One therefore cannot trust the Government's estimates of the impact of the GST. The reason for mistrusting its estimates is that it told a story to the people of Western Australia that was not based on fact about how it would improve the economic performance of the country. It is totally out of touch with the real economic issues that we must face with a new economy. The Government told us a story about the

GST's impact on average families which was totally unrelated to the real impact on those families. The Government has been caught out telling a story that has no relationship to reality. The GST is all about a huge redistribution of income from one group to another group, from people least able to pay to those who do not need any extra income but will receive a lot; that is the tragedy of the GST debate.

The GST will have an inflationary impact on the average Western Australian's household expenditure of between 4 per cent and 6 per cent. Increases in state government taxes and charges were announced last week and, in addition, the interest rate increases will come through the system. The Premier thought he would be smart last week by saying that we should not worry as there will be a tax cut to the tune of \$1 740 as a result of the national budget to be announced next week. However, he conveniently forgot to refer to the interest rate increases that are coming through the economy. It was obvious to everyone who looked at the Australian economy that inflationary pressures were growing and the GST would be part and parcel of those pressures which would induce interest rate increases.

Mr Court: It hasn't come in yet, my friend.

Dr GALLOP: It did not have to. It has gone through the Parliament and that is enough to start the inflationary spiral working. Has the Premier not seen what has happened to petrol and beer prices and what is happening in the shops? The Premier is out of touch with Western Australian families.

Interest rates have jumped by 1.25 per cent in the past six months. This means that an average home loan will cost an additional \$1 300 per annum, wiping out nearly all of the benefits of the tax cuts. With the interest rate increase announced last week, 86 per cent of the tax cuts have already gone; that is, before people start paying for the GST on the goods and services they purchase each week in their household budgets. Mr Speaker, we have been sold a pup and this Premier signed off on it. People on low incomes will suffer because those on high incomes will do very well out of the GST. There will be a triple attack on average families: State taxes and charges, interest rates and the GST. In that context, the way in which State Governments operate matters to people. It matters to people that this State Government has increased public transport fares seven times in the past eight years, such that a four zone standard fare from Armadale has increased by 91 per cent since 1992-93; and a pensioner travelling the same distance is paying 217 per cent more. A three zone fare from Joondalup has increased by 84 per cent since 1992-93; a pensioner travelling the same distance is paying 167 per cent more. It matters to people that a two zone fare, for example from Thornlie, has increased by 69 per cent since 1992-93; a pensioner travelling the same distance is paying 160 per cent more. These things really matter. Whether the Government has its priorities set such that the real needs and interests of average families in this state are being met is questionable. Whether it is pursuing extremely narrowly-based, ideological agendas and whether it is pursuing a redistribution away from those people who need support towards those who already have high incomes and do not need support is also questionable.

These things really matter to people but I will bring it into the true context of a budget. What we have with the budget is the revenue raising that I have been talking about and the increases in taxes and charges which impact on average families, particularly when compared with interest rate increases and the impact of the GST. If we compare revenue raising with expenditure, this government has lost the plot when targeting expenditure to where it is needed in the community. However, there is a more dangerous and insidious tendency in modern government to take a great chunk of hard earned revenue from people who work hard, to put it into the government account and to use it for government propaganda. This is happening more and more in contemporary politics. It is unjustified, it is a scandalous waste of taxpayers' money and it undermines the democratic principles under which we are governed. There should be a level playing field in politics and a proper scrutiny of the expenditure of money in government so that wasteful expenditure of this type does not occur. Recently, the Government was under pressure, became rattled and therefore is more concerned about talking about the Opposition than it is about talking about itself and its plans. The Opposition is coming out with a range of direction statements on how it sees the future of this State and what needs to be done to improve the way the State is delivering services to the people of Western Australia. The Opposition is being positive and is coming up with ideas. However, every time the Premier opens his mouth he makes a negative statement about the Labor Party. He is locked into a negative strategy for this election. Some members of his backbench should talk to him, because the people of Western Australia want to hear about the future and the ways and means by which the Government will improve it. However, it is worse than that. In its desperation, the Government is trying to present itself in the same way as private sector corporations present themselves by putting a big swag of money into its public relations and advertising budgets. The people of Western Australia are saying that enough is enough. The member for Nollamara will indicate to the Parliament the extent of this scandal. Make no mistake: It is a scandal, because it is not the Premier's money, his Government's money or Treasury's money; it is the people's money that he is using on these excessive advertising campaigns.

Mr Shave interjected.

Dr GALLOP: Is that how the member judges it?

Mr Shave: Yes. I actually listen to my constituents.

Dr GALLOP: That is good. We know where the member is coming from. The approach of the ever-cynical member for Alfred Cove is that if they can get away with it, they will do it.

Mr Court: You made advertising using taxpayers' funds an art form, my friend, and when you sit down I will get up and tell you about it.

Dr GALLOP: This is an appropriate time to invite my friend the member for Nollamara to illuminate this Parliament on

the amount of money going into this scandalous campaign to prop up a rotten and decaying Government that is building monuments to its own ego rather than promoting good services for the people of Western Australia.

MR KOBELKE (Nollamara) [4.22 pm]: The Leader of the Opposition has rightly pointed out the unacceptable increase in the burden of taxes and charges being levied by this Government on the ordinary people of Western Australia, and it is not as if they are getting any return for the extra they have to pay in their taxes and charges. The people of Western Australia are not interested in having a belltower paid for out of their hard-earned money, and they are not interested in having glossy advertising and television advertisements to promote the Government paid for out of the hard-earned money that they must pay in taxes and charges. The situation is that this Government is spending approximately \$100m in the current year on advertising, promotion and the things around it. That is absolutely scandalous.

Mr Court: Hang on. You said "advertising, promotion and the things around it". What are "the things"?

Mr KOBELKE: The Government's media marketing programs, its surveys and all the other things that go towards convincing the people that this Government is addressing the issues. However, the spin doctors cannot hide from the people of Western Australia the reality of this Government. It is on the nose, and the stench is going to every corner of this State. It does not matter if the Government spends \$100m this year trying to promote itself; it will not fool the people of this State by using spin doctors. Its attempt to suggest that promotional advertising can be a substitute for performance will not wash. This Government was elected in 1993 on the basis of more jobs and better management. There have been more jobs for its mates but no decent management as we now have a record budget deficit from this Government. That is what this Government is now about. It is seeking to spend huge amounts of taxpayers' money to try to promote an image which is totally false.

I will turn to the figures which are available on the public record, because the Government has done much to try to stop disclosure of the amount it is spending on advertising and promotion. A contract to the tune of \$112m has been let to Media Decisions for the provision of services for campaign master media agency advertising was. That covers the two years from 1 August 1999. There is a contract for the provision of non-campaign advertising services, which again runs for a period of two years, with an extension option beyond that. It went to Marketforce Productions, and it has a value of \$48m. Therefore, in those two contracts alone, there is a value of \$160m over a two-year period. Contract No 110697 with the Department of Contract and Management Services for the provision of public relations, marketing and marketing communications services was for a mere \$10.5m, and that was in the 1998-99 year, so I do not know how much of that flows over into the current year.

Mr Board: You would agree that the work of the Lotteries Commission and its advertising is worthy. You would also agree that money goes into road safety, health and public awareness campaigns.

Mr KOBELKE: All Governments must advertise, whether it is advertising job vacancies or bus timetables, but they do not need to spend something approaching \$100m on glossy advertising and television advertisements, which do not convey any useful information but which try to paint a picture that this Government is somehow doing something of value for the people of this State. That is using huge amounts of money quite improperly and wasting taxpayers' money. If that amount could be halved so that something of the order of \$30m a year was being spent, it would be more than enough to cover the needs of Government to enable it to run properly and to advise citizens on health and safety issues.

Mr Board interjected.

Mr KOBELKE: The minister can contribute in a moment. This range of advertising campaigns goes well beyond what is expected of a Government to inform its citizens and to be able to provide a range of programs to improve community health. We are dealing with a scandalous waste of taxpayers' money. Over the life of this Government, the amount spent to try to create an image for this Government would run into hundreds of millions of dollars. The whole process is not working because we know that this Government is no longer believed. It is on the nose because of the stench rising from what it has done and the corruption that is around. Its failure to deliver on a range of services has shown the people its true colours.

However, at almost every turn the Government has tried to hide the information the Opposition has sought on the expenditure in this area. I will refer to some questions asked by the member for Burrup when he sought to obtain this information. I will give a couple of examples. The member received an answer from the Minister for Transport on 21 December 1999. The member asked what was the expenditure in the 1999-2000 budget for advertising, pamphlets, brochures, bulletins, other forms of printed information, excluding annual reports and in-house bulletins, and public relations and events management. What we ascertained from the answer of the Minister for Transport was that in the Department of Transport that amount was in the order of \$10.3m in one year. Main Roads was not willing to answer. It said it was too difficult to answer that question. We suspect Main Roads spent about half a million dollars on the tunnel promotion, but it did not want to tell anyone about that. At least the Department of Transport said that it was spending \$10.3m. Some of that may have been transferred across to promote the opening of the tunnel - I do not know - but Main Roads, which had responsibility -

Mr Court: Have you been through it yet?

Mr KOBELKE: Yes, I have.

Mr Court: Did you follow the instructions?

Mr KOBELKE: The Premier is totally pathetic. Everyone would like a Rolls Royce. If a person had the chance to take a ride in a Rolls Royce, why would he not, but it does not mean he must own a Rolls Royce.

Dr Gallop: Premier, would you prefer the northern suburbs railway line or your tunnel? You won't answer that one, will you?

Mr KOBELKE: What would the Premier prefer?

Mr Court: Both of them.

Mr KOBELKE: Exactly. This Premier has thrown proper financial management out of the window and given this State the largest deficit in its history, and that is his response. When he has to make a decision about whether he will opt for major public transport infrastructure, such as a public railway, or whether the money will be put into a freeway tunnel, this Premier says he wants both.

Mr Court: How much is the state deficit?

Mr KOBELKE: I asked the Premier a question and he did not answer it. I am making a speech and I will not follow his red herrings down every tunnel he wants to build. The Premier will not answer a question in this House. I know for sure that if the Premier is asked a direct question, he will not give an honest answer. I can assure the House of that, because we have seen it year after year. All he does is try to run red herrings or talk about something unrelated to the debate.

Dr Gallop: On the last published figures from your Government, which was the midyear review, it was \$621m.

Mr Court: That is an absolute untruth.

Mr KOBELKE: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for providing that information to the Premier.

Dr Gallop: Are you refuting your published statements?

Mr Court: It is an absolute untruth.

Dr Gallop: What did the midyear review say?

Mr Court: That is a cash position.

Dr Gallop: That is right; I have always said that.

Mr Court: You have never used that as a measure of the budget. You had 10 years in government and you never used it.

Dr Gallop: You are so dishonest on this issue. You have been caught out.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Baker): The Leader of the Opposition will come to order!

Mr KOBELKE: As I said a moment ago we can be certain of one thing with this Premier: He will never answer a direct question honestly and fully. During the interchange between the Leader of the Opposition and the Premier, he again used smart semantics to tell everyone that the red ink in his budget is black. The Premier cannot honestly answer direct questions that go to the heart of the management of the Government of this State. We heard a clear example of that in the Premier's response to the interjection by the Leader of the Opposition.

The next example is a question asked by Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich. On 14 March a reply was given to a question asking how much the Government would spend on promoting the sale of AlintaGas. It indicated that the initial phase of advertising relating to the public float would cost about \$300 000. We could go through department after department and we would see huge amounts of money being spent on advertising and promotion. In some areas I accept that, but in many other areas it is a total waste. It is a bit of a split issue with the sale of AlintaGas because it must advertise to get the best price. However, we would prefer it if the Government did not sell it; the money would be saved anyway and we would be much better off. The minister can have it both ways. It is impossible for us to determine the exact amount of money being wasted on advertising and promotion. The amount of \$160m over two years is flexible. It may be that over \$100m is spent in one year and not much is spent in the next. There may be an expansion beyond \$160m. There may be a drawing back and less may be spent. However, two contracts with a total value of \$160m over two years have been let. There are other contracts in addition to those, some which would be subsumed into those total amounts and some which might stand apart. However, we are dealing with a large amount of money, and I will give more examples later.

I turn now to the attempts by this Government to deny the people of Western Australia any real understanding of where this money is being wasted. I will give a couple of examples of questions asked by the member for Burrup. He received a reply to question on notice 1666 on 21 December 1999. That question was to the Premier, Treasurer, Minister for Public Sector Management and Federal Affairs. The question asked of each department or agency under the Premier's control what was the total of the 1999-2000 budget for advertising, including television, print and radio; pamphlets, brochures, bulletins and other forms of printed information, excluding annual reports and "in-house" bulletins; and public relations and events management. It went on, but I will not go into the other details. The Premier's response was -

- (1) The Ministry of the Premier and Cabinet, under the output based funding system, does not set budgets at the level of advertising, pamphlets and events management etc.
- (2)-(3) There are no advertising campaigns, promotional publications or public relations campaigns planned for the period 1 January to 30 June 2000.

I turn to another question asked by the member for Burrup which was replied to on 21 December. Question on notice 1673 was directed to the Minister for Family and Children's Services, Seniors and Women's Interests. It was the same form of question. The reply stated -

The questions necessitate extensive research to collate and summarise the information. I am not prepared to instruct the department to commit the resources required to respond to the questions . . .

Another question from the member for Burrup to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Commerce and Trade, Regional Development and Small Business was in the same form. The response from the Deputy Premier under the Department of Commerce and Trade was -

- (1) The Department of Commerce and Trade does not identify individual line item costs for advertising, printing and publication of written information, public relations and events management. Costs for these activities are included in overall program and project costs and cannot be separately identified.

This is a clear attempt by a range of ministers to prevent people understanding the areas in which this money is being wasted on promotion and advertising. However, a provision in the Electoral Act requires that the departments disclose the amount they spend in these areas. Some departments have done that and have fulfilled their requirements. The amounts being spent have been detailed in their annual reports. However, many departments do not do that. I will give three examples of departments whose annual reports disclose what they are spending. The first is the 1998-99 annual report of the Department of Contract and Management Services. It had expenditure of \$40 952 on market research and organisations; nil on polling organisations; nil on direct mail; \$158 992 on media advertising for tenders; and \$67 134 for positions vacant. That is a total expenditure of \$267 000 by the Department of Contract and Management Services in that year. The total amount paid by the Department of Land Administration during the 1998-99 year was \$282 110. Advertising agencies were paid \$177 000; market research organisations received \$25 800; the direct market organisation received \$17 000; and media advertising agencies received over \$61 000. The third example is the Department of Commerce and Trade. I think it is for the 1998-99 year because that is the heading, but the content says 1997-98. I am not sure which year it is as it may be a typographical error. The total amount spent was \$1.149m. That is itemised as \$457 000 for advertising agencies, \$78 000 for market research organisations and \$614 000 for media advertising organisations. The Auditor General's 1999 public sector performance report indicates that a large number of agencies did not fulfil their statutory requirements to include such information in their annual reports. That was a survey of only a sample of public sector agencies, and nearly 30 per cent had failed to fulfil their statutory obligation to report such expenditure as required under the Electoral Act.

Many of these agencies are simply not obeying the law. It may have been a start-up problem in the first few years, but this has been going on for a few years and there is still an attempt to deny this information. The answers to the parliamentary questions I have just read indicate that there is a need for departments to maintain information in their accounting systems in a form which could answer those questions. They need it for the statutory purpose of providing their annual reports as required by the law of this State. They have simply been telling us a lot of fibs when they said that they could not provide the information. Either that, or they are thumbing their noses at the statutory requirements to report annually. We find that some ministers go even further; they simply deny that they have the obligation.

The Leader of the House, as the Minister for Energy, is responsible for AlintaGas and Western Power. He was asked questions on notice, to which he replied on 28 October 1998. In his answer for AlintaGas, he said that section 175ZE of the Electoral Act did not apply to AlintaGas, therefore questions one to 13 were not applicable. The member for Burrup asked 13 questions for each agency in the minister's portfolio. The Minister for Energy provided some form of answer for the other departments, but he simply said they were not applicable for AlintaGas and Western Power.

Mr Barnett: That was because the member for Burrup sought details such as what was the sponsorship arrangement with the Dockers. That is private and confidential.

Mr KOBELKE: The minister is wrong; he could have provided it. He should not mislead this House. I take it he does not know what he is talking about. In his answer to the member for Burrup on 28 October 1998, he stated -

AlintaGas

Section 175ZE of the Electoral Act has no application to AlintaGas.

Therefore our answers are:

- (1)-(13) Not applicable.

He went on to say that section 175ZE of the Electoral Act also has no application for Western Power. That is wrong. The minister misled the House. Under the Electoral Act, he has an obligation to provide that information in the annual reports of Western Power and AlintaGas. Section 175ZE of the Electoral Act states -

- (1) If a public agency is required to publish an annual report under the *Financial Administration Audit Act 1985* or any other written law, the principal officer of the public agency shall ensure that a statement is included in the annual report setting out the details mentioned in subsection (2) of all expenditure incurred by or on behalf of the public agency during the reporting period in relation to the following -

- (a) advertising agencies;
- (b) market research organizations;
- (c) polling organizations;
- (d) direct mail organizations;
- (e) media advertising organizations.

The Act imposes a clear legal requirement on all public agencies that provide annual reports. The minister cannot tell me that Western Power and AlintaGas are not required to provide annual reports. However, I will refresh his memory. Section 63 of the Gas Corporation Act states that AlintaGas must provide an annual report. Section 62 of the Electricity Corporation Act requires Western Power to provide an annual report. Those two agencies are clearly caught by the provisions of the Electoral Act. The Minister for Energy and the agencies may not like it, but they are required to submit specific advertising expenditure information in their annual report.

MR COURT (Nedlands - Premier) [4.42 pm]: This debate has ranged far and wide. The Leader of the Opposition spent half an hour commenting on the goods and services tax and a few minutes on taxes and charges, and the member for Nollamara made some comments about government advertising. It is important to understand that the Federal Opposition has now said it will retain and support the GST if it is in government. The Labor Party cannot have it both ways. It was unable to bring about taxation reform. The Federal Government is taking risky and politically difficult action to bring about major change. The change will result in not only a goods and services tax, but also changes to income tax and company tax and the removal of wholesale sales tax. The Opposition cannot deny that its federal political party debated this issue extensively over the years. It held tax summits, and in the 1980s it finally reached a position where it wanted to introduce a goods and services tax. But it backed off.

Mr Kobelke: The party never wanted a GST.

Mr COURT: At a meeting with Paul Keating present, the party in Perth voted to support it. The big sell succeeded. The Federal Government is introducing tax reform and there is no doubt that it is a difficult process. For the past year, and continuing into the next, Peter Costello has had and will continue to have one of the most difficult jobs in politics - if not the most difficult. He designed the package and got it passed; he had to make compromises with the Australian Democrats and get those passed. Those compromises complicated something which could have been simple. It is easy for the Opposition to say it opposes the tax but that it will retain it and use the revenues. The Leader of the Opposition was stupid to sign up to the Burnie agreement and say he would roll back the GST. He has signed a document which says he will allow a future federal Labor Government to reduce the revenue flow to the States. They have now woken up to that.

Mr Kobelke: Can the Premier tell the truth once?

Mr COURT: Did he not sign the document?

Mr Kobelke: The Premier is totally deceitful in everything he says. He will have no credibility at all if he cannot tell the truth.

Mr COURT: Did the Leader of the Opposition go to Burnie and agree with all the other State and Federal leaders to -

Mr Kobelke: He agreed on a guarantee that there would be no reduction in the payment to this State.

Mr COURT: They agreed to roll back the GST. It does not matter which way one looks at it. If the GST revenues are lessened, less comes to the States.

Mr Kobelke: The Premier has sold us out.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Baker): Order! The member for Nollamara.

Mr COURT: The member should have seen the look on the faces of the Labor Treasurers at the last Treasury meeting. They finally woke up to the fact that not accepting the original package would take a State like New South Wales another four years before it was revenue-positive.

Mr Kobelke: Is the Premier telling the truth this time?

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The member for Nollamara.

Mr COURT: We hear a constant chirping; can the member not listen? I said the Labor Treasurers have just woken up to the fact they sold themselves short.

Mr Thomas: The Premier also said the Labor Party in Western Australian supported the broad based consumption tax. That was wrong.

Mr COURT: At the Premiers Conference, when the agreement on the tax package was made, the Premiers from New South Wales and Queensland could not sign the documents quickly enough. They are the big winners.

Mr Kobelke: We are the big losers.

Mr COURT: Queensland will receive income from a fuel tax and financial institutions duty revenue. Currently, it does not collect them. When it is all put into the big pool, a big revenue flow will come through for the States.

Mr Kobelke: From Western Australia. Our loss is their gain.

Mr COURT: Not at all. It comes from all places and Queensland gets its fair share of that revenue. The Opposition will spend the next six months knocking the GST around, and the federal Treasurer, love him or hate him, will have a difficult job seeing this change through. I hope it goes as smoothly as possible because the end result will be a fairer tax system for this country.

Why does the Opposition, with its record, want to talk about taxes and charges? During question time, I outlined that the Government had imposed only one increase in electricity charges of 3.7 per cent in eight years. The Labor Party imposed nearly a 40 per cent increase. It talks about families and what it does for them; it slugged families for 10 years.

I will not repeat what I said about taxes and charges, but I will comment on advertising. I had a quiet chuckle that members of the Opposition had the nerve to talk about advertising. The Opposition was the master at advertising campaigns. The previous Labor Government spent \$500 000 on a television campaign in the mid-1980s to tell the public what a great job it was doing helping its Police Force. It spent \$400 000 promoting its law and order package just before the 1989 election. It will recall what it spent on the big party gala fair for the opening of the northern suburbs railway.

Mr Bradshaw: The trains were not running!

Mr COURT: No, the trains were not running. Then there was the hypocrisy shown by the member for Maylands when she was asked whether she would accept television advertising to inform the public about the Regional Forest Agreement. She responded that no, the Government should not spend money on that type of thing. The Labor Government spent \$485 000 on three 30-second television advertisements using Andrew McFarlane from *Patrol Boat* to promote its new green image. That illustrates the hypocrisy of the Labor Party. It cannot explain what a Regional Forest Agreement is, but it can spend money on promoting its new green image. The Liberal Party has spent money on programs, as Governments do. For example, we had the listen to your head program, the immobiliser discount program and the heroin warning campaign. All of these programs and campaigns were designed to save lives.

The Opposition then talked about the overall volume of government advertising. It knows only too well what the government advertising system is and how well the master media agency concept has worked because the Labor Party put it in place. When looking at the total advertising expenditure, as the Minister for the Arts mentioned, everything comes under that banner. This is the case whether one looks at local government, public benevolent institutions, Perth City Council, universities, Western Power, the Water Corporation, the Gold Corporation, the Lotteries Commission, or the TAB to name a few. All of those programs come under that concept, including the advertising of situations vacant which results in an extensive bill. It also includes the tenders that go out to the business community. The Leader of the Opposition said that when the Labor Party returns to government it will fund programs by cutting down on government advertising. Before saying that, the Opposition should look at its record. Before telling the Parliament what it is going to do, it should look at its performance in the past.

Dr Gallop: We will, Premier; we will do it.

Mr COURT: The Leader of the Opposition will tell the Lotteries Commission and the TAB to cut their advertising.

Dr Gallop: We are going to cut government advertising and we will use that money for the people of Western Australia. That is what we will do.

Mr COURT: After looking at the Labor Party's past performance, who will believe the Leader of the Opposition? Is he saying to Western Power and AlintaGas that they should not be advertising?

Mr Kobelke: They should not be wasting money on advertising, Premier.

Mr COURT: The member for Nollamara can determine what money is wasted. Promoting the Labor Party's greener image is not wasting money? The Opposition will make the judgments. Does the Labor Party believe reducing the Lotteries Commission's advertising is a positive step? Do members opposite think that is the way to go? The Opposition wants to cut down on lotteries advertising.

Mr Kobelke: When the Government forces young children to suffer because they cannot access health services, then yes, even if lotteries advertising is important, we would cut back on wastage.

Mr COURT: The Lotteries Commission puts money into health services. Does the member for Nollamara not understand how it works?

Mr Kobelke: Its expenditure on advertising can still be examined to see if we can look after the health of the children of this State which the Premier refuses to do. The Premier is neglecting his responsibility.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Baker): The member for Nollamara will come to order.

Dr Gallop: If the Premier is incapable of taking 10 or 20 per cent off that budget, he is not capable of governing this State. Give us the power and we will do it.

The ACTING SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will come to order.

Mr COURT: We were the first Government to table the expenditure report from the master media agency in 1997. That was the first time the public had an idea as to how these moneys were being spent. The member for Nollamara is nodding in approval.

Mr Kobelke: The Government has fudged the figures ever since and has refused to release them in a timely way.

Mr COURT: The Labor Party would not release any information when it was in government.

Mr Kobelke: The world moves on, Premier.

Mr COURT: The world moves on, but members opposite do not. I will give members an example of accountability in the Labor Party. In November 1992, just prior to an election, a local south west newspaper carried an advertisement headed "A Good Police Record". The article claimed the current police numbers represented an increase of 55 per cent since 1983. A Liberal Party member lodged an official complaint with the Advertising Standards Authority and the true figures came out. The figure of 55 per cent should have been 25 per cent. That is an example of the sort of advertising that was put out when the Labor Party was in government. In 1989, the Labor Cabinet transferred a government-funded advertisement on care for seniors to the Labor Party which then picked it up, and all of the research, art work and production costs were paid for by the taxpayers; and that was meant to be useful advertising. That indicates the record of members opposite who have the nerve to criticise how much money is spent on advertising.

Dr Gallop: Poor old Premier, rattled, in a corner, negative, carping and whingeing.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition.

Mr COURT: The problem the Leader of the Opposition has - I have been here for a while and I have seen the Labor Party in government blatantly misuse taxpayers' funds - is that as well as losing money, the Labor Party blatantly misused it. The Leader of the Opposition has picked the wrong subject to stand up and talk about today, because Governments are judged on their performance, and the performance of the previous Labor Government was an absolute disgrace.

MS WARNOCK (Perth) [4.57 pm]: I will add a few brief comments on the matter of government spending on advertising. Some weeks ago, I began a file of newspaper cuttings about the opening of the Northbridge tunnel. I filed the bits and pieces of information which told me how to cut 15 minutes off my drive to the office and how to sleep in every morning without getting fired. I saw a couple of advertisements in the local papers - or perhaps they were in *The West Australian* - and I thought they were cute slogans so I cut them out and put them in the file. I received a glossy brochure, informing me how to use the Graham Farmer Freeway, although I thought that with a driving licence and some experience of driving and the use of decent signage - which seems to be fairly common around Perth - I could have worked it out for myself.

As the days and weeks went by, my cuttings file grew fatter and fatter. It was filled with clear, well-written and remarkably similar information. Then came the assault of the great wrap-arounds in all community newspapers and in our major morning newspaper. Then came television ads and special documentary coverage, followed, it seemed until one was almost drowning, by more paid media coverage. Do not get me wrong; I am a former journalist and I know that big public events must be covered in a proper way. I thought, however, that a project that was faring well in - as they say - free-to-air media did not need the extraordinary amount of paid advertising that flooded the newspapers and airwaves over several weeks. It is not as if nobody had noticed that the tunnel was being built; indeed, it had been under construction for some years. The businesses in the area - an area I represent in the Parliament - that had been damaged and the people who lived there whose houses had suffered serious structural damage during the construction period, were certainly acutely aware of it. Anybody else who used the Mitchell Freeway every day, or the northern suburbs railway or any one of the roads leading into the city from the north or the west, were also aware of it.

As I said, there was plenty of free media coverage. Skilled Main Roads WA public relations man Len Horne had done his job very well; we all knew that the tunnel was there and was due to open soon. Therefore, I was surprised the Government needed to spend - according to a media estimate - \$500 000 of taxpayers' money to tell members of the community something they probably already knew. That sum was on top of the hundreds of millions of dollars - I believe the figure was approximately \$400m, although there have been higher estimates - already spent on the multiple roads, the bridge and the tunnel itself. The Government has spent what seems to me to be a huge bucket of public money to put a gloss on a big public project entirely unnecessarily. One expects good media coverage of significant events; however, to spend such vast sums of public money to tell people something they already know seems to me to be way over the top. As the days went by and the advertising continued I became more and more amazed by it. Why was the Main Roads information campaign necessary, as Len Horne said on television "to help the public find their way around"?

As one local journalist remarked, it is a bit rich to claim that the tunnel is toll free when we have already paid a steep price for its construction and the subsequent advertising costs. I accept that this is an election year and the Government is likely to be trumpet blowing and triumphal, but I ask the Government to remember that taxpayers are footing the bill for all of this, and they will not happily cop what many believe to be unnecessary expense. The Government's paid tunnel advertising was overkill. It was way over the top, and most people can think of much more important ways in which that taxpayers' money should have been spent.

MR MARSHALL (Dawesville - Parliamentary Secretary) [5.00 pm]: I find it farcical that the Opposition should choose to debate the Government's expenditure on advertising and promotion, because its track record shows it knows nothing about the subject. Only recently I took advice from a financial adviser when investing a substantial amount of money. When this strapping, classy-looking young lad came into the room, I first asked him what car he was driving. He asked what that had to do with the interview, and I said that it had a lot to do with it. He said he drove a BMW. I said that he obviously knew what he was doing with investments and, on that basis, I was willing to listen to him. Have members opposite ever driven or owned a BMW?

Mr Kobelke: No.

Mr MARSHALL: What is the track record of members opposite? They are not the kind of people in whom I would place my confidence when investing money, because they have proved they are right out of their depth in advertising, promotion and financial matters. If they do not believe me, let them place some money on it. How much money do they have in their pockets? I bet I have more money in my pocket than members opposite collectively. They do not carry money because they do not know how to count it and they do not understand its value.

The previous Government squandered money, and the Leader of the Opposition, who was then the Minister assisting the Treasurer, was the major reason that I came into Parliament. He had destroyed the finances of this State to such an extent that there was no future for my children and grandchildren. I came out of retirement to win a seat to try to give some solidarity and consolidation to this Parliament. I had a little wager the other day that in the next six months in this State we shall see strikes by bus drivers, nurses and teachers. I am already in front. That is all members opposite know about and that is what they should talk about. They have not reached the level of understanding of expenditure on advertising, promotion and marketing whereby people can have any confidence in them.

I will explain to members the importance of advertising in an area in which I have been involved for much of my life - sport. Advertising and promotion play a very important part in sport. It is impossible to run a function or team without a major sponsor, a co-sponsor and minor sponsors. Once that is established, the sport - no matter what type - needs advertising. There must be arena advertising, advertising for the lollipops around the ground, and advertising in the magazines that will keep the sport alive.

Of course, the community benefits from participation in sport and recreation, and it enables the development of healthier, safer and stronger communities. Recent evidence suggests that fitness levels are declining. Australian data shows that the prevalence of inactivity is about 44 per cent of the population. However, participation in sport, recreation and physical activity can provide a number of health benefits. These include reduction and prevention of heart disease; improved ease of movement for people with arthritis; and a reduction in the risk of stroke. They are some of the benefits of remaining fit and participating in sport. It also reduces the symptoms of anxiety and depression; fosters improvements in mood and feelings of wellbeing; and increases self-esteem. They are some of the reasons the Government must promote and sell to the public the advantages of participating in sport and recreation, in order to reduce the costs of the hospital system. A 1999 study for the Health Department estimates that the current annual cost to government of physical inactivity is \$400m. If an additional 10 per cent of the Australian population undertook regular, moderate and effective exercise, an estimated \$500m could be saved from the commonwealth health budget each year. They are facts that the Government needs to promote and advertise. Members on the other side who talk negatively about advertising and promotion cannot see the big picture. I have spoken only about sport and recreation, but it applies to other areas.

Sport provides valuable social benefits. Many people think of sport in terms of supporting a football team. The Fremantle Dockers football team won recently, and everyone in Fremantle grew three or four inches taller. Also the West Coast Eagles have been doing well. People equate major sports events with building confidence. However, participation in sport has many social benefits. For example, there is an improvement in social networks, meeting people and getting to know what is going on in the community. There is a greater sense of community, and the positive social contact provides a sense of belonging and shared values and norms of behaviour. All these benefits come from participation in sport and recreation. The more the Government promotes it, the better the community will be.

On the subject of community involvement and sponsorship, I plucked out some examples from the agenda of the Ministry of Sport and Recreation. The first was the Alcoa coach-in-residence scheme, which gives access to world class coaching. Alcoa of Australia Ltd is a major sponsor. Other examples were the Ansett country sport development program, the Skywest country sport development program, the Healthway smarter than smoking country scholarships and the Skywest country officials program. Under the latter program, officials are brought to Perth to get a taste of the big time and learn from the seminars, so that they can go back and teach their skills to people in the vast north west and country areas of this State. Trailswest is sponsored by the Lotteries Commission and Mainpeak, and it is supported by the Department of Conservation and Land Management and BikeWest, among others. Walk friendly is supported by the Heart Foundation, and the East Perth public and community health unit. We know how much the sponsorship from Channels 7 and 9 television stations means to sport in Western Australia. In tourism, the crabfest in Mandurah three months ago was backed by Channel 7 and because of the continual advertising, a record number of people attended that town during the weekend. We need the medium of television to get people involved. Channel 10 runs a junior sport program.

We are currently debating government expenditure on advertising and promotion. I am particularly interested and involved in sport, and I am proud of any advertising in that area. I ran a business involved in sport, and we knew that the more we advertised, the more people would walk through the doors of the sports stores, and the greater would be the gross turnover.

Dr Gallop: The more the Government advertises, the more votes it expects to receive.

Mr MARSHALL: That is what worries the Leader of the Opposition. He is talking through his hip pocket. I told him he has nothing in his pocket, and talking through his pocket has ruined this debate. The Leader of the Opposition is not interested in the results. He thinks the Government might have an edge that he does not have, and he is not thinking correctly. I have proved that any involvement in sport through sponsorship is good for the game. I am happy to keep people out of hospitals.

Dr Gallop: Given your knowledge of business and how it operates, do you think it would be possible for the Government

in Western Australia to cut between 10 and 20 per cent of its advertising budget and redirect it to areas of need? I am not asking whether you think it is a good idea, but whether it would be possible.

Mr MARSHALL: The Leader of the Opposition is the reason I am in this House. He was not in the Chamber when I said that I came into government because of the glossy brochures distributed in 1991-92 when he was Minister assisting the Treasurer, and I thought there was no future for my children and grandchildren, and my friends' children and grandchildren, because the State was being destroyed. The roads and schools were run down, they were all going downhill, and there seemed to be no future for young people. The unions were taking control. I made a move -

Dr Gallop: You should be blaming your mate -

Mr MARSHALL: He is a good bloke but when people like him lose control of running the country we have a problem. I entered Parliament to try to moderate the behaviour of unions and to get rid of the Labor Government because it had no idea of financial policy or how to run the State. I think this Government has been successful. In the eight years it has been in office the State has flourished and unemployment has gone down. It is going from strength to strength. People will look back on the 12-year reign of this Government and say it was the most important era in the history of Western Australia.

Dr Gallop: Is it coming to an end?

Mr MARSHALL: I said 12 years; there are four to go. The Leader of the Opposition has missed the point. He should not talk through his pocket when debating issues because I have checked his pockets and he has nothing in them.

MR BROWN (Bassendean) [5.12 pm]: I will make a few observations on the interesting comments of the member for Dawesville. First, I have regard for all people in the community, including those who drive BMWs, but particularly for those who do not drive them. In my electorate very few people drive BMWs. They are good, honest, hard-working people. I take strong umbrage at anyone who says that people who do not drive BMWs are somehow lesser, inferior beings. It is disgusting to revert to the old class system by implying that people who do not drive BMWs are somehow lesser beings, do not deserve to be heard and do not stand in an appropriate position in this Parliament.

Secondly, I was interested in the member's comments about glossy brochures. Let us have a look at some glossy brochures and a bit of political advertising. I have here issue No 4 of March 2000 of the "disability update" produced by the Disability Services Commission. Guess whose happy photograph is on the front of it? We have seen this man before. He does not seem to have a disability but he holds the office of Premier of this State. Guess who is on the inside page? It is the Minister for Disability Services with a smiling face. The former leader of the coalition, the person the Premier managed to edge out, Barry MacKinnon, is also staring at us from that page.

At page 5 there is another photograph of the minister and no doubt there are more photographs throughout the brochure. I also have an edition of the January/February 2000 *CALM News*. The people photographed on the front page look like a lot of greenies. The Minister for Forests, the minister for logging, is on the front page with the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. I remind members that a minute ago the member for Dawesville said he entered Parliament because he wanted to stop the Labor Government using glossy advertising.

I have here also the newsletter of the Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries, which is produced by the minister. This is a classic. Some people have had a go at my colleague, the member for Girrawheen. At least he is not a minister producing a glossy brochure on his ministerial budget. This is a "glossy", on the front page of which is a nice photograph of the minister. He looks about 35 in the photograph, but he is a little older than that now. Just in case we miss seeing him in that photograph, there is another photograph at the bottom of the page. Page 3 contains another photograph of the minister, in case we missed his picture at page 1. At page 6 there is another photograph of him just in case we missed him on the previous pages. Another photograph is on page 7, and in case we missed it all the way through, there is a photograph on page 8. Some members have stood in here and criticised my colleague, the member for Girrawheen; yet here is a picture of the Minister for Primary Industry twice on every page, just in case we miss it! The member for Dawesville is having a great deal of success in stopping the glossies!

Here is "SafetyLine", a guide to occupational health, safety and rehabilitation. Whose photograph do we find inside it? The photo of the minister of the day. Unfortunately it is no longer his portfolio; he is now the Minister assisting the Treasurer, but he is not doing that very well. I am sure if we read more of the publication we will see more of his photographs.

I also have here a publication of the Women's Advisory Council of Western Australia, which contains the president's message. Whose smiling face is pictured with other people inside the publication? That of the former minister for Family and Children's Services. That was taken before she got the flick. In case we missed it on page 2, it can be seen again on page 6 - another smiling face. The member for Dawesville has had quite a lot of luck in stopping the glossies!

I also have "Artsline", a newsletter by Arts WA, which is a government authority. Who is this person photographed on the front page? We have seen him before. He looks as though he is swishing down the Terrace wearing a nice suit. It is the Premier. His photo is in any publication we pick up. However, in case we missed it on the front page, as a special bonus, his picture is on page 3. I could keep going all the way through that publication.

The member for Dawesville has had a great deal of success stopping the glossies! In the Disability Services' publication called "Update" is a picture of the Minister for Disability Services looking very serious. Whose photo is on the next page keeping an eye on the Minister for Disability Services? It is the Premier's. He is like a man on a mission. He is

everywhere. We cannot keep his photo out of publications. He must have his smile frozen on his face. No-one should criticise my colleague, the member for Girrawheen; he is a novice at this.

In "Multiculture And Ethnic Affairs" is a tiny photograph of the former minister at the bottom of the front page. The member for Dawesville appears to be leaving the Chamber. I see that he is not; that is good.

I also have the publication "Focus on Families". Who is on page 3? The minister. She is in favour with this publication; she gets her photograph in it every time. However, there is no favouritism in another publication because it has only a few pictures of the minister! The Government does not get anything out of these publications!

Who is this photographed in another edition of *CALM News*? A picture of the minister for knocking down forests is on the front page in which he is looking very good wearing his cowboy hat. In case we missed him in the first photograph there is another one. Two of his photographs are on the front page. It is a double banger! He is doing really well.

Mr Pental interjected.

Mr BROWN: We are coming to them! We have got them all! In case people miss him on the front page, he is also on the second back page! He is everywhere. He is smiling at us - the minister for knocking down forests. He is all over the place.

We also have *Homefront*, the official magazine of Homeswest. The minister has nothing to do with this publication, of course. Whom do we have here but, yet again, on the second page, the flashy Premier! He is everywhere. We cannot keep this man down. He has to get an "E" for effort. However, there is no government advertising. There is no misuse of taxpayers' funds. The member for Dawesville has had great success. He has got into Parliament and he has stopped the glossies.

Here is another issue of *Homefront*, January-February, and whom do we see on page 3 but the Minister for Housing. I suppose we cannot complain about that; he has not had too much of a go, has he? Another suspicious looking character is lurking around on page 2. Who is that? It is Hon Derrick Tomlinson. I suppose he thought, "I have not had much of a run in these government publications; I should get something." We then have *Primary News*. This is a classic from the Minister for Primary Industry. There are two photos of him on the first page, one at the top and one at the bottom. In case people miss the first one, they get the second one. Who is that rather suspicious fellow in a suit whom he is with in the bottom photo? It is the Premier. He is everywhere. He has done it again. Who is on page 2, with a sort of swirly haircut, attempting to look a bit different, but looking exactly the same, but the Minister for Primary Industry. He is on page 1 and on page 2, and in case people miss him there, he is on page 3 as well. It is a four-page publication, and somehow he was missed out on the fourth page. I have another issue here for January-February 1998. He has some more photos in there, on the second page and on the third page. He is doing pretty well out of these publications; he must know somebody.

We then have *Road Safety Network*, the official newsletter of the Road Safety Council of Western Australia. We have some likely looking candidates here. Who stands out here - nice black suit, looks great - but the Premier again. We have got him again. He is everywhere. In case people do not get him the first time, he has a double-banger. He has taken a lesson from the Minister for Primary Industry and has made sure he is in here twice. He wants to be indelibly printed on our memories. He is in there a couple of times.

I could go on. There is more. Who is in *Waterline*? Here is the Minister for Water Resources, looking very youthful. He looks about 25 in this photo. Is that not a great photo? The only problem with that photo is that no-one will recognise him when he goes into the street. People will say, "We saw a nice photo of your son in a publication the other day." Here he is; and in case people miss it, there is a lift-out, and here he is again. Wherever we look, he is there. He is all over the place. There is more. There are heaps of examples. If the member for Dawesville entered the Parliament to stop the Government from advertising in glossy brochures, he has failed miserably, because he has not done it.

The next question is the use of advertising. The member for Dawesville said that advertising is good because people use it to promote their products. In a commercial sense, that is right. If the people who are running a business do not advertise and promote their products or services, people will not know what products or services they are selling. They need to go out into the community and put the best possible gloss on their products and services in order to get them sold. That is fine. That is what commercial organisations do. That is part of the free enterprise system, and provided that advertising is not misleading, it is perfectly legitimate. However, government is in a different position. Government is not the owner of the money. The owner of the money is the taxpayer. Government is simply the custodian. A Government that uses the money in the public interest is using the money correctly. A Government that uses the money in the furtherance of its own political objectives is using the money wrongly. That is the distinction.

One classic example that stands out above the rest in illustrating the Government's perfidy in using advertising dollars is the Fix Australia, Fix the Roads campaign. We were told that that campaign was designed to put pressure on the Federal Government to provide more road funding. That is what the Government said. I have just reviewed the questions that I asked the Minister for Transport, and the answer to those questions was that the fix the roads campaign was a political campaign to put pressure on the Federal Government to release more money to the States for roads. That is what it was for. What did we see? In the first three years of that campaign, we saw television and newspaper advertising. We saw all sorts of advertising, saying, "Give us more money for the roads," but by implication also saying, "The Federal Government is no good. It has not given us enough money. It is lousy."

In those first three years, we had a federal Labor Government. However, in 1996, there was an election, and federal Labor was defeated and a coalition Government was elected. In the first budget of that coalition Government, road funding to

Western Australia was cut by \$4m. What happened to the fix the roads campaign? Did we see people on white chargers come out of the stables? Did we see television advertisements? Did we see newspaper advertisements? Did we see all this from this Government that is so committed to getting more road funding, or did we see a political campaign? The answer to that question relates to how the Court Government reacted when that cut occurred. What did the Court Government do? Did it come out of the blocks with guns blazing and say, "This is wrong; this is contrary to everything that we have stood for during the past three years, and we will continue to campaign, by newspaper advertising or television advertising, or whatever," or did it run dead because it was now a coalition Government? History shows that the Government ran dead. There was not another television advertisement. We went from full page advertisements to little strip advertisements. Do members know where those advertisements were? They were right at the bottom of the international pages of *The West Australian*. I checked them out. The Government said, "This is not about politics. This is about our standing up for this position." It was a totally different situation. It was a blatant misuse of taxpayers' funds. We were able to compare the Government's position when there was a Labor Government that it despised and wanted to get rid of, with when there was a coalition Government that it wanted to suck up to. Its position on advertising changed totally overnight, and all of a sudden the fix the roads campaign became an education campaign for drivers. It looked at safe driving practices and those sorts of things, instead of seeking to put political pressure on the Federal Government to get more road funding for the State. There has never been a more classic example than that.

The other area of political advertising was in the early days of this Government and concerned workplace agreements. The Government said in its advertisements that workers would be able to choose between awards and workplace agreements. Of course, we know that is a lie. The Minister for Labour Relations confirmed again this week, in answer to a question, that a bunch of young workers in this State are now employed on lower than award rates and conditions, and they do not have a choice. Why was that advertising campaign undertaken? It was undertaken for political purposes. It was not undertaken in the public interest. It was not undertaken to improve employment in Western Australia. It was undertaken not on any public basis but on the basis that the Government wanted to sell a political message and get its political views across.

I asked questions in this House last year about every two months of all ministers seeking details of contracts entered into by departments or agencies under their control. I butted my head against a brick wall for about two years as ministers made excuses for information not being provided. Finally, it was decided that the information could be provided. The former Minister for Works wrote to me to suggest that I might like not to ask the questions any more because the information was on the Department of Contract and Management Services web site. However, I understand that the web site does not contain all the information relating to government contracts.

Mr Board: It will.

Mr BROWN: It will in time; in the meantime, it is necessary to recommence asking questions about those contracts. The sensitive contracts do not find their way to the web site.

I received an answer to one of those questions recently, and I had to check whether the figures were correct. I discovered that two contracts had been let: One to Media Decisions for \$112m and another to a sister company for \$48m. Therefore, contracts were let to the tune of \$160m for advertising. The \$48m was considered - according to what I understood from the shorthand in the answer - to be for run-of-the-mill advertising; that is, for chief executive officer position advertisements and the like. The \$112m was allocated to "campaign advertising". One could be forgiven for thinking that "campaign advertising" was designed to get the Government re-elected. Much of the advertising has promoted not a safe message or whatever, but the Government's political agenda. The advertisements concerning the Graham Farmer Freeway and tunnel were a classic indication of the political advertising. Why it is necessary for the Government to spend \$100m on "campaign advertising" is beyond me, given that the Government has in the order of 23 journalists working for it.

Mr Carpenter: It has many more than that - it adds up to almost 60 or 70 in all of government.

Mr BROWN: The Opposition has two journalists.

Mr Board: There were more when we came to government.

Mr BROWN: No, that was not the case. The Government somehow finds it necessary to allocate this enormous amount of money to advertising although it has a huge army of journalists. It has 20 or 30 times the journalism power of the Opposition. If a journalist writes one media statement a day, that is 70 statements a day or 350 a week.

Mr Bradshaw: I do not think it is 70 journalists.

Mr BROWN: Let us say that there are 50 journalists.

Mr Bradshaw: There are not that many.

Mr BROWN: I think the parliamentary secretary will find that to be the case.

Mr Board: About 90 per cent of our journalists' time is spent answering questions the Opposition raises through the media.

Mr BROWN: I examine most media statements, although not from all ministers, and some ministers are more active than others. Some ministers put out a statement if they have managed to tie up their shoelaces in the morning, which is a feat for some of them! I see the volume of statements released. On budget day next Thursday we will see 60 or 80 media statements released. I find it amazing that somehow the Government, when it has all that media horse power, enters into

these contracts for advertising. This is especially the case when it is the Government's habit to have ministers duck for cover when they get into strife. When some of a minister's colleagues get into trouble, the permanent head gives a nice public service response on television and the minister disappears from view. I do not know whether these ministers have their pay docked.

As government does not have the money to meet all important social needs, it is a question of prioritising; that is, asking what is more important in allocating those dollars. Is it more important to allocate \$100m to advertisements or elsewhere? People in Family and Children's Services and the non-government sector would argue that it would not hurt to take \$10m from the advertising budget and allocate it for homeless youth in the city. They argue it is a better use of money to protect young people in the city who are homeless rather than direct it to television advertising.

Mr Board: Even with that argument, it is necessary to advertise to the homeless youth where the crisis centres are, to produce hot-line numbers and to produce the cards the kids can get hold of. That is all part of the advertising budget. The reality is that we must let people know.

Mr BROWN: One need not let people know through television advertising.

Mr Board: The bulk of that money is not for television advertising - nowhere near it.

Mr BROWN: The young people do not see television. The money is spent on things like the newspaper wraparound for the Northbridge Tunnel. What did that cost? It was a quarter of a million dollars. I have asked Family and Children's Services to put an intervention program in my electorate to deal with kids who are sniffing substances. I could put a quarter of a million dollars to good use looking after those kids. I could kit them out, provide a youth worker and work with all the kids. We could put them in programs and work with their families. We could put on a couple of people. Is it better to use that money to work with those kids, probably saving them and their families a lot of grief, or to have a wraparound in a suburban newspaper for one day of the year? My values are such that I would prefer to work and spend that money as saving three, five or 10 kids is a better long-term investment for the State of Western Australia than a wraparound to a suburban newspaper, especially as it was not information advertising, but government propaganda.

It is a matter of priority, and the Government should consider its position. The Government thinks it is very clever in its advertising and thinks that it can con people. However, it must give the community credit for a little more intelligence than that. Each time people see an advertisement on the television, they know roughly how much it costs. If the advertisement is a political message and not in the public interest, many people who see through it will be voting against those who waste taxpayers' money in that way.

MR BOARD (Murdoch - Minister for Employment and Training) [5.41 pm]: It is with some -

Mr Riebeling: Trepidation?

Mr BOARD: - excitement that I add to this debate. Three aspects have been lost in this debate. Although many humorous words have been spoken, particularly by the member for Bassendean, the reality is that government advertising has great responsibility.

Mr Riebeling: How many publications do you advertise in?

Mr BOARD: I will get to that. The reality is that the Government has a responsibility and a duty to inform the community of both its initiatives and programs. Quite frankly, as a minister I probably get far more requests for additional information on a day-to-day basis than I would criticism for informing the community of what this Government is doing and achieving.

The other two aspects that have been lost in the Opposition's debate are that there is a great deal of pride and initiative in the public sector. The bulk of the publications which the member for Bassendean held up are produced by government agencies. I can categorically tell him as a minister that in three and a half years I have never insisted on my agencies to produce an article with a photograph of me.

Several members interjected.

Mr BOARD: I have never done it. I will tell members why agencies do it: They are promoting what they do. If there is a launch or promotion of a government initiative or something in which we have been involved, they use that photograph. The fact that the Premier has been so proactive in Western Australia is a credit to him. The reality is that those publications are produced by government agencies to promote and support their initiatives and what they are doing in the community. We should get behind what the public servants are doing and support them.

Mr Brown: This has nothing to do with the fact that the Premier is the Minister for Public Sector Management and that under the Public Sector Management Act he can sack on any day of the week without question and without redress any chief executive officer or he can move them in any way he wishes?

Mr BOARD: That is a ludicrous interjection, and the member knows it. The reality is that those agencies are promoting their initiatives. They take pride in the fact that the Premier has taken time out to promote and support what they are doing and to launch their initiatives. That is a good thing.

The other issue that has been lost in this debate is the fact that the bulk of this advertising generates income and savings to government.

Several members interjected.

Mr BOARD: I will explain it. The member for Bassendean mentioned \$100m for campaign advertising. He singled that out as some way of criticising the Government. However, let us look at where that \$100m is spent. Would he stop lotteries advertising and the hundreds of millions of dollars that the Lotteries Commission puts into the community, in health, infrastructure, the promotion of our community, arts and youth and all the other areas in which it gets involved? Every single dollar it spends has been generated by advertising. It is recouped 50 times over. Would the member stop Healthway and its non-smoking campaigns or any of its health care messages? It spends an enormous amount of money.

Mr Carpenter: What is the budget?

Mr BOARD: I do not know exactly. Would the member stop the Lotteries Commission or Healthway or the road safety campaign, the breathalyser campaign, and the 0.05 campaign? A massive amount of money is spent trying to inform people and stopping the community from drink driving and from speeding. Would he stop the campaign on seat belts, which is saving lives in our community? Would he stop the campaign on using water wisely? Would he single out that one as wasting government money? Would he stop the TAB from its advertising and what it does? That is part of the campaign advertising.

Mr Carpenter: Personally I would not have a problem.

Mr BOARD: The member may do that. However, it is the TAB's right to advertise and that is incorporated in the campaign advertising. Would the member have stopped the use your head campaign when young women were in danger on the streets at night and the Government saw it as its responsibility to inform young people as to their safety on our streets? That is part of the campaign advertising. Would the member stop breast cancer campaigning and informing the community about regular check-ups and what people need to do? Would he stop any tourism campaigns around Australia, where we are trying to generate visitors to Western Australia? Are those the areas where he would stop advertising? That is where the bulk of advertising occurs in this State.

Mr Prince: There is also the domestic violence campaign.

Mr BOARD: Yes, an award winner, not only nationally but also internationally. Would the member stop that? Why would he stop those campaigns? That is where the bulk of the money is spent.

Mr Carpenter interjected.

Mr BOARD: Yes, our budget is coming down next week. We have a duty to inform the taxpayers and citizens of this State who need to know about the state budget. How would the member inform them? Would it be by a telephone campaign or by radio?

Mr Brown: I would use 50 journalists for a start.

Mr BOARD: We tried to get all of our messages through *The West Australian* and community newspapers.

Mr Brown: Forty per cent of people are on the Internet.

Mr BOARD: Yes, it will be on the Internet as well. We have a responsibility to inform the community where its money is going and what initiatives are being undertaken. In my portfolio, would the member stop the Art Gallery telling the community which exhibitions are coming forward? Would he stop the museums promoting their new exhibitions and trying to promote their new educational campaigns to schools? Would he stop the library informing the community about which editions it has and what is happening? Would he stop our performing arts groups advertising to try to get people into their establishments? Would he stop the ballet, opera or the West Australian Symphony Orchestra advertising, promoting and telling the community where they are performing? Would he stop those things? I do not think so. Would he stop technical and further education advertising in my portfolio of Employment and Training? Full page advertising is taken in *The West Australian* informing people about courses, where they are to be held and giving details of all the various TAFE colleges.

Mr Riebeling: Is there a picture of you?

Mr BOARD: No. Why would the member stop that? He would not stop it. Would he stop informing the community about our new get access program, telling people how to get employment and training? Would he stop publication of our little cards informing the community of our emergency numbers and where people can get help? No he would not. All of those things go into that state advertising budget.

Mr Carpenter interjected.

Mr BOARD: The member for Girrawheen wants to criticise me on youth. Would he stop me trying to get young people into the cadets? We have had one advertising campaign.

Mr Carpenter: You have been a complete failure as the Minister for Youth.

Mr BOARD: Is that right? The bulk of the money for advertising in youth -

Mr Carpenter: We have the highest youth suicide rate in Australia. That is what you have done; that is your hallmark.

Mr BOARD: That does not become the member.

Mr Carpenter: It is true. All you do is run glossy campaigns.

Mr BOARD: No we do not.

Mr Carpenter: You do nothing serious about the issues.

Mr BOARD: The media has supported the bulk of the campaign free of charge. We have had millions of dollars of free advertising. They are the sorts of things on which government money is spent to inform our community, raise the profile of our community and get behind our community and to let them know that the Government is active and working in their interests. The Opposition is criticising that because it knows the community is receiving that message. We are informing the community and communicating government initiatives - what is wrong with that? Should we come out with a program and tell no-one about it - hide it in the corner - let nobody know that it exists? I do not think so. The Opposition gets up every day in this Parliament and says, "This minister is a failure - that minister is a failure" because they have not told anybody anything or let anybody know what is happening in the State. The Opposition cannot have it both ways. If there are new initiatives and programs, people need to know about them and be informed. I am proud of government initiatives since 1993 and of the fact that we continue to inform the community of those initiatives. I am proud of the fact that the bulk of government advertising and supporting of the community is on campaigns that will save lives and, in the end, generate income and save the money of the taxpayers of this State.

MR RIEBELING (Burrup) [5.51 pm]: I want to make a few comments on what the Government sees as its priorities in relation to spending on advertising. The Minister for Employment and Training went on about programs. The Health Department of Western Australia produces hundreds of publications each year. I am sure that some of them are about programs that are worth pursuing. However, the minister said that most of those are produced in-house. The minister must think that we live in cloud cuckoo land if we believe that. The Health Department outsources everything. One might wonder why some of those publications - I will not go through all of them; despite the fact that they are only thin and stack up to over half an inch thickness - cost hundreds of thousands of dollars to produce. This Government would produce a minimum of at least two different glossy publications each day promoting its worthiness in the community. We have noticed the extremes reached in the past few weeks in relation to the Polly pipe - that is, the new Northbridge tunnel. I have never witnessed such mass advertising to try to beef up a government's performance and to deflect from its poor performance in every other area. This Government hits one winner and then advertises it to death. I think the vast majority of people in Western Australia realises how cynical such performances are.

We heard from the member for Bassendean about the shameless campaign run before the last federal election, or the one before last, where the Government ran a campaign called "Fix Australia, Fix the Roads". The Government spent millions of dollars in an attempt to unseat the then Federal Government. After that campaign was finished we heard nothing further. In fact, the next Federal Government cut funding to roads. The direct result of this wonderful campaign to fix Western Australian roads, especially in the country, was that we got less funds.

It was with interest that I asked a series of questions in relation to each government department. I asked the questions in December and it has taken some five months for the Government to answer them. One department I queried was Transport. I wanted to find out how much the Department of Transport was spending on advertising. One would think that it would not have to advertise too heavily to encourage people to drive on our roads. This question was asked in three sections: How much was spent in advertising in print and on television and radio in the 1999-2000 budget? The answer to that question was \$8 445 000. The next category was how much they spent on pamphlets, brochures, bulletins and other forms of printed information, excluding the annual reports and in-house bulletins. The answer to that was just over \$1.5m. With those two categories combined we have a budget of about \$10m. The last category was public relations and events management, on which only \$280 000 was spent. In excess of \$10m was spent solely on advertising our road system by Main Roads. Some may say that there is a need for this Government to get the good news out. However, one wonders why it had to spend \$10m on doing that. A number of agencies under Transport's umbrella, such as the port authorities, spent much less. However, the overall spending by this department is, to say the least, outrageous.

Another department which has taken over five months to answer my questions - one can understand why the departments have taken so long; they are too busy spending money on advertising to answer questions from members of this House - was Tourism. The Minister for Tourism spends in excess of \$13m per annum on television advertising and promotions. Of course, one could expect that more money would be spent on tourism than on promoting our road system.

One of the huge successes that this Government has targeted is the running of the 2000 ITU triathlon world championships. We have just witnessed one of the great disasters in public relations for Western Australia and our ability to organise events. The event was proudly sponsored and promoted by the State Government. The minister in the other House was very defensive of the event and indicated that EventsCorp was not at fault and that it was the organisers of the event who were responsible for the fiasco. One imagines that in a 200 metre race the distance would actually be 200 metres. If there is a 10 kilometre race it should be 10 kilometre in length. I cannot imagine a professional body of any kind allowing a race to be run where two kilometres of the race were missing.

Mr Bradshaw: Are you saying that it was the Government's fault?

Mr RIEBELING: If the Government takes the credit, it must share some of the blame.

Several members interjected.

Mr RIEBELING: Some 50 competitors broke the world record in the first event - phenomenal! The course must have been

all downhill with a tailwind. It was a very fast course. The sort of problem that occurred on the weekend was not good for Western Australia. It should not have happened and it may be a lesson to the State Government, through EventsCorp, that if it is promoting a world championship of any type it should be involved to ensure that the body that runs it is capable of running it properly. The reputation of the entire State is on the line. If, as the member for Murray-Wellington indicated, it is not the Government's business, it should be. The world triathlon body can hold this championship anywhere next year - perhaps Cannes - and it will run it. Western Australia will be in the business of trying to encourage world class events to this State, and we want to be able to go to international bodies and say that we are professional enough to run efficient and well-organised events. In the main, Western Australia does that, and it has a proud history of doing that. It is very sad for all concerned that the disaster occurred not in the event itself, but in the way the course was structured. It was a fiasco. It required closer checking of the event by the Government. Anyone involved in triathlons who looked at that course must have noticed that it was too short. I played hockey for 35 years, and I would know whether a field was 30 metres too short. It would not be necessary to wait for an official to say that it was too short. I have no doubt that participants in the triathlon event walked the course beforehand; they are professionals and they want to ensure there are no surprises.

Mr Barnett: If you had to do three or four laps, would you walk the course three or four times?

Mr RIEBELING: Participants would probably walk it once and work out the distance.

Mr Court: And count the steps?

Mr RIEBELING: No, they would estimate its length. We are talking about a quarter of the distance, or pretty close to that, and it is amazing that it was not picked up.

Mr Court: Do you reckon you would walk the 10 kilometres?

Mr RIEBELING: I reckon I could. I would know the difference between 8 kilometres and 10 kilometres, but perhaps ministers may not. They do not do much walking.

Mr Court: You would be crawling for the last two.

Mr RIEBELING: No.

Mr Carpenter: Even Fred would have broken the world record at the weekend.

Mr RIEBELING: I would have smashed it. The Minister for Youth is famous for the number of brochures and pamphlets released by his departments. He had the interesting slant that government departments, when producing these publications over which his ministry has control, used these pictures because the government officers have a burning desire to include a picture of him.

Mr Board: They want to promote their program.

Mr RIEBELING: The minister said that he had no control over the inclusion of his photograph in these publications.

Mr Board: No, I do not.

Mr RIEBELING: All of a sudden these government departments swell up with pride and say that they want a picture of the minister because he is such a good looking chap.

Mr Barnett: Because he is charismatic.

Mr RIEBELING: I can understand why the departments of the Minister for Resources Development would be clamouring to get his photo on every page.

Mr Court: Just listen to the radio on Friday and you will hear some good advertising.

Mr RIEBELING: On what?

Mr Court: Music selections.

Mr RIEBELING: That will be very good.

Mr Carpenter: It has all been done before. It has happened all over the world. It all ends up the same way; you get booted out, mate.

Mr RIEBELING: A new Government. There are hundreds of pictures of the Premier in publications. How many publications each week from the Government contain a picture of the Premier? Is it 100?

Mr Court: Every day I am asked to sign forewords for non-government publications.

Mr RIEBELING: I am talking about government publications.

Mr Court: Similarly, I sign many government publications. You would expect any Premier to do that, no matter what his political persuasion.

Mr RIEBELING: When Dr Gallop is Premier, all government departments will want pictures of him in their brochures. I cannot understand why they want pictures of this Premier in their publications.

Mr Court: Will it be right?

Mr RIEBELING: It will be much better, and we will have better looking ministers.

Mr Court: Your argument is very strong!

Mr RIEBELING: People will genuinely want to see members on this side in their publications, unlike the current situation in which the public servants are forced to include countless pictures of awful, scowling ministers who are being nasty to the people of Western Australia. The minister says that government departments want pictures in their publications. Apparently his departments also have a burning desire to include his comments in the publications they produce. There is not only a burning desire to include a picture of the minister, but also a passionate wish to hear a few gems of wisdom from the minister saying what the week's activities have produced and to provide another glossy publication.

There is also a problem with the annual reports produced by government departments. I asked a series of questions about them. Apparently some reports cost \$100 each to produce. No-one reads them but each department produces them. It is an acute waste of money and it is an absolute scandal. Each department probably knows its audience and could produce the publications in-house for a very small cost. An award is given by the Government for the best annual report; that is not the report that is read the most but the one that looks the best and has the nicest pictures. I forget who won it last year. Did the Minister for Youth's department win the W.S. Lonnie award last year?

Mr Board: No.

Mr RIEBELING: Surely he won it for the best poster. Annual reports cost squillions of dollars and the Government wastes a huge amount of money on glossy publications. That has been demonstrated tonight.

MS MacTIERNAN (Armadale) [6.08 pm]: I rise to make two comments. First, I endorse the comments by the member for Burrup about the waste in the Department of Transport in its expenditure on promotional activities. Main Roads has also been the cause of considerable scandal with regard to the Northbridge tunnel.

I want to bring a particular case to the attention of the House tonight because it is scandalous. I am pleased that the Minister for Fisheries is more or less in the House because it concerns him. I understand a series of brochures was produced by his department and some may have been brochures identifying certain fish species. They were perfectly good brochures and they served a great public purpose, but it is said that the department was compelled to shred all those documents and reproduce them because one fish was not included - the Minister for Fisheries was not included in the brochures.

Mr House: You raised this issue two or three years ago, and it could be even older. I told you then that it was totally untrue, and the department said that it was totally untrue. It is totally untrue. It is ridiculous for you to raise it again. Your accusation is totally untrue. There is no foundation to it at all. You were told three or four years ago when you raised it.

Ms MacTIERNAN: The minister says that the department has told me this.

Mr House: I understand that you contacted the department. You asked a parliamentary question and I checked with the department at that time. You have had an answer to that question for three or four years. You obviously have not read it.

Ms MacTIERNAN: That is news to me.

Mr House: Have you been wasting time asking questions and not reading the answers?

Ms MacTIERNAN: I will double check that, but I find it very hard to believe. The minister has told us that this did not happen. I will take his word for it.

Mr House: Just as I told you three or four years ago that it did not happen.

Ms MacTIERNAN: I will check those answers. I am glad the minister has been here to respond.

Mr House: Do you have any other issues you want to raise? You have just spent two minutes saying things that are not true.

Ms MacTIERNAN: The minister claims that they are not true. Time will tell.

The figures produced here tonight by the member for Nollamara are very disconcerting.

MR BARNETT (Cottesloe - Leader of the House) [6.11 pm]: I will make a few very brief comments, to some extent in defence of the advertising industry. It is easy for members to mention individual campaigns and brochures, have a go and get a few laughs. Some are very humorous. That will always be true of advertising; it is a very difficult area in which to measure effectiveness and value and any other criteria one might wish to consider.

I will suggest a few points that could have been raised in the debate rather than plucking out a few examples. If money is to be spent on any form of advertising, whether it be via print, electronic media, direct mail or whatever, obviously that money should be spent effectively. To be effective, advertising must be attractive and targeted to an audience. That generally requires a high level of expenditure, but that is the nature of the beast. Members must remember that advertisements are competing at all times with all other advertisements, particularly on television or in the print media.

Government advertising is more complex than private sector advertising because we are dealing with taxpayers' funds, community assets and the like. Any government advertising should be ethical. I have not heard members mention in this

debate any advertisement that was not ethical. Government advertising should also be accurate. Occasionally mistakes happen; that is human nature. Government advertising should also have a worthy information component and it should in no way be misleading.

Mr Kobelke: It should also conform with the law. A number of the Government's advertising campaigns have been in breach of the law.

Mr BARNETT: I made the point about it needing to be ethical.

Mr Kobelke: There is a breach of the federal law.

Mr BARNETT: Ethics relates to the law. All government advertising should be ethical, and the member can define "ethical" as he wishes.

Government advertising can be justified for a number of reasons. The first is the most obvious need to market. Marketing is very obvious in the sale of goods and services in the private sector. It must also be recognised that many government agencies are also involved in the direct sale of goods and services. I refer to the supply of water, gas, electricity, public transport and culture, arts and sporting events. Many government activities have a direct market role. Therefore, the availability, timing, quality and price of the service is relevant information that should be made available.

Members have also mentioned the role of government in a range of public education programs. I do not think anyone would argue that the Government has a role to play in education about drugs, health, road safety, electrical safety and so on. That is a role that Governments should play in the public interest.

Often government bodies have a unique responsibility to use advertising in the public consultation process. An example from my own portfolio area is the expenditure of a significant amount on public consultation about the Education Bill. It was entirely appropriate to provide information and to obtain community views. In some cases, the Government has a responsibility to provide information about policies and changes in policy. The Education Department is about to launch an advertising program to advise the public of changes to the school starting age. That is relatively expensive, but it is entirely appropriate that the public be informed of such a change well in advance.

Mr Kobelke: Having seen the figures for a number of departments, the advertising expenditure in the Education Department, which is a major department, is very conservative.

Mr BARNETT: I agree.

I do not think many people would dispute that marketing and providing public education and consultation are proper roles for the Government. Many campaigns are extensive and therefore lead to significant expenditure.

The more difficult issues relate to corporate image, which takes many forms. Large organisations within government - for example, Western Power and AlintaGas - must establish a corporate identity in the business community and in the broader community. Such entities also have a social responsibility to the community, and to effect that often requires advertising. For example, if organisations support sporting events, the arts, culture, charitable groups and so on, it is proper that they inform the wider community of what they are doing to fulfil their social responsibilities.

It is also appropriate to promote and establish the identity of an organisation. I am often asked - quite properly - why an organisation like Western Power should advertise. Advertising its services such as off-peak tariffs and so on is valid. AlintaGas sponsors the Fremantle Football Club, which is clearly promoting gas and AlintaGas. Other sponsorships are more in the nature of community service, such as support of the reptile display at the Perth Zoo, the Arthritis Foundation, the RSPCA and a range of environmental care programs. It is being a good corporate and public citizen.

Organisations such as Western Power and AlintaGas and others also need to be seen as responsible entities within the community. They are institutions and they need that institutional image for a range of reasons, including establishing a proper place in the community to attract high-calibre staff, to gain respect among customers and suppliers and to raise finance. Western Power must be seen as responsible and as a significant entity for its operations in the business and corporate area.

Corporate promotion, social responsibility and so on are difficult to measure. This debate would have been more focused had members distinguished between the role of government and agencies and the type of advertising expenditure they undertake. I agree that it is more difficult to be precise, but there was little attempt to do so in this debate. The vast majority of advertising expenditure by major organisations, whether they be statutory trading organisations or government departments, would fall into the category of informing the public of goods and services, programs, public education and consultation. The element that is open to debate is a very small part of total government advertising expenditure. I have enjoyed the debate.

Mr Kobelke: I pointed out in my speech that your reply to the member for Burrup regarding AlintaGas and Western Power was factually wrong. Will you look into that and correct the record?

Mr BARNETT: I will. AlintaGas provides the details in its annual report.

Mr Kobelke: You said it did not have to, but it does.

Mr BARNETT: I will check that. If I have in any way erred or misled the House, it has been unintentional.

Mr Kobelke: You must have simply ticked off what came from the department, but it gave the wrong advice.

Mr BARNETT: We will see.

Question put and a division taken with the following result -

Ayes (18)

Ms Anwyl
Mr Brown
Mr Carpenter
Dr Edwards
Dr Gallop

Mr Grill
Mr Kobelke
Ms MacTiernan
Mr Marlborough
Mr McGinty

Mr McGowan
Ms McHale
Mr Riebeling
Mr Ripper

Mrs Roberts
Mr Thomas
Ms Warnock
Mr Cunningham (*Teller*)

Noes (27)

Mr Ainsworth
Mr Barnett
Mr Board
Mr Bradshaw
Dr Constable
Mr Court
Mr Cowan

Mr Day
Mrs Edwardes
Dr Hames
Mrs Hodson-Thomas
Mr House
Mr Johnson
Mr Marshall

Mr Masters
Mr McNee
Mr Minson
Mr Nicholls
Mr Osborne
Mrs Parker
Mr Pandal

Mr Prince
Mr Shave
Dr Turnbull
Mrs van de Klashorst
Mr Wiese
Mr Tubby (*Teller*)

Pair

Mr Bridge

Mr Kierath

Question thus negatived.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX, IMPACT ON SMALL BUSINESS

Motion

MR BROWN (Bassendean) [6.23 pm]: I move -

- (1) That this House expresses concern about the impact of the goods and services tax on small business in terms of -
 - (a) driving a percentage of small businesses out of business;
 - (b) imposing a significant cost on small business by requiring it to change its operating and accounting systems; and
 - (c) imposing higher ongoing compliance costs.
- (2) That this House calls on the Government to -
 - (a) publicly call on the Howard Government to provide higher levels of assistance to small business to enable it to comply with the new tax and ensure the Australian Taxation Office does not take a harsh approach to compliance in the early stages of the new tax; and
 - (b) extend the \$400 training allowance provided by the State Government to small business in the south west to small business throughout the State - without delay.

This motion is designed to express a range of concerns small business has about the pending implementation of the goods and services tax. I will deal with each of the five points listed in the motion.

The first point concerns the potential of the goods and services tax to drive a percentage of small businesses out of business. We have already seen a number of newspaper articles in which people in small businesses have indicated that, due to the new tax, they will no longer continue in business after 30 June this year; that is, they have decided that the complexities of the tax, difficulties in bringing their business systems up to compliance and the problems of operating under the tax have tipped the balance to the point where they no longer wish to be in business. These are not people who have been "caught" by the tax and are unable to comply, but they have decided that the new system will be so difficult and complex they are not prepared to continue in business.

I will not speak about the various articles about people who have indicated they intend to shut up shop by 30 June this year. A range of other issues pose significant problems for the business community. I refer to an article that appeared in *The Australian Financial Review* of 27 April that dealt comprehensively with the GST and its impact on small business. I will quote extensively from this article because it tends to have been fairly well researched and written by people who have access to some of the major accounting firms in Australia. They obviously have a reputation for being well informed about small business accounting procedures and about the new tax system. I suggest they are certainly far more informed than I am and are dealing with these issues daily. They have small business clients and, as part of their business profession, are required to advise small business on the problems they will face with the new system.

An article appeared in that edition of *The Australian Financial Review* written by Mark Fenton-Jones under the heading of "New tax system will expose weaknesses" and reads -

The GST could push some companies over the edge, but it won't be just because of the new tax.

Greg Hall, a partner in business recovery services at PricewaterhouseCoopers, says a company that is already poorly run will be unlikely to manage the successful introduction of the GST.

It is predicted that the first casualties will be those companies that do not have the systems in place and that are not effectively run. They will be in danger once this tax is introduced. They are currently managing but they may not manage given the complexities of the new tax. In the same article he says -

David Lofthouse, an insolvency partner with HLB Mann Judd, is predicting an upturn in insolvencies this year. In 1998-1999, new bankruptcies increased by 8.1 per cent to 26,376.

Some sectors will be hit harder than others. Lofthouse predicts an increase in insolvencies in building and the automobile industries.

He is already predicting that insolvencies will occur in those industries. It is interesting that he is predicting problems in the automotive industry. I took the opportunity of raising in this House approximately three weeks ago the problems facing car hire companies with the advent of the GST, particularly as, under the new tax system, their hire cars will be treated as goods for hire rather than as ordinary capital inputs. Members will be aware that car hire companies will not be able to claim an input credit for full GST as an offset for a period. Hire vehicle companies will be allowed to claim only half of that after 12 months and the other half after a further 12 months. They will have to carry half that cost for two years and half for 12 months. That will add significantly to their overall costs. I will not repeat what I said previously. It is detailed in an extensive letter received from one of the car hire companies on behalf of others, and it has also been outlined by the Motor Traders Association.

With reference to the building industry *The Australian Financial Review* article reads -

Moreover, the one-off change to taxation that has created a pre-GST boom for builders is predicted to be followed by a drop of around 9,000 new dwellings in the two years after the introduction of the GST - a drop that will coincide with a cyclical weakness in the market.

That downturn will have a negative impact on home builders that have borrowed to expand during the boom times.

Mr Cowan: I suggest interest rates will probably have a greater impact on the building industry than the GST.

Mr BROWN: The Deputy Premier may be right, but the GST will have an impact both in the way that industry must cope with the GST and because, as everyone is aware, home purchasers have been rushing to complete the building before 30 June to avoid the GST. Afterwards something of a drought is expected in new building starts. The article continues -

Other industries likely to be hardest hit by the implementation of the GST include businesses with long lead times between invoicing and payment such as heavy manufacturing, and small retail and service businesses.

"Small companies are remitting on a three-monthly basis. The question is whether they have retained three months' worth of GST received in order to meet that liability," says Mark Robinson, senior manager at PPB.

Two issues are raised in this article that pose a significant problem for small business. The first concerns small businesses that have long lead times between the time they purchase and sell goods. As we know, a company will pay the GST on the basis of its invoices, not on the basis of its receipts. Companies that have long lead times between the issuing of an invoice and the date of a payment will be in jeopardy. That of course will be particularly problematic for small businesses that do not have influence when they are dealing with larger businesses or government. Later in this debate I will address the way in which government will treat small business in relation to the GST and how small business will be disadvantaged. I will do that through reference to a Treasury document that has already been issued.

Two issues will cause some small businesses grief. The first is the delay between the date invoices are issued and their payment if that date extends beyond the date the GST must be paid. The GST cannot be deferred on the basis the payment has not been made by the purchaser of the good or service. The second issue, particularly for micro businesses, is that they will need accurate accounting systems and must set aside GST money for collection. Unless those funds are set aside during the collection period, businesses will have a problem when the relevant date arrives for the remittance to be made if insufficient funds have been set aside to meet their GST obligations.

Another troubling aspect is the new pay-as-you-go tax system which is part of the goods and services tax. This article makes particular note of that system and reads -

"That will have an impact on cash flow, and if that impact is not planned for it could be a significant trigger for companies that are bumping and surviving. It could be the straw that breaks the camel's back, . . ."

Fast-growing companies could also be under threat.

And it's not just a case of a company ensuring that its internal systems are GST-ready. The company needs to see that the supply chain is GST-ready.

It is significant that small businesses cannot simply set the price of the goods and services that attract GST at an appropriate rate to reflect the GST compared with goods and services that do not attract the GST. Small businesses must also ensure that their cash flow systems are such that they can account for the new tax. There will be problems unless that occurs. All the literature indicates that large businesses have invested a great deal of money, have updated their accounting systems and are almost ready for the new tax. However, my reading of the literature, particularly *Yellow Pages* surveys, indicated that is not so for small businesses. It is estimated that about one million small businesses still have not registered for an Australian business number. The impact of the goods and services tax will drive some small businesses out of business for the reasons I have indicated and other reasons.

I am unsure whether the Government or the Small Business Development Corporation have conducted assessments of the number of small businesses that they anticipate will go out of business as a result of the goods and services tax. However, I have been told that government figures suggest about 10 per cent of businesses will not survive the GST. The minister may want to comment on that.

Mr Cowan: We are not saying that.

Mr BROWN: What is the Government saying?

Mr Cowan: We would not waste our time putting an estimate on businesses that have decided to call it a day.

Mr BROWN: It is not only businesses that have decided to call it a day, but also businesses that want to keep going but cannot for one reason or another.

Mr Cowan: The Federal Government may have estimated that figure but the State Government has not.

Mr BROWN: Does the minister know if the SBDC has estimated it?

Mr Cowan: Not to my knowledge.

Mr BROWN: My understanding is that people are conservatively estimating the figure to be in the order of 10 per cent. Other figures suggest a lot more.

The second point raised in the motion is that the GST will impose a significant cost on small business. At the federal government level, a token grant of \$200 has been made available to help small business meet the cost of the goods and services tax. All areas of business will incur a significant cost in coming up to speed with the goods and services tax. In that same edition of *The Australian Financial Review*, the largest sporting goods retailer in Australia, Rebel Sport, is quoted as estimating that it will cost it \$1m to come up to speed with the GST. That is not the compliance cost after the GST is implemented but is the cost of preparing for the GST. I know from speaking to people in both small business and micro business that the costs have been significant. I spoke to one small business operator a short time ago who said he and his bookkeeper were going to a major seminar on the GST, the cost of which was in the order of \$300 for one or two days, and that was just to get further advice and information about the GST. A lot of small businesses still do not know the end cost of all this, because some of the rules that must be complied with have still not been determined, and there are still some grey areas. The issue of rounding was determined only a short time ago. On the issue of contractors, the goalposts were shifted some two or three weeks ago.

Mr Cowan: The excise on draft beer has shifted as well.

Mr BROWN: Yes. The business community, and particularly the small business community, is being asked to prepare for the implementation of the GST when all the rules have not yet been set. That makes it extremely difficult, and I venture to suggest extremely onerous. It would be onerous enough if all the rules had been set, as they were supposed to have been set, prior to 1 January 2000, so that small business and business generally had an opportunity to know what the rules were and to try to adjust to meet those rules, but that has not been the case; the rules are still being adjusted, and it is now less than two months before the new tax will come into place. Significant costs will be incurred by business in preparing for the implementation of the goods and services tax, and once that tax has been implemented, business will incur significant compliance costs. The Commonwealth Government's advertising suggests that it will be a simple form, it will be quite easy, and if people have half a brain, they will be able to do it in about a quarter of an hour. However, that is not what the accountants are saying. People may say the accountants are pushing their own barrow, but it seems the accountants are run off their feet. There is a shortage of staff in many accounting firms, and they are seeking to recruit staff who are trained in the GST. I heard on the news yesterday that the Australian Taxation Office is complaining that as soon as it trains up its staff to become GST proficient, they are being stolen by private accounting firms. The compliance costs will be quite high, and it will be necessary for many small businesses to use the services of professional accountants in order to meet their obligations under this tax.

The cost of preparing for the GST has been increasing as well. The one thing the proposed implementation of the GST has done is provide a boom for the accounting industry. The people who have done very well out of the proposed implementation of the GST are the accounting profession and some software companies. For example, MYOB Accounting has done extremely well from the software packages that it is selling. However, at the same time as those groups are doing well, an additional cost is being imposed on the small business community.

In summary, some businesses have decided to call it a day before the implementation of the GST, and some businesses will simply not survive the goods and services tax. Significant costs are being incurred by businesses in getting their operating and accounting systems up to speed to deal with the tax when it is implemented on 1 July 2000. Businesses will incur significant compliance costs.

This motion calls on the Government to publicly call on the Howard Government to provide higher levels of assistance to small business to enable it to comply with the new tax. The level of assistance provided by the Australian Government to small business and micro business to cope with the new tax is pathetic. For the small business people to whom I have spoken, the amount of \$200 that they have been given is petty cash. It is better than nothing, but it is not much better than nothing, and it does not go anywhere towards meeting the additional costs that they will incur in getting up to speed with the new tax system. The GST will impose a significant additional cost on small business. The Government may argue that it is a bit late in the day and we should have done this earlier, but I remind the Government that it is estimated that in the order of one million small businesses still have not registered for an Australian business number. It may be late in the day, but there are probably one million businesses that can be helped, and bearing in mind that a total of 2.5 million businesses will need to be registered, there are probably still 40 per cent to go, which I suggest will be small and micro businesses.

The second part of the motion calls on the Government to ensure that the Australian Taxation Office will not adopt a harsh approach to compliance issues in the early stages of the new tax. The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission has indicated that it intends to take a harsh approach to people who exploit the new tax system by increasing prices. This motion does not deal with the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission. It deals with the Australian Taxation Office. The Australian Taxation Office has employed a huge number of business educators to provide information in the lead-up to the implementation of the tax. However, the plan is that as time goes by, those business educators will become compliance officers.

The second matter is that the level of information which will now be provided to the Australian Taxation Office will be much more than it has ever been previously. In looking at its monitoring standards for business, the Australian Taxation Office will have a range of benchmarks, and those businesses and industries that fall beyond the benchmarks in one way or the other will be subject to scrutiny. There will be a lot more scrutiny of small businesses, because small businesses and micro businesses - every business - will be tax collectors. Previously, in many instances they were not, but they soon will be. Therefore, they will be in the same position as many wholesalers are with the wholesale sales tax. Each and every one of those 2.5 million businesses will be a tax collector. The Australian Government, through the Australian Taxation Office, has made it clear that it intends to use those education officers for compliance purposes. I do not suggest that one should turn a blind eye to tax cheating and tax evasion, but because of the complexity of this tax, it will not be unusual, certainly in the early stages of the tax, for micro businesses and small businesses to make mistakes. Given that significant penalties can be imposed, it would be harsh and oppressive to impose on members of the small business community such massive penalties in the early stages when many of them are still trying to grapple with the changing rules of the taxation system.

Mr Cowan: You know that Mr Carmody has made a statement about that, don't you?

Mr BROWN: I know he has made a statement, but, as the Deputy Premier knows, there is also a concern about the number of people in the ATO whose roles will change.

Mr Cowan: He has made a statement about them as well.

Mr BROWN: My information about them is that the Australian Taxation Office will use them for compliance purposes.

Mr Cowan: That is right, but Mr Carmody has also made it clear that they must draw a line when they make the shift from providing advice and information. Any information they gather on a company when they are providing advice and information is not to be used, and if they use the information they gathered they will be dismissed instantly.

Mr BROWN: I understand that, and I do not take issue with that. My point is that many of these small businesses and micro businesses will for the first time become tax collectors. In many instances the rules are still grey, and these businesses will be required to try to cope with them. There will be a small army of people who are keen to collect the tax. I agree with the Deputy Premier that they will not use the information they collected as educators or advisers. Ethically, if a person has advised business A, someone else should check on that business, and the person who previously dealt with business A in an advisory capacity should not go there. In that way, one would make sure that no transference of information takes place. Nevertheless, there will be a huge amount of scrutiny of those small business operations. There will be new benchmarks, an elaboration on the benchmarks that already exist, and a level of compliance will be expected. This motion requests the House send a message to the Federal Government saying that, in the early stages of the GST, we want it to go easy on compliance issues for small and micro businesses. If people are rorting the system, that is one matter, but if one looks at the checklist that has been mentioned - it is a simple 10-point checklist - it is quite complex. It is a complicated process to decide when tax is or is not payable, whether accounts fall before or after an accounting period, what is and what is not an input, and those types of matters.

Mr Cowan: It is when people get their money.

Mr BROWN: I am glad the Deputy Premier said that, because some interested people in the business community will do that.

The other matter about which I am concerned is a Treasury document which refers to the way in which government departments should deal with the goods and services tax.

Mr Cowan: State Treasury?

Mr BROWN: Yes.

Mr Cowan: Nobody's photograph is on that document.

Mr BROWN: The Deputy Premier knows why, does he not? Nobody's photograph is on a tax document! This document is interesting. Under the heading "Benefits and Costs for Agencies" it says -

Like most projects, it is useful to consider the benefits and costs of GST implementation. Successful GST implementation by agencies may have benefits to agencies that include:

Then there are three dot points, the first of which reads -

cash flow benefits - for instance, through careful management of accounts, a refund of the GST on purchases can be received before it is actually paid. In this regard, the ATO will refund the GST incurred by agencies within 14 days of the returns being submitted to them. If agencies provide their ATO returns monthly and apply normal commercial credit terms to accounts, input tax credits could be refunded before payment is made;

What is that code for? It is this: One receives an account and immediately submits it to the ATO to receive the refund of the tax that has been charged on the account. However, the other side of the equation is that one does not pay the account for an extended period afterwards. Therefore, who has to carry the costs? They are carried by small businesses dealing with the Government. That is in the Treasury document.

Mr Cowan: There are already requirements for government to comply with Treasury directions on payment of accounts.

Mr BROWN: I know, but this is the problem -

Mr Cowan: Some people will dispute whether they are paid in good time.

Mr BROWN: They are not. As the Deputy Premier knows, when the coalition Government was elected, it said that it would pay accounts within 30 days.

Mr Cowan: That is right.

Mr BROWN: Then it changed the policy. The coalition's present policy is that it will pay accounts 30 days from the end of the month in which they are received. Therefore, if an account is received on 2 January, it is paid by 28 February, 60 days after it is received.

Mr Board: You are overlooking an issue; that is, that virtually every business - whether it is a wholesaler, a retailer or a service provider - has been paying wholesale sales tax on what it purchased. That was embedded in the prices and it was passed on to the consumer, usually with an additional charge, on which a tax was also paid. In many ways, those businesses are ready, prior to the GST, because of being conveyors and collectors of tax along the way.

Mr BROWN: They were not collectors of the tax because they paid for a product from a wholesaler and the wholesaler collected the tax. The retailer did not collect the tax. Within the product was a tax. It was not collected by the retailer.

Mr Board: However, the retailer added to it.

Mr BROWN: Yes, but the GST will be collected at each point.

Mr Cowan: There are two separate issues. You are right in that if a business submits its accounts to the ATO, it may get a reimbursement, but there are two separate issues. The submission for a refund of GST and the payment of accounts are separate issues, and there is no sense in trying to say that that document states anything untoward.

Mr BROWN: The Government should look at that matter before we resume this debate, because, on my reading of that Treasury document, it ensures that government structures its accounting system so that it claims early but pays later. Perhaps the Deputy Premier should talk to Treasury about that document because that is the way I read it.

[Leave granted for speech to be continued.]

Debate thus adjourned.

House adjourned at 7.00 pm

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Questions and answers are as supplied to Hansard.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES, GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

1887. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Employment and Training; Youth; the Arts:

(1) Has each department and agency under the Premier's control assessed the degree to which the Goods and Services tax will effect all -

- (a) charges;
- (b) fares;
- (c) tariffs;
- (d) other costs; and
- (e) fees,

charged to consumers, clients, users etc of each department and agency?

(2) What -

- (a) charges;
- (b) fares;
- (c) tariffs;
- (d) other consumer charges; and
- (e) fees,

of each department and agency will be effected by the Goods and Services tax?

(3) What -

- (a) charges;
- (b) fares;
- (c) tariffs;
- (d) other consumer charges; and
- (e) fees,

will increase a consequence of the Goods and Services tax?

(4) What will be the percentage and monetary amount of the increase?

(5) What -

- (a) charges;
- (b) fares;
- (c) tariffs;
- (d) other consumer charges; and
- (e) fees,

will decrease as a result of the introduction of the Goods and Services tax?

(6) In percentage and monetary terms, what will be the amount of the decrease?

Mr BOARD replied:

(1)-(6) This information will be released as part of the budget process.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES, GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

1888. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Local Government; Disability Services; Forest Products:

(1) Has each department and agency under the Premier's control assessed the degree to which the Goods and Services tax will effect all -

- (a) charges;
- (b) fares;
- (c) tariffs;
- (d) other costs; and
- (e) fees,

charged to consumers, clients, users etc of each department and agency?

(2) What -

- (a) charges;
- (b) fares;
- (c) tariffs;

- (d) other consumer charges; and
- (e) fees,

of each department and agency will be effected by the Goods and Services tax?

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- (a) charges;
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- (c) tariffs;
- (d) other consumer charges; and
- (e) fees,

will increase a consequence of the Goods and Services tax?

(4) What will be the percentage and monetary amount of the increase?

(5) What -

- (a) charges;
- (b) fares;
- (c) tariffs;
- (d) other consumer charges; and
- (e) fees,

will decrease as a result of the introduction of the Goods and Services tax?

(6) In percentage and monetary terms, what will be the amount of the decrease?

Mr OMODEI replied:

(1)-(6) This information will be released as part of the budget process.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES, GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

1889. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Family and Children's Services; Seniors; Women's Interests:

(1) Has each department and agency under the Premier's control assessed the degree to which the Goods and Services tax will effect all -

- (a) charges;
- (b) fares;
- (c) tariffs;
- (d) other costs; and
- (e) fees,

charged to consumers, clients, users etc of each department and agency?

(2) What -

- (a) charges;
- (b) fares;
- (c) tariffs;
- (d) other consumer charges; and
- (e) fees,

of each department and agency will be effected by the Goods and Services tax?

(3) What -

- (a) charges;
- (b) fares;
- (c) tariffs;
- (d) other consumer charges; and
- (e) fees,

will increase a consequence of the Goods and Services tax?

(4) What will be the percentage and monetary amount of the increase?

(5) What -

- (a) charges;
- (b) fares;
- (c) tariffs;
- (d) other consumer charges; and
- (e) fees,

will decrease as a result of the introduction of the Goods and Services tax?

(6) In percentage and monetary terms, what will be the amount of the decrease?

Mrs van de KLASHORST replied:

(1)-(6) This information will be released as part of the budget process.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES, GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

1896. Mr BROWN to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Justice:

(1) Has each department and agency under the Premier's control assessed the degree to which the Goods and Services tax will effect all -

- (a) charges;
- (b) fares;
- (c) tariffs;
- (d) other costs; and
- (e) fees,

charged to consumers, clients, users etc of each department and agency?

(2) What -

- (a) charges;
- (b) fares;
- (c) tariffs;
- (d) other consumer charges; and
- (e) fees,

of each department and agency will be effected by the Goods and Services tax?

(3) What -

- (a) charges;
- (b) fares;
- (c) tariffs;
- (d) other consumer charges; and
- (e) fees,

will increase a consequence of the Goods and Services tax?

(4) What will be the percentage and monetary amount of the increase?

(5) What -

- (a) charges;
- (b) fares;
- (c) tariffs;
- (d) other consumer charges; and
- (e) fees,

will decrease as a result of the introduction of the Goods and Services tax?

(6) In percentage and monetary terms, what will be the amount of the decrease?

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN replied:

(1)-(6) This information will be released as part of the budget process.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, NON-TEACHING STAFF

1983. Mr KOBELKE to the Minister for Education:

- (1) How many non-teaching staff positions (in FTEs) were there in the Education Department of Western Australia at the level five grading and at each level above this at 30 June 1998?
- (2) How many non-teaching staff (in FTEs) were on the payroll of the Education Department of Western Australia at the level five grading and at each level above this as at 30 June 1998?
- (3) How many non-teaching staff positions (in FTEs) were there in the Education Department of Western Australia at the level five grading and at each level above this as at 1 January 1999?
- (4) How many non-teaching staff (in FTEs) were on the payroll of the Education Department of Western Australia at the level five grading and at each level above this as at 1 January 1999?

Mr BARNETT replied:

- (1) The figures below show the number of non-teaching staff positions (in FTEs) in the Education Department of Western Australia at the level five grading and at each level above this as at 30 June 1998. Note: these figures are taken from the Education Department's Staffing Payments System that preceded the current PeopleSoft system.

Level	Number (FTE)
5	213.1
6	92.5
7	124
8	38
9	35
Class 1	1
Class 2	5
Class 3	1
Class 4	1
Director-General	1
Education Officer 1	2
Education Officer 2	68.77
Education Officer 3	21

- (2) The figures below show the number of non-teaching staff (in FTEs) on the payroll of the Education Department of Western Australia at the level five grading and at each level above this level as at 30 June 1998. Note: these figures are taken from the Education Department's Staffing Payments System that preceded the current PeopleSoft system.

Level	Number (FTE)
5	210.1
6	91.5
7	123
8	38
9	35
Class 1	1
Class 2	5*
Class 3	1
Class 4	1
Director-General	1
Education Officer 1	2
Education Officer 2	68.77
Education Officer 3	21

*Note: One person at this grading was receiving a temporary special allowance.

- (3) The figures below show the number of non-teaching staff positions (in FTEs) in the Education Department of Western Australia at the level five grading and at each level above this level as at 1 January 1999.

Level	Number (FTE)
5	207.1
6	114.5
7	120
8	34
9	36
Class 1	1
Class 2	4
Class 3	2
Class 4	1
Director-General	1
Education Officer 1	0
Education Officer 2	24.8
Education Officer 3	6

- (4) The figures below show the number of non-teaching staff (in FTEs) on the payroll of the Education Department of Western Australia at the level five grading and at each level above this level as at 1 January 1999.

Level	Number (FTE)
5	203.1
6	114.5
7	118
8	34
9	35
Class 1	1
Class 2	6*
Class 3	2
Director-General	2**
Education Officer 1	0
Education Officer 2	24.8
Education Officer 3	6

*Note: one person at this grading was receiving a temporary special allowance.

** Note: two people were paid as Director-General as the incumbent was on paid leave.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, NON-TEACHING STAFF

1984. Mr KOBELKE to the Minister for Education:

- (1) How many non-teaching staff positions (in FTEs) were there in the Education Department of Western Australia at the level five grading and at each level above this as at 30 June 1999?

- (2) How many non-teaching staff (in FTEs) were on the payroll of the Education Department of Western Australia at the level five grading and at each level above this as at 30 June 1999?
- (3) How many non-teaching staff positions (in FTEs) were there in the Education Department of Western Australia at the level five grading and at each level above this as at 1 January 2000?
- (4) How many non-teaching staff (in FTEs) were on the payroll of the Education Department of Western Australia at the level five grading and at each level above this as at 1 January 2000?

Mr BARNETT replied:

- (1) The figures below show the number of non-teaching staff positions (in FTEs) in the Education Department of Western Australia at the level five grading and at each level above this as at 30 June 1999.

Level	Number (FTE)
5	241.5
6	121.4
7	126.4
8	34
9	40
Class 1	2
Class 2	4
Class 3	3
Class 4	1
Director-General	1
Education Officer 1	1
Education Officer 2	34.15
Education Officer 3	6

- (2) The figures below show the number of non-teaching staff (in FTEs) on the payroll of the Education Department of Western Australia at the level five grading and at each level above this as at 30 June 1999.

Level	Number (FTE)
5	234.5
6	120.4
7	123.4
8	34
9	37
Class 1	1
Class 2	2*
Class 3	2
Director-General	1
Education Officer 1	1
Education Officer 2	34.15
Education Officer 3	6

* Note: one person at this grading was receiving a temporary special allowance.

- (3) The figures below show the number of non-teaching staff positions (in FTEs) in the Education Department of Western Australia at the level five grading and at each level above this as at 1 January 2000.

Level	Number (FTE)
5	227.4
6	113
7	119
8	33
9	42
Class 1	2
Class 2	4
Class 3	3
Class 4	1
Director-General	1
Education Officer 1	1
Education Officer 2	18.5
Education Officer 3	3

- (4) The figures below show the number of non-teaching staff (in FTEs) on the payroll of the Education Department of Western Australia at the level five grading and at each level above this as at 1 January 2000.

Level	Number (FTE)
5	223.4
6	113
7	118
8	33
9	39*
Class 1	0
Class 2	3**
Class 3	3
Class 4	1
Director-General	1

Education Officer 1	1
Education Officer 2	18.5
Education Officer 3	3

* Note: two people at this grading were receiving a temporary special allowance.

** Note: three people at this grading were receiving a temporary special allowance.

LITERACY PROGRAMS, COMMONWEALTH FUNDING

2087. Mr CARPENTER to the Minister for Education:

- (1) How much money is the State Government expecting to receive from the Commonwealth for literacy programs in 1999-00?
- (2) What are the forecasts of funding for the years 2000-01 to 2002-03?

Mr BARNETT replied:

- (1) The Literacy and Numeracy Grants to Schools allocation from the Commonwealth Government for the year 2000 is \$11 482 000. In addition, the Education Department, the Association of Independent Schools WA and the Catholic Education Commission will share in funding provided by the Commonwealth through the recently announced National Indigenous English Literacy, Numeracy and Attendance Strategy. Approximately \$3.3 million will be provided to WA under the Strategy in 2000.
- (2) Information on the Literacy and Numeracy Grants to Schools allocations for these years is not yet available from the Commonwealth. As the year 2001 is the beginning of a new quadrennium, new legislation is required to be tabled in Federal Parliament, which is expected to occur in late May 2000. Under the National Strategy, approximately \$2 million will be provided to WA in 2001, and \$1.54 million in 2002.

TEACHERS' HOUSING, EXPENDITURE

2088. Mr CARPENTER to the Minister for Education:

- (1) What is the total expenditure by the Education Department on teacher housing in 1998-99, and what is the expected level of expenditure in –
 - (a) 1999-00;
 - (b) 2000-01;
 - (c) 2001-02; and
 - (d) 2002-03?
- (2) What is the nature of this expenditure?

Mr BARNETT replied:

- (1) The total expenditure incurred by the Education Department on teacher housing in 1998-99 was \$17.628 million.
 - (a) 1999-00 - \$16.839 million (estimated).
 - (b) 2000-01 - \$17.330 million (estimated).
 - (c)-(d) It is not possible to accurately forecast expenditure levels beyond 2001, as commercial rent is charged by the Government Employees Housing Authority (GEHA) is reviewed annually, and the number of properties required by the Education Department can fluctuate from year to year in line with changes to the number of teachers appointed to each school and their specific housing needs.
- (2) The expenditure is the subsidised portion of the commercial rent charged to the Education Department by GEHA.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAM

2089. Mr CARPENTER to the Minister for Education:

I refer to pages 386 to 389 of the 1999-00 Budget papers which display the capital works program for the Education Department in 1999-2000. Will the Minister provide a similar breakdown of the capital works program for the –

- (a) 2000-01;
- (b) 2001-02; and
- (c) 2003-04 years?

Mr BARNETT replied:

- (a)-(c) The information requested for 2000/01, 2001/02 and 2003/04 will be provided when the budgets for those years are announced.

REGIONAL FOREST AGREEMENT, STRATEGIC BODY

2099. Dr EDWARDS to the Minister for Forest Products:

With respect to the body developing a new strategy, as promised by the Premier on 27 July 1999 in announcing the revised Regional Forest Agreement, will the Minister advise –

- (a) what is the state of progress of this body;
- (b) who has been appointed to it and by whom;
- (c) what are its terms of reference;
- (d) how will the public have input;
- (e) when will its work be completed;
- (f) will its findings be made public; and
- (g) if the body or process has not been created or commenced, why not and when will it be commenced?

Mr OMODEI replied:

It is not possible to answer this question without knowing what the Member means by "the body developing a new strategy as promised by the Premier on 27 July 1999". The Premier's media statement of 27 July 1999 made mention of a Jarrah Strategy but no mention of a "body" to develop the strategy. The statement made mention of a taskforce of Ministers to monitor the effects on employment of the accelerated changes to forest management and bring forward recommendations on developing opportunities and assistance for affected communities. On 15 December 1999, Minister Edwardes made further mention in relation to a framework for development of a jarrah strategy but no mention of a "body". The 26 July 1999 Cabinet decision approved the preparation of a jarrah strategy for the post 1994-2003 Forest Management Plan period so that the resource harvested is applied to greater value adding and that auditing is employed to ensure maximum value is derived from quality jarrah timbers.

Whilst the main element of value adding commitments required for all new jarrah sawlog contracts has been defined and agreed to by the Forest Industries Federation (WA) Inc, other elements are being complied with, such as competitive tendering and further independent review of sustained yield. The WA FISAP restructuring and industry assistance elements are being progressed and it will be up to the Minister for Forest Products, in association with the Forest Production Commission, to finally prepare a jarrah strategy for the next Forest Management Plan.

PYRTON SITE, ASBESTOS IN BUILDINGS

2126. Mr BROWN to the Minister for Disability Services:

- (1) Was asbestos used in any of the buildings on the Pyrtton site in Eden Hill?
- (2) What buildings have asbestos?
- (3) What is the state of the asbestos?
- (4) Is it Government policy that asbestos be removed from all Government buildings on the Pyrtton site?
- (5) If not, why not?

Mr OMODEI replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Carramar, Catering, Central Stores, ER Admin/Building, Gardening Section, Hospital Flat, Maintenance Workshop, Mylar, Myoora Hostel, Pindara, Staff Training Centre.
- (3) All asbestos in good condition except for the cooling tower in Myoora.
- (4) No.
- (5) The asbestos in the building is in a condition that is not currently harmful to occupants.

PYRTON SITE, ASBESTOS IN BUILDINGS

2127. Mr BROWN to the Minister representing the Minister for Justice:

- (1) Has the Ministry of Justice obtained any advice or sought any information on whether any of the buildings on the Pyrtton site in Eden have asbestos in them?
- (2) Is asbestos present in any of the buildings?
- (3) Does the Government intend to remove all asbestos from the buildings before turning them into a minimum security prison?
- (4) What is the cost of the asbestos removal?

Mr BARRON-SULLIVAN replied:

- (1)-(4) It is the Ministry of Justice's information that a thorough asbestos management plan was developed in 1990 for all the buildings on the Pyrtton site by the property owner Disability Services Commission (formerly Authority for Intellectually Handicapped Persons) and that of the three buildings in which the Ministry of Justice have expressed

an interest, asbestos was identified in some cladding and eaves lining, but that this is in good condition and professional advice at that time was that it was not considered necessary to be removed. This situation remains unchanged.

ULRICH PARK, SUMP

2134. Mr CARPENTER to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Why has the sump at Ulrich Park, at the junction of Osborne Road and Fraser Street, East Fremantle, not been satisfactorily filled in by the Education Department as agreed with the Town of East Fremantle?
- (2) When will the sump be made good so that the proposed playground can be built?
- (3) If the sump is not suitable as a playground site, what will the Minister do to ensure that the original agreement is honoured?

Mr BARNETT replied:

- (1)-(3) The sump at Ulrich Park was filled in as part of a major revamp of the park to cater for 5 year olds attending the Richmond Primary School. The design criterion for the filling of the sump did not require that it be capable of accepting playground equipment, as it was intended that the area become a general grassed play space only. The details of the design were approved by officers of the Town of East Fremantle and the work was completed in December 1998. In March 1999 the consulting engineers responsible for the design confirmed that the work had been completed in accordance with the plans and specifications, and was suitable for the intended purpose.

FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES, TENDER RFT39099 FOR INDIGENOUS FUNERALS

2142. Mr CARPENTER to the Minister for Family and Children's Services:

- (1) Will the Minister advise why Tender Number RFT39099, for the provision of indigenous funerals, took so long to award?
- (2) Will the Minister confirm that the correct tender procedure was followed in this case?

Mrs van de KLASHORST replied:

- (1) The tender process was delayed due to changes in government tendering processes. To conform to the amendments to the tender structure, the specifications were rewritten and changes were made to the content of the requirements. The evaluation period was also prolonged due to the large number of submissions received. The initial tender period lapsed as a result of the delays and it was necessary for the Department to obtain additional information from each tenderer.
- (2) The tender process was administered by Contract and Management Services who, in consultation with Family and Children's Services, ensured the State Tender Committee requirements were met.

FORESTS AND FORESTRY, ROYALTIES

2205. Ms ANWYL to the Minister for Forest Products:

- (1) I refer to royalties payable by timber companies to the Government and ask how much revenue has been collected as royalties from the harvesting of timber for the following years-
 - (a) 30 June 1993;
 - (b) 30 June 1994;
 - (c) 30 June 1995;
 - (d) 30 June 1996;
 - (e) 30 June 1997;
 - (f) 30 June 1998;
 - (g) 30 June 1999; and
 - (h) 30 June 2000?
- (2) Will the Minister advise if there are any exemptions available to those industries operating and paying the above royalty and provide details?

Mr OMODEI replied:

- (1)

		(\$000's)
(a)	30 June 1993;	\$25,716
(b)	30 June 1994;	\$25,257
(c)	30 June 1995;	\$30,971
(d)	30 June 1996;	\$35,662
(e)	30 June 1997;	\$36,264
(f)	30 June 1998;	\$32,399
(g)	30 June 1999; and	\$33,861
(h)	30 June 2000?	not available
- (2) None.

FORESTS AND FORESTRY, SUPPORT TO TOWNS, WORKERS AND INDUSTRIES

2209. Ms ANWYL to the Family and Children's Services:

- (1) What amount of finance or other support whether financial or in kind has been supplied to date by your Department to the towns, workers and industries affected by change in Government policy regarding timber harvesting?
- (2) Will the minister provide further detail for the financial years ending 30 June 2000 and 30 June 2001?
- (3) What Government subsidies are available for timber mills and other industries affected by the policy change?

Mrs van de KLASHORST replied:

- (1) Family & Children's Services (FCS) in August 1999 established a funded project to respond to the community needs of people affected by the implications of the timber industry restructure in the Warren-Blackwood region. This project, in tandem with normal departmental services, undertook the following activities:
 Appointment of full-time Project Officer.
 Consultation meetings with all health and welfare providers across the region.
 Establishment of outreach services at Bridgetown, Greenbushes and Pemberton.
 Increased funding provided to South West Counselling (\$10,000).
 Information and promotion of services (inter-agency) at Manjimup Horticultural Expo 18 November 1999.
 Launch of Resource packs and Warren Blackwood Resource Directory for all service providers (including medical practitioners) 24 November 1999.
 Coordination of voluntary agencies in preparation for Christmas hampers.
 Focus on needs assessment re counselling services/depression/youth accommodation and housing.
 Representation on Human Services (consultative) Sub Committee, working to coordinate response and address issues across all agencies.
 Links in Pemberton via Child Health (parenting and support).
 Establishing a range of parenting supports and education across the region.
 Developing a Parenting Information and Resource Centre for Manjimup, which began operating in March 2000.
 Continued leadership, information and support for service providers.
 Increased presence of Anglicare Financial Counselling.
 Increased services by South West Counselling.
 Liaison with Redundancy Coordinators on referrals.
- (2) Resources up until June 30, 2000:
 Cost of FCS Project \$55,000.
 Additional funding to South West Counselling \$10,000
 Resources up until June 30, 2001:
 Normal services from FCS and other funded agencies.
- (3) Family and Children's Services does not provide subsidies to timber mills or other industries.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

INTEREST RATES AND GOVERNMENT FEES AND CHARGES INCREASES

746. Dr GALLOP to the Premier:

I refer to the Premier's attempt to deflect attention from last week's announcement of increases in state government fees and charges by claiming that the average Western Australian family would be \$1 740 per annum better off after proposed income tax cuts from 1 July.

- (1) Is the Premier aware that today's interest rate rise of one-quarter of a percentage point, together with the previous three rises in the past six months, will cost the average Western Australian family with an average-size home loan an additional \$1 300 a year?
- (2) Is the Premier also aware that these interest rate hikes and the charges announced by his Government last week alone have eaten up 85 per cent of the proposed tax cuts for the average family with an average home loan, and that is before they must pay a goods and services tax on almost every good and service they consume?
- (3) Will the Premier now admit that ordinary Western Australian families will be worse off under the GST, signed up and agreed upon by him and his Government?

Mr COURT replied:

(1)-(3) What ridiculous questions! The Labor Party supports the GST.

Dr Gallop: Don't try that!

Mr COURT: The Labor Party has said that it will not change the GST.

Mr Kobelke: Because it is stuck with a monster of a thing.

Mr COURT: In the 1980s the Labor Party promoted the GST. It came to Western Australia, and the Western Australian branch of the Labor Party supported the GST.

Mr McGinty: You are living in fairyland.

Mr COURT: No, I am living in factual land. Mr Keating promoted that proposal. The coalition is proud of its record on government taxes and charges. For example, we have had one increase in electricity and gas prices in eight years; in other words, there has been a significant real decline in electricity and gas tariffs. The member for Eyre said that we still have higher prices. That did not stop the Opposition from increasing gas and electricity prices on a regular basis when it was in government. In one year the Labor Party increased electricity prices by 7 per cent. In two other years, it increased prices by 7.9 per cent and 12 per cent. I suggest that opposition members look at their record in government. They judge Governments on their performance. There has been one small increase in eight years, and if we look at the Labor Party's record of significant increases -

Mr Kobelke: We had a family pledge and we stuck to it.

Mr COURT: The Opposition's family pledge was to get \$1.5b of family funds and blow it. Members opposite say that they lowered prices. Do they want me to read the list of the Opposition's gas price increases?

Mr Kobelke: We kept the price down compared with you.

Mr COURT: I will read the increases; it is about time members opposite understood them. In 1986-87, gas prices increased by 12 per cent; in 1987-88, by 5 per cent; in 1989-90, by 7 per cent; in 1990-91, by 6 per cent; and in 1991-92, by 3.5 per cent. In 1986-87, electricity prices increased by 12 per cent; in 1987-88, by 6 per cent; in 1989-90, by 7 per cent; and in 1990-91, by 7.9 per cent.

Mrs Roberts: This is a history lesson.

Mr COURT: It is a history lesson. They were not small increases. The Opposition was prepared to slug the families in charges. It cannot accept that we have made Western Australia the second lowest taxing State in Australia.

Mr Brown: Look at what you have done with water.

Mr COURT: Water and sewerage increased by 2 per cent this year, which is less than the consumer price index. This Government has made sure that the family has been given priority.

Mr Kobelke: The only priority for families is your tax slug.

Mr COURT: The Opposition did two things: It consistently increased charges and it blew \$1.5b of family money on blue sky. Interest rates go up and down. We have been fortunate that we have had a climate of low inflation and relatively low stability in interest rates. It concerns me that interest rates have been moving upwards in the past year. The Reserve Bank is expressing concerns about inflation pressures. It is something which this country will have to watch. The GST has a one-off effect on the inflation component. When members opposite were in government, they ripped off the families, and we have taken a responsible position.

PROSTITUTION LEGISLATION, SUNSET CLAUSE

747. Mr OSBORNE to the Minister for Police:

What effect will the Opposition's sunset clause have on prostitution law in Western Australia compared with the Government's commitment to a two-year review clause?

Mr PRINCE replied:

I thank the member for the question. It is worth looking briefly at the way in which the Opposition has dealt with this issue. In 1985 the member for Maylands, who was not then the member for Maylands, did a review of the containment policy, made a report and recommendations and the Opposition did nothing. In 1990, the Opposition's then Minister for Police, Hon Graham Edwards, formed a panel and Beryl Grant chaired it. She brought down a report which contained some excellent recommendations and the Opposition did nothing. In the history of this Government we have taken the issue on board and we have drafted legislation. Last year we brought into this House legislation which would effectively deal with streetwalking prostitutes, kerb crawlers, children involved in prostitution and a couple of other issues. It was rigorously debated in this House by members on the Leader of the Opposition's side and was passed without division. It went to the other place where, as the Leader of the Opposition keeps saying, the Opposition controls the numbers. Hon Nick Griffiths stood up and said, as near as I can recall, that it was the greatest affront to human rights he had ever seen and proceeded to gut the Bill. It was sent back with virtually no police powers and a lot of other changes. We put it back together again. We accepted some of the amendments and redebated it just before Christmas. As far as I can recall we divided on the health provision issues.

Since then there has been some debate backwards and forwards. Most recently the member for Midland has made a number of suggestions after debate in caucus as set out in the caucus decision 11-7. Last week I wrote to the member for Midland and said that against my better judgment I agreed reluctantly to the health provision clauses being removed, and I attached a list of the clauses. I agreed to section 59(2) being deleted. I made a suggestion about clause 57. With regard to a review and sunset clause, I drafted a review clause and sent it to the member for Midland. Members opposite clearly do not

understand what is a sunset clause. It means that at a predetermined time, law that is law ceases to be law. This legislation with a sunset clause would make criminal an act of prostitution in the presence of a child and two years to the day later it would no longer be a crime. There would then be a review, and we would then bring in law that would make it criminal again. It is an absurd, absolute, complete and utter farce to deal with criminal law in that way. In the meantime we have Labor's anointed in the Town of Vincent putting barricades across the streets. We must have law that deals with streetwalking, kerb crawling and kids in prostitution. Why is the Opposition doing this? I had my suspicions until the member for Midland stood before the cameras and appeared on *ABC News* last night. She said -

This is only stop-gap legislation, this isn't comprehensive prostitution legislation. If we let the Government get away with this, they'll put their head back in the sand and they'll pretend that they've dealt with the issue of prostitution.

What that implies, because it will not be reviewed for two years until the sunset clause brings it to an end, is that the Opposition does not want to let this Government off the hook in two years' time with a review of prostitution.

Dr Gallop: There will be another Government.

Mr PRINCE: I am sorry; the present Leader of the Opposition's member for Midland conceded on ABC television last night that we will be in power after the next election and that we are the ones who will have to deal with this. The sunset clause is fundamentally wrong; it is bad law particularly in the criminal law area. The Opposition is trying to make a Government, which it says will not be re-elected, do something in two years' time. It is effectively conceding defeat in the election. The Leader of the Opposition will not be sitting there; the member for Fremantle will.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT CASH-BALANCE FIGURE

748. Dr GALLOP to the Treasurer:

I refer to the claim by the minister assisting the Treasurer in this place yesterday that the general government cash-balance figure, which is forecast to be \$621m in deficit, is "a better way of showing the budget figures".

- (1) Does the Treasurer agree with the assistant Treasurer that this is the better way of measuring the budget bottom line?
- (2) Will he give a commitment to present this figure when he brings down the budget next week?

Mr COURT replied:

- (1)-(2) The ignorance of the Leader of the Opposition never ceases to amaze me.

Mr McGowan: The minister said it.

Mr COURT: He did not say it. He said that in the document the Opposition put out it wanted the State's accounts presented with the Australian Bureau of Statistics accrual presentations, which is what the Opposition is supporting. That is what he said, and that is what the Opposition will get. It will not have any choice because all of the States will be presenting them. Several members interjected.

Mr COURT: The Leader of the Opposition should listen to this because he will make a fool of himself. About a year ago, the Leader of the Opposition started saying that the ABS cash positions are the budget positions and that is how the budget is measured. He said that this State had a deficit of \$600m-plus. No Government has ever used the ABS cash figures for a budget to show whether it is in surplus or deficit.

Dr Gallop: That is one of your targets.

Mr COURT: I will explain.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members, we are 14 minutes into question time. I have allowed a lot of interjecting. We have had too much of it.

Mr COURT: I repeat: No Government has ever used cash figures as a measure of whether its budget is in surplus or deficit. If members look at the cash figures for the total public sector, they will find that since 1961 in only four years has there been a surplus. Those four years happened to be during our term of government. In one year when we had a cash surplus - from memory of about \$1.7b - we announced that we had a balanced budget. We did not say that our budget was \$1.7b in surplus. Neither our Government nor any other Government has ever used those cash figures. If the Leader of the Opposition wants to say that those cash measures are how the budget is determined, it means that his Government stood in front of this Parliament for 10 years and told untruths. It told us every year that it had a balanced budget. When this Government has presented its budgets, it has outlined the measures under which they are presented. They have always been in surplus. This year, as the minister assisting the Treasurer said yesterday, we will be presenting the budget with the ABS accrual statistics for the general and total government sector.

Dr Gallop: Will the cash figures be available?

Mr COURT: Yes, all the figures will be available. If the Opposition wants to use it as a measure, it must retrospectively

say that this Government has had an outstanding performance because one year it had nearly a \$2b surplus. The ignorance of the Leader of the Opposition in using those cash figures frightens me because we have seen the Leader of the Opposition when assistant Treasurer.

Dr Gallop: You read *The Australian Financial Review* and you might learn something.

Mr COURT: I will read *The Australian Financial Review*. It shows that a Labor Government in Victoria is very quickly starting to squander some very attractive surpluses left in its coffers.

Mrs Roberts interjected.

The SPEAKER: The member for Midland will come to order!

Mr COURT: The ABS accrual measures under which the States are reporting are as close as one can get to how a corporation would be reporting profit or loss figures.

Dr Gallop: Will you give the cash figures?

Mr COURT: I have said we do that. We provide all of the figures. If the Opposition wishes to use cash figures as a determination of whether the Government's budget is in surplus or deficit, that has never been done.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT CASH-BALANCE FIGURE

749. Dr GALLOP to the Treasurer:

Is it not the case that one of the Treasurer's Government's targets for the budget is a cash surplus on the general government account?

Mr COURT replied:

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition will find out next week all of our achievements. In the past 40 years Governments have had a cash surplus only four times. They were during our term of government. The figure is meaningless.

Dr Gallop: It is one of your targets.

Mr COURT: As to the surplus in those years, if there is a major asset sale, as we had, and we used those proceeds to retire debt -

Mr Brown: You sold the house, sold the silver and paid off the mortgage.

Mr COURT: Interestingly we sold the silver and paid off the debts - your debts, my friend!

COLLIE COAL BASIN, GROUND WATER DEGRADATION

750. Dr TURNBULL to the Minister for Energy:

For the past 12 years there has been a severe environmental and ground water degradation problem in the Collie coal basin resulting from the extraction of water for the Muja power station. I thank the minister for his commitment to solving this problem by standing by the recommendations of the Collie water advisory group.

The SPEAKER: Order! Could the member for Collie ask a question and not make a statement.

Dr TURNBULL: I have two questions.

- (1) Could the minister provide details of the recent decision by Western Power on the future management of the water supply for power generation for the Collie and Muja power stations?
- (2) Could the minister also make specific reference to the timetable for the installation of the Shotts exchange point of Muja power station pipeline, the Wellington Dam to Shotts exchange pipeline, and the use of Harris Dam water prior to the Wellington Dam water coming on line?

Mr BARNETT replied:

It is true that the use of significant amounts of water in the power generation industry and also the changes brought about by the cessation of underground coalmining have created difficult technical and scientific issues for managing water within the Collie basin. I thank the member for Collie for her interest and participation in this issue and for some prior notice of the question, because it is specific.

- (1) Western Power is proceeding with a surface water strategy as recommended in the Collie water management report.
- (2) Progress is as follows: The Shotts to Muja pipeline has been commissioned. The design parameters for the Shotts to Wellington Dam pipeline and pumping facilities have been agreed to by a joint Western Power-Water Corporation team and the final design is in progress. The use of Harris Dam water commenced in December last year.

PROSTITUTION LEGISLATION, SUNSET CLAUSE

751. Mrs ROBERTS to the Premier:

I refer to the Premier's prostitution backflip in first accepting Labor's condition of a two-year sunset clause for the Prostitution Bill and then dropping that commitment for a ministerial review. Was the Minister for Police correct when he told the media yesterday that the Premier did not know what he was doing when he agreed to the sunset clause because he was not a lawyer? If not, why has the Premier reneged on the sunset clause?

Mr COURT replied:

I will explain this, as I explained it to the media yesterday. The Labor Party is playing semantics.

Ms MacTiernan: It is not semantics.

Mr COURT: It is. I will repeat what has happened. The Prostitution Bill was debated in this Parliament. Prior to debating the legislation the Leader of the Opposition said in August -

We've said to the Government, look, we'll support it, so bring the legislation in, it's not as if they're going to have a problem with the Labor Party.

Dr Gallop: We do support it.

Mr COURT: The Opposition did support it. The legislation was passed in this Chamber. It went to the other House and was gutted by opposition members there. At a caucus meeting the vote was 11-7 not to accept those police powers. The Opposition then said it wanted the police powers taken out of the Bill, and a review. I admit that the Opposition's press statement said it wanted a sunset clause to guarantee a review of the legislation. I said that we did not have a problem with a review of that legislation. The Minister for Police correctly pointed out that we can build a review into a piece of criminal legislation, as the government has agreed to do; however, it is totally unacceptable to cut off the legislation at a certain date. That is not the issue. That is a red herring from the Opposition, because the Labor Party does not support this legislation. The Government has given a guarantee to the Opposition that it will review that legislation. The Opposition should support the legislation in the other House and get on with what it said it would do prior to Christmas.

TOURISM, FIVE-YEAR INDUSTRY PLAN

752. Mr BRADSHAW to the Premier:

The new five-year plan for Western Australia's tourism industry has been launched today. Does the strategy have the support of the State Government?

Mr COURT replied:

Today was a significant day for the tourism industry because it launched its five-year plan, Partnership 21. That strategy was developed by the industry, and has its full support. The industry got behind the Government's Brand WA marketing campaign five years ago. That campaign was an outstanding success. It allowed this State to market the features we identified - the free, fresh, natural-spirited image of this State.

Dr Gallop: Logging of old-growth forests.

Mr COURT: I will come to that issue.

The Brand WA campaign was the driving strength of our growth in tourism. The industry now wants to go a step further. The new strategy has three main components. One component is the application of technology in which all the tourist bureaus will go online. For the first time everyone with a tourist product will have a one-stop online shop where even the smallest operator will be able to be part of an international booking system. That is a major achievement.

Mr Ripper: What does a small operator have to pay for that?

Mr COURT: It is around \$500.

Mr Ripper: A bed and breakfast business in Collie will have to pay \$500 to be in the system!

Mr COURT: This is what the industry is proposing, not the Government.

The second component relates to promoting tourism in the regions, and the third to developing the interactive edge for nature-based tourism. This program has had tremendous support from industry. All we have had from the opposition spokesperson on tourism is knock, knock, knock. The day before the industry and Government launched this strategy, all the Opposition could do was knock. It is not prepared to come up with an alternative approach. I had a sense of déjà vu yesterday. Five years ago when the Elle campaign was launched the Opposition had nothing but criticism. It said the Elle campaign was outrageous, and a waste of money. It has been an outstanding success. In the past five years, the Opposition has criticised the convention-exhibition centre, the redevelopment of Barrack Square and the belltower. The Opposition has knocked all of those initiatives. The opposition spokesperson mentioned this State's environmental record. The Leader of the Opposition mentioned old-growth forests. I remind the Leader of the Opposition that this Government has stopped logging in the old-growth karri and tingle forests.

Dr Gallop: You are doing it down south as we speak.

Mr COURT: This is interesting. The Government has said that when the contracts expire in 2003, logging will be stopped. However, the Government has already acted, and has significantly cut the amount of timber that can be cut. The Opposition has been dishonest, because under its forest proposals, industry can cut old-growth forest to its contracted levels to 2003. Under the Opposition's policy, for the next three years, it would gut a whole lot of old-growth forest that the Government has protected. Under the Labor Party's proposals, old-growth forests that the Government has protected will be cut. In summary, all the Opposition has done with the launch of this Partnership 21 is to be critical. The industry has done a terrific job in preparing this strategy, and I have no doubt that it will be as successful as its first five-year strategy.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT, EXPENDITURE ON LEGAL ADVICE

753. Ms McHALE to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Will the minister explain why the Health Department paid more than \$1m to one legal firm for advice on the health privatisation process?
- (2) What were the health outcomes of that expenditure?
- (3) Does the minister concede that this is a shameful waste of public money, when public hospitals are banned from purchasing equipment worth more than \$1 000?

Mr DAY replied:

- (1)-(3) I assume the member for Thornlie is referring to the process the Government went through to test the market for the best way in which to provide for the new hospital now being constructed in the Armadale area. This new facility will very much benefit the constituents of the member for Thornlie, among many others.

Mr Court: Tell us about the hospitals you built; it should not take long.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

Dr Gallop: Have you forgotten about the north wing of the Royal Perth Hospital, Premier? Very convenient.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will come to order! We have had one of those days when many members have wanted to interject, and the Leader of the Opposition interjects after I call for order. Question time has just finished.
