

For the first time, we have ring-fenced the budget. In fact, when I came to the portfolio I asked a very simple question about how much money we spend on mental health in Western Australia, which is a very important question. In doing good work, the acting commissioner, Mr Neil Guard, advised me we spend over \$506 million—half a billion dollars—on mental health.

Mrs M.H. Roberts interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Midland!

Dr G.G. JACOBS: The state government has allocated \$128.7 million over the next three years to reform the program to improve Indigenous mental health. Of that, \$22 million is part of closing the gap for Indigenous mental health and will be used to train Aboriginal health workers to work with those people in the Indigenous community with a mental illness. That program will in fact train the people on the ground—those in the community who have the heart to be certified to provide counselling services to people—rather than train people in the metropolitan area to be sent to Halls Creek or Fitzroy Crossing, because we have significant issues with not only attracting, but also retaining people in those areas. It is a very practical way of doing it. In fact, Charles Sturt University could provide a course for Aboriginal people that will enable them to provide this service in their communities.

Recently, I was privileged to start the work on the Broome acute psychiatric unit—a 14-bed unit. Indigenous people from many areas need and will use that facility, obviating the need to transport an acutely ill person on a Royal Flying Doctor Service plane all the way to Perth.

Our half-a-billion-dollar investment over one year overshadows the federal Labor Party's paltry \$250 million commitment across all of Australia. I attended the health and hospital reform roadshow conducted by Nicola Roxon and the previous Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd. During that roadshow, Mr Rudd displayed a pie chart showing a 33 per cent met need; the rest was unmet. Mr Rudd said that this was the tsunami in health that was coming. I have to say to members, if that is the tsunami in health that is coming, I am surprised that the federal government has not invested more than \$250 million across Australia to overcome this issue or to deal with it.

I will quote from today's press a letter to the editor written by Mr Keith Wilson. He said —

No one wanting to promote Federal Labor's health credentials would want to refer to mental health. Its three-year legacy on mental health is lamentable and it comes to this election with few specific commitments.

They are the words of a former Labor health minister of Western Australia.

In contrast, we have Tony Abbott's commitment to health: a \$1.5 billion commitment, with a particular focus on youth mental health—those aged 12 to 24. Of that money, \$440 million will provide 20 early psychosis intervention centres—EPI centres. On a normal break-up proportion, that gives Western Australia two of those centres. Of that money, \$832 million is for 800 beds for acute and subacute care. By the normal division, that would bring about 80 beds to Western Australia. A further \$225 million is for an additional 60 head-space sites, which provide a door for young people seeking help with their mental illness. None of that is dependent on any signing of an agreement by this state government.

There is a clear choice in the election. Obviously, the federal coalition will deliver the much-needed boost for this country, and Tony Abbott will deliver it.

EMERGENCY SERVICES LEVY — RESOURCES

423. Ms M.M. QUIRK to the Minister for Emergency Services:

The minister has justified the 30 per cent increase in the emergency services levy over the past two years by contending that it is critically important to properly fund and resource our emergency services.

- (1) How can the minister explain that fewer shifts are being manned at fire stations, meaning that vital emergency equipment and appliances are offline for significant periods?
- (2) Does the minister consider it satisfactory that, despite netting an additional \$38 million from the ESL, critical infrastructure such as the Fremantle port has been left exposed for periods or industrial areas like Osborne Park are left vulnerable because equipment is not online?
- (3) Does the minister consider it satisfactory that career firefighters are staying back to staff these appliances despite not being paid?

Mr R.F. JOHNSON replied:

(1)–(3) I thank the member for the question. I have been waiting for this sort of question from the member for Girrawheen for the past week or so because it is quite apparent to me that the member has become a

very compliant mouthpiece for the fire union and this question has almost certainly come from that union.

Recently, we have seen —

Ms M.M. Quirk: Are you denying that appliances have been taken offline?

The SPEAKER: Thank you, members!

Mr P.B. Watson interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Albany!

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: Nobody cares more than I do about fire officers and the way they do their job, the protection of the community and the valuable work they do.

Ms M.M. Quirk: You clearly aren't listening to them, because that's what they are telling me.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: If the member wants an answer to the question, I suggest she sits quietly and I will give her the answer.

Occasionally, appliances have to be decommissioned. That does not mean that they are taken out of the system completely; it means that they are decommissioned for perhaps 24 hours.

Ms M.M. Quirk: They are not available for shifts.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: That is normally because there are not enough fresh firefighters able to take on that shift. Some firefighters have been doing not only one, but two and in some cases three shifts. They are long shifts. Quite frankly, that is not a good operational tool to have within the Fire and Emergency Services Authority because of concerns about fatigue. The union wants to ensure that its members get as much overtime as possible.

Ms M.M. Quirk: They are concerned about the safety of Western Australians.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: I have no concerns about their safety. The scaremongering that has been going on by the union and the compliant mouthpiece that it now has in the member for Girrawheen —

Point of Order

Mr M. McGOWAN: I refer to standing order 92, which states that imputations of improper motive are disorderly other than by substantive motion. I ask that the minister withdraw what he said on two occasions and answer the question in a straightforward and simple manner.

The SPEAKER: I direct the Minister for Emergency Services to answer the question.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: When appliances are decommissioned—the member for Girrawheen knows this; if she does not, she should know—other fire appliances within that station are ready to respond. The Fire and Emergency Services Authority executive does a risk assessment, and neighbouring fire stations —

Mrs M.H. Roberts: You don't know what you're talking about; you're an embarrassment.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Midland! We do not need to hear you interject every time a minister answers a question. I formally call you to order for the second time.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: As I was saying, FESA's executive looks at the situation and does a risk assessment. It tries to ensure that its firefighters do not suffer from fatigue, which is why it orders some fire officers to leave the fire station. The union has told those fire officers to stay even though they have completed their shifts.

Ms M.M. Quirk: Because it's concerned about public safety.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: I assure the member that public safety is of paramount importance to me. I am convinced that FESA —

Ms M.M. Quirk: That's why you take specialised equipment offline.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: Specialised equipment is always available to be used. People can be called on immediately if need be. Neighbouring fire stations will administer any assistance that is needed. There have been no incidents during the past few weeks when appliances have been decommissioned. If a fire station has three fire appliances, it might decommission one because it does not have enough fire officers to fully complement that appliance. Other stations assume responsibility if needed and can send fire officers very quickly. This government has spent more money on appliances, fire equipment, fire stations and personnel with the extra 102 extra firefighters that FESA will be employing —

Mr A.P. O'Gorman: That comes from the ESL.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: Some of it does, but a lot of money has come out of consolidated revenue. This government is committed to ensure that we have not only more firefighters but also strategic operation centres in the areas in which they are needed, which is why we are opening a new one in the south west, as the member would be aware. Both the government and FESA have nothing to be ashamed of. Given the enormous problems I have had with the secretary of the Western Australian branch of the United Firefighters Union of Australia—he has not been truthful—I refuse to have any further meetings with him.

EMERGENCY SERVICES LEVY — RESOURCES

424. Ms M.M. QUIRK to the Minister for Emergency Services:

I ask a supplementary question. How can the minister justify Western Australians receiving a diminished emergency services capability whilst being slugged more money?

Mr R.F. JOHNSON replied:

That question is an absolute nonsense. We are putting on an extra 102 firefighters and we are providing equipment that was badly needed when the member's party was in government. We know what sort of minister the member for Girrawheen was. When other Labor members were the responsible minister, they did not spend the money that was needed in that important area. They denied the funding that was needed in emergency services to ensure public safety. We are doing what we are doing in police, in emergency services and in road safety.

ANTISOCIAL AND CRIMINAL BEHAVIOUR — GOVERNMENT AGENDA

425. Mr M.W. SUTHERLAND to the Minister for Police:

Yesterday the minister advised the house about several important initiatives that the government has introduced to tackle crime and antisocial behaviour on our streets—initiatives that the opposition has not supported. Will the minister please provide the house with the details of the government's law and order agenda?

Mr R.F. JOHNSON replied:

I would be delighted to! I thank the member for his question. I am aware of his tremendous commitment in the area of law and order.

Before question time, the opposition was banging on about its lack of support for the government's law and order agenda, which includes its initiative to be tough on crime. The Labor Party is well known for its soft-on-crime approach; I know that and the public know that. The Premier used an apt term earlier when he said that the Labor Party is in denial. One member of the community who is calling for some action is Mr Rodney Cox, the father of the 23-year-old man who was allegedly stabbed to death in Northbridge over the weekend. He came forward to speak about the heartache of losing his son. He has the government's sympathy. Mr Cox knows only too well the dangers of people carrying knives and other weapons in entertainment precincts. Just three years ago, another of his sons lost sight in one eye when he was stabbed in Northbridge. Mr Cox has said that enough is enough. He wants the Labor Party and the Greens (WA) to get behind the government's law and order legislation.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members! Order, member for Mindarie.

Withdrawal of Remark

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: Mr Speaker, the member for Mindarie just called me dishonest.

Mr A.P. O'Gorman: No, he didn't.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: He said "my dishonesty". I ask that he withdraw that comment.

The SPEAKER: I will make the decisions in this place. I give the call to the Minister for Police.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: He got away with that one.

Point of Order

Mr M. McGOWAN: The minister is referring to a case in which a citizen has been charged with murder. He is referring directly to the facts surrounding that case, which involve elements of some violence. I refer to standing order 91, which relates to the sub judice convention. It states that members must be very careful about what they say so that they do not prejudice a trial. In making a political point and in attempting to accuse the opposition of somehow having blood on its hands, the minister is straying dangerously close to breaching that standing order.