

Blowout imminent on hated folly

The West's brilliant cartoonist Dean Alston continues to deploy the meme that will haunt the Cook Government to the next election and beyond — the Burswood racetrack.

Whatever the issue, he succeeds in linking it to the ill-conceived project that has destroyed a large swath of tranquil inner-city green space and displaced its aquatic wildlife to build a 3km, 12m-wide concrete track for the minority sport of V8 Supercars.

"Rita's Racetrack" is now part of WA's folklore, with Premier Roger Cook her eager co-driver. In Parliament on Wednesday, Roger virtually confirmed the project's \$217.5 million price tag would blow out, and labelled opposition to it "elitist". My Macquarie Dictionary defines "elitist" as "anti-democratic sentiment" — precisely what Roger and Rita have shown in ignoring the big majority of people throughout the State who object to the racetrack in favour of the few who want it.

Never think the issue has gone away. Our anger and disappointment in a Government many of us voted for remains white hot.

Susanne Roberts, East Perth

Stamped for revenue

Looking at some of the hard facts on the meteoric rise in stamp duty for the WA Labor Government since 2017 makes for interesting reading.

This is particularly relevant in relation to the supposed support for first-homebuyers announced in this week's State Budget, from Treasurer and aspiring premier Rita Saffioti. Over the past nine years the State Government has received about \$20 billion in stamp duty. Since 2017 this figure has risen by over 175 per cent, or in real terms nearly trebled.

Another revealing detail is how rising inflation itself boosts stamp duty, even if the number of homes sold does not



Dean Alston's cartoon yesterday.

increase to anywhere near the same proportion. A classic example is a \$450k house in 2018 generated roughly \$15k in stamp duty. A similar house now selling for \$800k, generates roughly \$33k in stamp duty.

So in essence, the WA Government can collect dramatically more revenue without delivering dramatically more homes, because the stamp-duty tax scales with rising prices. Or in very simple terms, the State Government has benefited enormously from rising property values through stamp duty receipts, while the increase in actual housing availability lagged well behind the increase in housing costs.

With that in mind, don't get overemotional with concessions announced from our Government this week. They are making more money from stamp duty receipts than they know what to do with, so this attempt at playing the saviour will have little impact on anyone attempting to enter the WA housing market.

With inflation rising at nearly 5 per cent per year, the savings the Government is offering will be far outstripped by bulging stamp duty revenue receipts in no time.

In reality, housing affordability for WA families has become one of the WA Government's most profitable revenue streams, which they have no incentive to curtail, despite the rhetoric.

Andrew Wynne, Yallingup

Citizens' rights

Ian Bevan, ("How much are ISIS brides costing us", *Letters* 6/4) the Prime Minister, the

Foreign Affairs Minister, et al, repeatedly claimed they are not going to help these Australians in Syria in their efforts to return home. Fair enough. But that does not give them the right to say they can't come home.

They are Australian and would probably be home by now, had the Syrian Government not presumed, with all the hoo-ha, that they were not allowed to return. I'm sure, as they did with the previous women in 2022, their own families and supporters will look after them and government agencies will keep a close eye on them.

As for the children turning into terrorists, that's a dreadful accusation to make. Australia's jails are full of criminals of every variety; they are not sitting empty waiting for terrorists to fill them. I'm not a churchy person but didn't somebody famous once say "Judge not, lest ye be judged". Doesn't Australia's mantra of a fair go for everyone include all citizens.

Deirdre McGorry, Greenmount

Part force, perhaps

I have written a few unpublished letters regarding the overuse of clichés and catchphrases used by polities and other folk who should know how to use English better than they do.

With the advent of a group of fanatical women who turned their back on Australia, now returning, we are hearing various politicians and police people rabbiting on about how some of these people may "face the full force of the law".

What a crock. No one in Australia has faced the full force of the law since Henry Bolte had Ronald Ryan hanged in February 1967.

Between activist magistrates and foppy judges, a slap with a wet lettuce leaf is about par for the course these days.

We wait to see.

C. Martin, Bull Creek