

# Milking us for things we don't want

The WA Labor Government, due to the Federal Coalition's GST fix and record iron ore royalties, is swimming in money, yet they continue, even though the public is buckling under cost-of-living pressures, to stick their greedy hands into our pockets at every opportunity to feed the Treasurer's spending frenzy.

There has been no holding back on household charges such as electricity, water or vehicle registration fees while, apparently for the optics of it, money already forked out by struggling families is returned by way of electricity rebates.

Not only are they squeezing our wallets dry to help pay for splurging public money on their own vanity projects, which are no more than shrines erected in celebration of their extravagance and wastefulness, Paul Murray (*Opinion*, 6/12) reveals their trickery by using a ridiculously low projected iron ore price in order to appear to be good financial managers.

The difference between the estimated and actual royalty payment together with the increased GST revenue has fed Rita Saffioti's coffers with an additional \$10 billion to \$12 billion each year yet, due to her unrestrained spending spree, State debt continues to grow, our health system remains dangerously under-resourced, the public housing waiting list is getting longer and half of the classes our children are sweating it out in are transportables.

**Alan Freind, Leeming**

## Put ratepayers first

I remember when the first 150kL of water we used was free. Now, our bills keep climbing, partly because water charges increase steeply under the tiered system — the more you use, the higher the rate per kilolitre.

Meanwhile, the Water Corporation has sent approximately \$3 billion in net dividends to the WA Government over the past



**Rita Saffioti**

decade. That money could have upgraded infrastructure, funded new desalination plants, or reduced our bills.

Instead, profits are siphoned off, while my own sewerage charges alone cost roughly three times more than the water I actually use.

Ratepayers should benefit first — not pay the price while revenue is diverted elsewhere.

**Ewin Armstrong, Mt Hawthorn**

## Who would want this?

I'll call it straight. I spent a few hours wandering around the Burswood area last week, and something struck me as I did so: What ego-driven idiots would want to ruin such a great family space by racing cars around it? I didn't have far to look, as both seem to appear in every newspaper each week.

**Bruce Larsen, Erskine**

## Anika fails the pub test

The Minister for Mink Coats, Anika Wells, may not have "broken any rules" (*News*, 6/12), but the pub test still has a place.

When many households and businesses are struggling, she fails spectacularly.

**Kim Keogh, Claremont**

## Ban only the first step

Western Australia's demersal fish stocks are in serious trouble.

Recent DPIRD assessments show dhufish and pink snapper at critically low levels, with spawning biomass in some areas as low as 7 per cent of unfished populations.

These are long-lived, slow-growing species — dhufish can take 10 to 20 years to recover, and pink snapper five to 10 years.

The recent 18-month recreational closure and permanent commercial restrictions (*News*, 4/12) are a start, but short-term bans alone can not restore these fisheries. They do, however, halt further decline and protect remaining breeders.

Without long-term protection and careful management, decades of overfishing will continue to threaten these iconic fish, depriving future generations of both ecological and recreational benefits.

This is not about limiting fishing for its own sake, it's about giving our fisheries a fighting chance to survive.

Science shows patience and long-term planning are essential for real recovery.

**Brian Hastie, Stratham**

## Treat us all equally

There have been several letters concerning conscription recently, and David Cockram (*Letters Extra*, 6/12) is absolutely right wanting all who served as nashos to be properly recognised.

Often forgotten are the 1950 Korean War-era nashos when it was compulsory for all 18-year-old males to be called up.

Unlike the 1960s scheme, it was not a ballot system. Some 500,00 were called up and 227,000 passed as medically fit for what was a proud experience.

West Australians did basic training at Swanbourne, then corps training on Rottnest followed by a compulsory two years in the Citizen Military Force and five years on the reserve list.

In recent years those of us left were issued a DVA white card. I join Mr Cockram in calling for all remaining servicemen to be recognised with a gold card.

**Sid Breeden, City Beach**