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electoral cycle. It also falls upon the media to scrutinise us properly and not to give us credit for running a surplus when we have really borrowed another few billion dollars. Some people have argued that the state should take on debt during the good economic times in order to take advantage of the opportunities; at the same time, others argue that we need to overspend in the bad times, as the federal government did during the GFC. In other words, we have state and federal governments racking up debts for precisely opposite reasons. In the minds of some, there is never an appropriate time to break even or run surpluses. Unfortunately, that is the thinking that has led to European countries finding themselves with 25 per cent-plus unemployment, and in some cases over 50 per cent youth unemployment, with no money left in the kitty to deal with that tragedy.

On that note, I would also like to touch on the principles we need to consider for a viable state-based future fund. They are extremely useful, but can work or be worthwhile only if there are no huge debts to service. Peter Costello said recently that future funds can be effective only if there are large budget surpluses and we are virtually debt free. If we have a large enough amount in a future fund, we can easily live off the return without touching the capital. The Western Australian Future Fund lacks any real substance. This cannot change until we start producing operating surpluses; but, firstly, we need to get out of debt. With such a large debt hanging over our heads in this state, and one which is forecast to increase, perhaps it is time to rethink our commitment to the fund. I appreciate the fact that my position on state debt will cause some angst among some of my Liberal parliamentary colleagues, but I also happen to know that many of them agree with me.

Mr Speaker, I also accept that I caused some controversy running for the esteemed office that you now hold. I only say in my defence that I ran for another parliamentary term on the understanding that I would be supported in filling that role. As the wheels of politics turned, this was not to be the case, and I certainly accept that. I will not, however, accept the current and growing debt position; it troubles my conscience as well as my fundamental belief in good housekeeping. This is a matter of speaking now or forever holding one's peace.

As the re-elected member for Hillarys, I faithfully promise the people of my electorate that I will continue to think of their futures as well as those of their families. I have been very privileged to have represented the people in the electorate of Hillarys for the Liberal Party over the last 20 years. I, like many others, came into Parliament to try to make a difference. The area that concerned me most was law and order, but it was not until becoming the police minister that I could really make a difference in that area. I am very proud that under my watch the state's crime level fell by around 10 per cent. I believe this was in part because of legislation that I was able to introduce so that police and the courts were able to deal more effectively with criminals and with those individuals who carry out antisocial activities. It gave me enormous satisfaction to make it a mandatory sentence for anyone who creates bodily harm or grievous bodily harm against our fantastic police officers.

I am also proud of legislation concerning the public sex offender register, as well as legislation concerning the misuse of drugs, which dealt with the manufacture, sale and supply of drugs to or around children. I also took great delight in personally performing the first crushing of a hoon's car. Over the last few years, hoons have not only made life unbearable for many people, but also created great danger on our roads. Another achievement that I am very proud of is introducing into Parliament legislation that ensures all revenue from speed and red-light camera infringements goes into the road trauma trust account for funding road safety initiatives. It was very pleasing to see a decrease in the number of both road deaths and serious injuries during this time. The protection of innocent people, whether they be our children, our motorists or our law enforcement personnel, has always been a priority for me; but the main point is that protecting our citizens is the government's first duty, and it is an area in which this state government has been extremely effective, without the need for large and questionable spending commitments.

How necessary are some of the major commitments we are making in areas of far less importance than law and order? Do we get an effective outcome for every problem simply by throwing money at it? Instead of mortgaging the future of Western Australians, could we not get back to core Liberal values by supporting free enterprise to do more of the things that government is trying to do? Could we not support the family unit to do more of the things in which the government may now have taken too big a role?

I do not know what the next four years have in store for me, but I give this commitment to the people of Hillarys and, indeed, to the wider community of Western Australia: I will continue to work very hard to do all I can to enhance their lives and to maintain an honest dialogue with them. Finally, I pray that we will always have the courage to tell the truth.

**MR B.S. WYATT (Victoria Park)** [12.50 pm]: I also rise to speak to the Governor's address, following on from an outstanding speech by the member for Hillarys. He offered some timely words about state debt—words that have been said at some length by members on this side of the house, so it is now good to know that the lone Liberal has raised his voice on that side of the chamber to express his concern about the running of the state's finances over the last four and a half years. He quite rightly gave credit to the former Labor government for

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reducing debt and managing to get things done without increasing debt to unsustainable levels that, the member for Hillarys has just pointed out, offend his Liberal principles. I hope that other Liberals sitting in this place will pay attention to the member for Hillarys because ultimately, as the member for Hillarys said, it is our children and our grandchildren who are going to pay for the debt that the government is taking on right now. As the member for Hillarys said, governments that take on debt very rarely pay it off. I found the member for Hillarys' speech very accurate and very incisive. I dare say that all members, particularly new members in this chamber, should read the member's speech when Hansard is finished with it.

I rise to give my short Address-in-Reply contribution to the Governor's address and, Mr Speaker, I also congratulate you, as other members already have, on your election as Speaker of the house—bearing in mind that a significant number of Labor Party members voted for the member for Hillarys, because we think the member for Hillarys is a wonderful member of Parliament! Clearly, Mr Speaker, when you think about it, because it was a reasonably close vote, it was really the opposition that ensured your rise to the Speaker's chair in the end! I hope that when you are making decisions about the behaviour of various members of Parliament, that fact will be foremost in your mind, especially when you are making calls during question time!

I also acknowledge all the new members who have been elected to this Parliament, and I wish them all the best in their parliamentary careers. I hope that they find it an enjoyable and satisfying job, however long they happen to be in it.

I also want to reflect on the idea that the Premier has been putting around about this “new” government, as though the member for Cottesloe has suddenly, like a fairy, appeared on the scene—pop! We have not seen him before, he is new to us! This is a new government with new agendas—that is, a new government that can walk away from some of the more embarrassing things from its previous term. I think that is why the Premier has gone to some lengths to talk about the “new” government, rather than a continuation of the Barnett government. I am confident that members of the Western Australian electorate will not really take much notice of that attempt.

It took up some time during question time yesterday, so I will reflect quickly on the government's performance thus far, particularly in respect of the dismissal, the sacking, of the former Commissioner of Corrective Services. To be frank, that was an embarrassing, cowardly performance by this government. It is clear that no-one really knows how the Public Sector Commissioner got it into his head that he had to sack the Commissioner of Corrective Services. No-one is 100 per cent sure how Mr Wauchope suddenly decided that he needed to get rid of the commissioner. The minister certainly had nothing to do with it. The minister did not even have the good grace, or do the professional thing, to meet with the commissioner, despite being in the job for some four weeks before the decision was made. No-one really knows how Mr Wauchope, sitting in his office, decided it was time to sack the commissioner. Mr Wauchope has obviously gone rogue. I dare say that it will only be a matter of time before other directors general are silently but efficiently shot during the next few months by a Public Sector Commissioner gone rogue.

**Mrs M.H. Roberts:** The ministers will find out about it afterwards.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** The ministers will find out about it well afterwards. The ministers have no involvement with the directors general of their departments, whether they maintain their role or whether they are moved on by a Public Sector Commissioner gone rogue.

It has been an interesting not quite two months since the election of the new Barnett government. During that time ministers seem to have simply disappeared. Ordinarily, we would have thought that we would see ministers out and about explaining decisions and trying to persuade the electorate of particular public policy decisions that have been announced. What we have seen in those short two months is a “no comment” government. I thought I would have a look at how many times in fewer than two months we have had ministers respond to important issues of the day by simply declining to comment. First, I will start with the Minister for Corrective Services because, quite simply, he has been the greatest offender. He has been the greatest offender because, ultimately, he was too busy avoiding meeting the commissioner while somebody else apparently told the Public Sector Commissioner it was time for the commissioner to go. On 28 March, we have the corrective services minister's first offence regarding juveniles in Hakea Prison, on which the minister declined to comment. On 2 April, the minister declined to comment as part of an article headed “Bid to quash Hakea transfer”. On 4 April there was an article published headed “Kids in jail ‘paraded like zoo animals’”. The corrective services minister declined to comment. On 9 April, with respect to a Supreme Court review that had taken place, the minister declined to comment or have anything to do with that. “Sydney lawyer wants action for juveniles” was the heading of an article published on 10 April. Again, the corrective services minister declined to comment. An article headed “Jail work drags chain” was published on 28 April. The corrective services minister declined to comment. An

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article published in *The West Australian* on 30 April, headed “Minister and sacked jails chief never met” stated —

After refusing to be interviewed about Mr Johnson’s removal on Friday, Mr Francis was forced to answer questions on his way into a Cabinet meeting yesterday.

Finally, after declining to comment for weeks on end about significant issues, the minister was captured by the journalist on his way to a cabinet meeting. No doubt that is probably where he found out that his commissioner had been sacked. Still, we are yet to find out reasons why that commissioner no longer has his position as a member of the public service. It is not good enough. If a minister is going to dismiss a senior member of our public service, he needs to have reasons and he needs to have the confidence and at least the courage to address him, meet with him and explain to the people of Western Australia why that decision was taken.

I want to make some comments about Browse. A lot has already been said about Browse so I will just make a few comments about it. That was a fine example of the heavy-handed interference by the Premier simply driving a project away. Ultimately, a process was in place that was going to deliver an outcome in a location that everybody would have ultimately been satisfied with, including those various environmental groups that, in the end ultimately, and I think a bit mischievously, decided it was time there be no development in the Kimberley.

I want to make some brief comments about Christine Milne, the leader of the federal Australian Greens party. She put out a media statement rejoicing the fact that an on-site liquefied natural gas plant was no longer going to be built at James Price Point. The problem that the senator has is that she does not pose any solutions. What is next for the Aboriginal people in the Kimberley? The article that was written by Peter Yu outlined that exact issue. What is next? This is the problem we have when Aboriginal economic development is linked to a particular industrial outcome. When that industrial outcome falls over for whatever reason, Aboriginal people are literally left holding the baby and working out what happens next, and a community is incredibly divided because the process that was in place was simply ignored and trampled over by the Premier of the day. So the Kimberley people sit there now, wondering what is going to happen in light of the fact that so much of government decision and investment in the Kimberley was built around a successful decision for an onshore gas plant at James Price Point.

I will read a quote, hopefully to bring to Senator Milne’s mind where Aboriginal people sit today compared with perhaps the times when she would like them to sit. I will quote from Marcia Langton, who gave last year’s Boyer Lectures, an excellent series of lectures. She made this point in her very first lecture —

But on the left, and among those opinion leaders who hang on to the idea of the ‘new noble savage’, Aboriginal poverty is invisible, masked by their ‘wilderness’ ideology. They describe the Aboriginal situation through a romantic lens. Their unspoken expectation is that no Aboriginal group should become engaged in any economic development.

Later on in that same speech she says —

By the late 1980s, Indigenous policy and much public commentary in Australia was based on a paradigm which cast Aboriginal people as victims of a brutal colonial legacy, as residents of remote regions where they strove to maintain the vestiges of a traditional way of life, an endeavour in which they needed the support of government through income assistance schemes and other policies that would help them to stay on their traditional lands. Over the following two decades this paradigm came under increasing attack, ...

The question I will put to Senator Milne, whom I have never met, but in the event that I do, is: what is her paradigm? What happens now with Aboriginal economic development? Clearly, the senator does not want to see any mining or energy-related development associated with Aboriginal lands but, interestingly, she offers no alternative. I do not accept for a minute that bland references to ecotourism will be anywhere near sufficient to deal with the economic development challenges that Western Australian Aboriginal people face, particularly in some of those remote locations.

I have a few things to say in my 30 minutes today. Just before I came to Parliament this morning, I went to a very significant signing of a memorandum of agreement, which I found out about only yesterday—it was embargoed, so I was very pleased that I could get there—between Curtin University and Colgate University in the United States regarding the Carrolup art. Many people may know the history of the Carrolup art. I want to read from a document prepared by Curtin University. It states —

Carrolup Native School and Settlement, now known as Marribank, is situated 30 kilometres out of Katanning Western Australia. In 1915 the Settlement was established by the Australian Government to provide education and training for Aboriginal children in accordance with the aims of the assimilation

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policies under the Aborigines Act of 1905. The Settlement closed in 1922 and its residents were transferred to the Moore River Settlement. In 1940, the Settlement was reopened as a farm training school.

During that time, many of those children did art that became incredibly famous simply for the fact that it left Western Australia and was found at Colgate University in storage. There has been a 10-year development of the relationship with the Noongar people, in particular Angus Wallam, the Aboriginal elder who was at the ceremony today, and Ezzard Flowers. Today Colgate University signed a memorandum of agreement to return the Carrolup art to Western Australia and the Noongar community. It will be stored by Curtin University and then toured throughout regional Western Australia and shown at John Curtin Gallery. Some 119 pieces of Carrolup art will be returned to Western Australia. Anyone who knows a little about art or Aboriginal affairs will know that that was indeed a very significant signing this morning. I would like to congratulate those representatives of Colgate University who came out to sign that agreement this morning and who clearly have developed a very strong relationship, as was shown by Angus Wallam in his speech this morning.

I would now like to move to my electorate. It is not often I get the chance to talk specifically about issues in my electorate. I thank the electorate again for re-electing me at the general election some two months ago. I also thank my staff. We all are here thanks to our outstanding staff and volunteers. I acknowledge Alison Cook, my electorate officer, who is currently on maternity leave. On 6 December last year, Jake Cook was born, and he is no doubt proving himself to be a worthy brother to his sister, Willow.

Much was made yesterday about crime. What I would like to speak about in respect of my electorate of Victoria Park is education. Victoria Park is an inner-city electorate that is undergoing a dramatic increase in population density. When I lived in Lathlain 20 years ago, I lived on a quarter-acre block. The vast majority of properties in Lathlain at that time were quarter-acre blocks. Those blocks have now all been subdivided, and what was once a quarter-acre block now has two or three properties on it. That has been replicated in all the suburbs in my electorate.

That means that in a very short period of time there has been a dramatic increase in the student population in my schools. For example, since 2009, at Victoria Park Primary School there has been a 50.7 per cent increase in student population, and at Lathlain Primary School there has a 34.1 per cent increase in student population. Between 2009 and 2012, at East Victoria Park Primary School there was a 25 per cent increase in student population. But in 2013, there was a decrease, because East Victoria Park Primary School was no longer the overflow school, and students were transferred out of East Victoria Park Primary School, mainly into Millen Primary School, which has now become my overflow school. That means that since 2009, Millen Primary School has had a 65.5 per cent increase in student population.

**Mr J.E. McGrath:** It is a very good school.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** It is a very good school, yes.

**Mr J.E. McGrath:** It used to be in my electorate.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** Since 2009, Kensington Primary School has had a 10 per cent increase in student population, and Bentley Primary School, the other primary school that I have in my electorate, has had a 14 per cent increase in student population. So there have been significant increases in student population in a very short time in all my primary schools.

One of the issues that I have, as other members of Parliament no doubt have—probably the member for South Perth has a similar issue, because we cover similar ground—is that the school infrastructure is now decaying. Victoria Park Primary School, which is at the end of my street, is landlocked and it can no longer expand anywhere, really. It is an old school—over 100 years old. What I think needs to happen in Victoria Park in my electorate is in respect of Millen Primary school; and I do appreciate the member for South Perth's interjection that it is a very good school. Millen Primary School is located on very old grounds. As I have just outlined, since 2009 there has been a 65 per cent increase in the student population at that school. A small amount of money has been spent at Millen Primary School on maintenance. However, it is time for a new school to be built on the Millen grounds. The reason I have picked Millen out of all my schools, when other schools would have just as worthy an argument, is because it is the overflow school, and also because the Department of Education owns a large area of land around that school that is currently a playground facility. That means that there is the capacity to build a new school at that location without affecting the education of the students at that school. A new school certainly needs to be constructed at that location. That would have a dramatic impact on the other schools in my electorate, which have seen an increase in student population, in addition to the increase in the number of overflow kids coming into Millen Primary School.

[Member's time extended.]

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**Mr B.S. WYATT:** The other point I would like to make is in respect of secondary education. Every one of the primary schools in my electorate is excellent. I have great principals. I have active P&Cs. I have engaged parents. Therefore, as a result, we have great kids coming out of these schools. A number of years ago, the Leader of the Opposition described our primary schools as the jewel in the crown of our education system. I think that is right.

**Mr M. McGowan:** You have a good memory!

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** I remember everything, Leader of the Opposition!

**Mr T.K. Waldron:** Selectively!

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** I remember everything that is helpful to me!

But one of the things that has been raised with me regularly since I was elected in 2006 is a sense of dissatisfaction with the secondary education options in my area, which also includes the member for South Perth's area—not so much the member for Belmont's area, but possibly. Certainly, my patch also incorporates the member for South Perth's patch in respect of the education zones. The sense of some parents is that they are not so sure that Kent Street Senior High School or Como Secondary College is right for their children. That has been for various reasons; they all have their reasons as to why that is. Just last week—this is not a rare occurrence—another couple moved from the electorate of Victoria Park to get into the catchment of Churchlands Senior High School. This couple has a very young baby, and they want to make sure that their child is in a catchment for a high school that they feel comfortable taking their child to. So, it is not the primary schools; there is a sense of discomfort about the choice of high schools that they have available. I want to make this point: I am in no way reflecting on the staff at either Como, member for South Perth, or Kent Street. That is not the point I am trying to make here. They are excellent staff.

I will tell members what I am about to do. I have prepared a discussion paper that I will send out over the next week to all my school parents and citizens associations and to all my school principals, and there will probably be some in the member for South Perth's electorate; I will also give him a copy of the discussion paper. I want my electorate to enter into a discussion about what they want. How do we develop in my area, which, as I said, is not just the electorate of Victoria Park? Educational zones are not bound by our electorate zones. How do we create in my area that Shenton College of the south east corridor? How do we create a Churchlands Senior High School? I note the member for South Perth nodding his head at those hypothetical questions I am floating.

There are a number of choices, and one of those choices that has been pursued by various principals of both Como and Kent Street over the years would be to effectively create one school out of Como and Kent Street. I know that is controversial. As soon as it is said that two become one, it inevitably means that one school disappears. However, the number of students going into both Kent Street and Como is no longer sufficient to attract the resources for the courses that we want to run and certainly does not fill up those schools. Looking at the My School website, Kent Street's numbers are increasing. Como has had some trouble; its numbers have been decreasing. Both schools still offer great alternatives, but there is now a concern, I think, in the broader community in my electorate—maybe the member for South Perth shares the same concern—about the choices they have available. So, I think it is time to look at that option. Maybe it is time that we merge and create one school that can take up to a couple of thousand students and attract the necessary investment that would therefore be needed to have the courses on offer, not just for those students who want to move on into university. I know that the maths course, for example, and the science course at Como are outstanding. In fact, Como could be made a gifted and talented education school now—absolutely right now. The decision should simply be made to get that done. Kent Street is very well known for its aviation school, its fashion and its cricket. They are two schools that I think would complement each other well.

The question is: if we were to do that, where would we do it? My view is that because of the land available at Kent Street and the fact that Kent Street is heritage listed, that would be the obvious location. It would also provide the density of students attending that would then perhaps one day attract the state's investment into light rail, which would go up to and run directly around Curtin University of Technology. Another option—I know that people are sensitive about one school taking over the other—that I know Curtin University is very keen on would be to create an entirely new school on Curtin University grounds. The proceeds from the sale of land would go into paying for a large component of that capital spend on a new secondary college in that inner south east area of my electorate of Victoria Park, and I have no doubt that the member for South Perth probably has similar —

**Mr J.E. McGrath:** That would be a better option for the Como area; it's more central.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** Yes. I am painfully aware that I am not an expert on education, and I want to get some feedback, input and, hopefully, some support from the education department about how we should go about

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having this community discussion. Over the next week I will send that discussion paper out to all those relevant parents and citizens associations and principals because I want their feedback on how we go forward. My constituency regards choice of secondary education as the big, missing government-provided service in our area. Victoria Park is a wonderful inner-city electorate comprising the Swan and Canning Rivers. It also has a train line. It is a wonderful area but I think it is that choice of secondary education that people find wanting. I look forward to engaging in that discussion with my constituency. I want the member for South Perth involved as well because ultimately —

**Mr J.E. McGrath:** You might end up moving to South Perth!

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** No; I assure the member for South Perth that will not be the case! We can hopefully have a constructive dialogue around this. I really want to move outside any political element to it, member for South Perth, because it is an important issue. It impacts on the electorates of South Perth and Victoria Park. I have a final point in respect of education —

**Mr J.E. McGrath:** Is the member aware that there is a plan to turn Como Secondary College into a K–12 school?

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** There was. That was the initial closedown to do that. It never seemed to happen. Como has a similar issue in respect of a regular spend on maintenance but I think it is beyond that now. It is an old school; it is beyond that. That may be an option: do we create one big K–12 school or should it be purely secondary? That is a discussion that the member and I can have here. We need further involvement from our constituents before we can progress that.

I want to make one other point in respect of schools. Like many MPs, I travel around Western Australia to visit schools. Section 125 of the School Education Act requires every government school to have a council unless it is exempted by the minister. Section 126 allows the Minister for Education to exempt the school from having a council for a number of reasons—for example, because of its size or nature. I put questions on notice to find out exactly which schools have been exempted from the requirement to have a school council. School councils generally comprise parents of the kids who are at that school, and I think they provide a very important service to those schools. Of course, in regional and remote Western Australia, a lot of Aboriginal communities really struggle to have a viable school council. In a small population, with the challenges of poverty, having a viable school council often does not exist. No doubt when the minister answers my question on notice I will find out exactly which schools are exempt and which have been exempted over the last few years. There needs to be a push from the Department of Education to get more people, including professional people, interested in education. They may be based in Perth but have the time and interest to serve on school councils outside the metropolitan area. That does not mean they will need to travel once a month to a remote location to attend a school council meeting. It may be that they only go to that location once or twice a year. That sort of input into government schools that are struggling at the moment to have a viable school council is very important for the ongoing success of some regional and remote schools. People living in small populations may not have the sort of expertise they would like to call on that, for example, some school councils in my electorate fortunately have.

My final point relates to the Governor of Western Australia, His Excellency Malcolm McCusker. This week I received a letter from the Governor. I do not know whether every member of Parliament received it—I did. It relates to some comments that he made in his speech to Parliament. Issue was taken in the media in respect of these comments made by the Governor —

Australia has one of the oldest democratic systems of government in the world, a system which was achieved without civil war or bloodshed, and which is the envy of many.

I know some letters have passed between the member for Kwinana and the Governor. Quite rightly, the Governor was upset that he was perhaps characterised in the media as somebody who was not understanding or supportive of Aboriginal people. The Governor, in a long letter to me—I assume other members received it also—set out his long-term support for Aboriginal people, not just in terms personal but of course in what have been very generous donations from the Governor and his family to various Aboriginal groups around Western Australia. I do want to make that point. I have spoken to the member for Kwinana, who shares the view that nobody doubts—I certainly do not doubt it for a minute—the Governor’s commitment to Aboriginal people in Western Australia. The one thing that has always struck me as very brave of the Governor when he was a senior lawyer, and since as the Governor, is that he has always been very, very strong in respect of his objection to the high rates of Aboriginal juveniles in detention. I do want to put that on record. I have not spoken to the Governor yet, but now that I have received his letter, hopefully I will do so in the not-too-distant future. With that, 28 minutes seems to have flown by, and I conclude by saying that, as I said, I have incredibly high regard for the Governor.