

Will our windfall be spent wisely?

It is now well beyond time for the WA public to now ask the hard questions from our State Government about the new GST windfall for WA, announced last week in the latest national allocation (*News*, 14/3).

Congratulations firstly to the WA Government in obtaining the increased windfall, however one must ask why are essential services deteriorating whilst the GST is increasing?

WA is the richest State in the Federation, but still can't run basic services properly. This is well demonstrated across the State with health and hospitals deteriorating, housing shortages, prisons overflowing and the now highlighted lack of fuel security for our farmers and miners.

Whilst the WA population has grown at 19 per cent since 2017, the public sector has increased by 27 per cent, or in real numbers another 37,000 public servants, which clearly indicates that, despite additional and disproportionate numbers being added to the Government payroll, service provisions have decreased and got worse.

What is a more damning statistic is that in 2018 the GST allocation per resident in WA was \$960. In 2026 this is now forecast to be a staggering \$3000 per person. Despite a 20 per cent increase in population in the same period, the GST has nearly trebled.

One has the right to ask how the WA Government is spending the rivers of money that are now pouring into the State and why are 80-year-old grandmothers are still sleeping in hospital corridors (*News*, 13/3).

With our hospitals and prisons now well over operational capacity, why isn't there a plan for desperately needed new facilities, which both have five to 10-year lead times?

Why are off-the-plan stamp duty reforms announced in



Rita Saffioti

blazing glory by Rita Saffioti last week not being extended to all sectors of the exploding housing market?

Many of these questions will never be resolved whilst we have a Government that not only lacks accountability, but the talent to resolve the issues.

Or maybe it is best summed up by the esteemed USA social economist Thomas Sowell: "No one will really understand politics until they understand that politicians are not trying to solve our problems. They are trying to solve their own problems, of which getting elected and re-elected are number one and number two. Whatever is number three is far behind."

Andrew Wynne, Yallingup

Out of touch with WA

Both Roger Cook and Rita Saffioti have lost sight of the value of money.

Their mantra is, "we know that families are doing it tough", yet they're spending our taxpayers' dollars on projects that have a limited targeted audience, such as an unwanted racetrack and rugby team or a ferry service — none of which have gone through a cost analyses process and all of which will likely result in cost overruns.

As a result, we now have the Premier crying poor, telling us he understands what we're going through with the way things are. This as he buys a new unit with a possible price tag of between \$700,000 and

\$950,000. Meanwhile, some people are going without meals or trying to scrape some money together so the kids can enjoy a school excursion.

So tell us again, Premier, how you can't afford to pay your mortgage with your property portfolio and \$400,000-plus-a-year salary.
Con Sappelli, Greenwood

In truth, we like trinkets

One might assume, from reading the letters published each day, that many West Australian voters have grown weary of the current Labor government.

Yet recent polling suggests the opposite — that Labor is likely to be returned at the next election with a majority similar to the one it already holds.

This contrast is revealing. The views expressed by regular letter writers do not necessarily reflect the broader sentiment of the electorate.

It also raises the question of whether the Government's strong financial position is being interpreted by voters as evidence of superior economic management.

In reality, much of Western Australia's Budget strength has been underpinned by exceptionally high royalties from iron ore and gold production.

These revenues have significantly boosted the State's finances, regardless of which party happens to be in office.

The more pressing issue is how this windfall is being used. Many would argue that greater priority should be given to core services such as hospitals, policing and education rather than to projects or initiatives of a more discretionary nature.

For now, however, it appears that a large section of the electorate is content to accept the benefits on offer.

As long as the trinkets keep coming, the Government may find that public goodwill remains intact.

Ewin Armstrong, Mt Hawthorn