

Ms Mia Davies; Dr David Honey; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Shane Love; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Vincent Catania;
Ms Sabine Winton; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Ms Jodie Hanns; Ms Caitlin Collins; Mr John Carey

TREASURER — PERFORMANCE

Motion

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt — Leader of the Opposition) [4.02 pm]: I move —

That this house condemns the Treasurer and his government's inability to address the multiple crises of their own making after four years of underinvestment and bandaaid budget solutions.

Before I start on my contribution, it was quite chilling to listen to the member talk about 9/11 and his recollections of that day. I think everybody has a memory of where they were at that time. It is one of those moments in time. It brought back to me in sharp relief where I was. I was in the United Kingdom at the time, in a small village just outside of London, in the kitchen of the house that I was housekeeping, watching the TV as I was preparing lunch for the family. I was a long way from home and for the first time in my life I felt completely lost and very at sea. I am sure that is something that connected people right around the world. It was something that changed the world for our generation. It was a remarkable reflection; I got goosebumps when I was listening to the member talk. I am sure that it was visceral for many and for those people who were directly impacted.

We are talking about something a little closer to home at this time, on a Wednesday afternoon in Parliament, the day before the handing down of the state budget. Obviously, the opposition will be talking to the state budget. I think that, predominantly, all the announcements have been made. It will be interesting to see what the Treasurer has left to talk about tomorrow, but there have been a number of announcements made in the preceding weeks and even months to this point. Of course, the budget has been delayed because of the state election this year. Ordinarily, it would have been handed down in May. Here we are in September, still considering the budget, and what a budget and revenue source this government has at its disposal.

One would think, with that enormous revenue and income that the government has been gifted by the success of our mining industry, with those royalties that it has collected and the GST that has been secured and delivered into our state's coffers, that we would see announcements from the state government about securing industries and businesses and diversification of our state's economy in both metropolitan and regional areas for future generations, because much of it has been driven by a one-off windfall from a mining sector that has enjoyed very rude health over the last 18 months to two years. Instead, what we have seen and anticipate seeing is a budget that is made up of announcements papering over the cracks that have been created by this government over the last four and a half years as a result of under-resourcing and underspending in critical areas. I think that the Premier and Treasurer—one and the same—is expecting accolades for the announcements that the government has made on its investment in housing and health, but the reason it has been forced to make those investments is that we have multiple crises across these sectors. It does not stop there, and my colleagues will talk about various portfolio areas in which there has been a lack of attention and investment that means that this government is now bringing out the bandaids to try to patch up the mess that it has made over the last four and a half years. To me, that is an opportunity cost for the people of Western Australia. Instead of using that surplus to really set up our future for future generations, we see this government dipping into that pile of money to make sure that it can repair the damage that it has done in the health sector.

Not only have we been persistent and consistent in raising these health issues over a long period, well before the pandemic arrived on our doorstep, but also others who are involved in the sector are saying that this government has under-resourced and underinvested and is responsible for the crisis that we now see it struggling to try to correct. When I see announcements like the one that has been made today in relation to our native forestry industry, I am gobsmacked that we will have another crisis that is of the government's own making, because that is exactly what will happen down in the south west when the businesses and communities that rely on this sustainable industry come to terms with the fact that this government did not have the courtesy to take such a significant decision to the election. I am sure that, before the election, not one of the government's candidates wanted to knock on doors in the south west and talk to businesses that were supportive of its local candidates to tell them that it was about to close down those business and that industry. The government held no consultation. It certainly did not have the guts to take this decision to an election and actually debate the merits of it with anyone from the opposition or the community. It has simply used this massive majority—this arrogance that seems to be permeating every government minister—to push things through. This is clearly coming from an ideological bent.

I really feel for those communities that have been impacted today. They will be reeling for some time. They are about to become accustomed with what everybody in the health and housing sectors is feeling. For the last four and a half years, people in those sectors have had to deal with a government that has not listened and not invested, and left all those people trying to do the very best they can without the support of a state government. Now we see the government dipping into the coffers to try to fix up the mess of its own making. I again put on record my disappointment and the disappointment of the opposition with the decision that was made and announced this morning in relation to the forestry industry.

Ms Mia Davies; Dr David Honey; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Shane Love; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Vincent Catania;
Ms Sabine Winton; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Ms Jodie Hanns; Ms Caitlin Collins; Mr John Carey

Mr V.A. Catania: Anger! Not disappointment—anger!

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I am gobsmacked, member for North West Central. When I saw it, I thought someone had commandeered or created a post on social media that could not possibly be true, because surely the government would not make announcements like that without actually consulting with the key and peak body that represents the businesses and communities, and I am talking about the Forest Industries Federation of WA. Surely it would have had a conversation with that body before talking about changing the fortunes of everybody involved in those industries.

Surely we should expect that from a government that has been gifted such a huge majority. Time and again it has fallen short of the mark. No doubt the spin doctors are still working overtime in the Premier's office and government cabinet offices to make sure that when the Premier stands up tomorrow and announces the budget, the government looks as though it is benevolent, and has been using its power appropriately and investing in the community so that our health system, housing sector and all those areas that my colleagues will talk about will have the support that they need. But it will be too little too late. This government has learnt nothing from the fact that we have reached crisis point in health and housing. It has carried on and created another crisis that will have long-term ramifications.

I have had the privilege of being a Minister for Forestry and working very closely with people involved in that industry. My colleague the member for North West Central was my parliamentary secretary. He was directly responsible for the portfolio when we were in government and dealt with people within all organisations involved in the sector. Those people take great pride in the work that they do. They take pride in the fact that science sits behind everything that they do in that industry. This government chooses to perpetuate many myths associated with native forestry rather than doing the hard yards to explain to and convince people why it is important that the industry continue. Fifty million dollars will be grossly inadequate to transition the communities, businesses and individuals currently in that sector. I put that on the record right now. The businesses and people in that sector make long-term decisions. That was the purpose of forest management plans—to allow people to plan sensibly within the framework of a scientifically based document to ensure the best environmental management of our native forests. What we will see now is timber coming increasingly from countries that have lower environmental standards than we have here in Australia. I think that will be a very poor outcome.

This is a poorly thought out policy. I note the response from the Minister for Climate Action today to the question posed by the member for Moore, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, about why the government thought it was appropriate to use \$57 000 of taxpayers' money to essentially run a poll to see whether the broader public supported a position that the government already knew it was going to introduce. It is a gross misuse of taxpayers' dollars. The government should have sat down and gone through the forest management plan process that allows everyone involved in the sector to have a say. It should have consulted the environmental people, the community and every stakeholder.

Mr R.S. Love: And foresters.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Yes, and the foresters. That process has been laid out. That has been the process since 2001. While I am on the topic, let me say that anybody who says that old-growth forest logging is continuing in Western Australia is wrong. There has been no old-growth tree logging in Western Australia since 2001.

Ms C.M. Rowe: Excuse me! It depends on how you define "old growth".

Ms M.J. DAVIES: "Old growth" is defined by the fact that in 2001, the Labor government ripped the guts out of the industry and said, "You will no longer be able to log in a forest that has remained untouched." If it had not been touched, it was excluded from logging in the future. Since 2001, only coupes or areas of forest that have been logged previously are logged. Guess what! They are replanted and they are thinned out. It is actually a sustainable industry—who would have thought! I absolutely disagree. If somebody comes across a log or a tree within one of those coupes, there is a process to identify whether a habitat is important or should be excluded from the coupe. Do not perpetuate the myth, because we are talking about wiping out the livelihoods of a thousand people without any consultation. They have woken up to the news that their businesses and their communities will not look anything like what they do today. That is all down to the Labor Party. The government did not have the guts to take this issue to the election, just as it did not take to the election the fact that it was going to reduce regional representation either. This government does not use the money that it has been gifted by the mining industry to manage the budget financially appropriately. This government does not use the power that it has been afforded by the people of Western Australia. The shine will come off the Premier and his ministers if they continue to behave like this.

I suspect that what we will see tomorrow when the Premier stands up to deliver the final details of the budget is a papering over of the cracks that have emerged because the government has failed to deal with the business of the state. The bread and butter of state government is health, housing, resourcing our police officers, making sure that there is investment in regional communities and looking after those who look after our most vulnerable, like those working in the Department of Communities. The government has failed on many fronts. From the opposition's perspective, all we are going to see tomorrow is the Premier, unfortunately, taking credit for something for which

Ms Mia Davies; Dr David Honey; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Shane Love; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Vincent Catania;
Ms Sabine Winton; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Ms Jodie Hanns; Ms Caitlin Collins; Mr John Carey

no credit is due. The revenue that is sitting in the state coffers is a result of the GST deal with the federal government and royalties collected from the iron ore sector predominantly and the gold industry.

The government is sitting on a pile of money while we face what I consider the worst crisis in the health system in Western Australia. Ordinary, everyday Western Australians and businesses rely on the government to keep an eye on making sure that we get what we deserve—that is, a first-class health system that looks after the people who work in that system. The government should be encouraging more people to work in that system and to make sure that we are prepared for any potential outbreak of COVID in our community. That is what this government should be focused on. That is what we expect the government to be paying attention to. It is quite clear that the significant amount that the government has announced before we got to this point today shows that it has underinvested in and under-resourced that critical sector. That is incredibly disappointing and the shine is going to come off the government very, very quickly. These eleventh-hour investments just go to show that the opposition has been on the right track. It has asked the Minister for Health to explain why ambulance ramping in the health system is now the highest it has ever been in this state's history. I think it is something like 530 per cent higher than it was when he was in opposition and was calling it a crisis. Why are there regular code yellows in our hospitals? That is no longer rare; it is happening on a weekly basis. Why are 17 000 people waiting for a safe house—any kind of house—right across regional Western Australia? Why did the government sell off 1 300 houses when it knew the waiting list was only going to get worse? This government has dropped the ball on every front. When the budget comes down tomorrow, I am not sure that there should be any credit given to the Premier; Treasurer for the job that has been done over the last four and a half years.

It is undeniable from our perspective that the state government has failed the people of Western Australia. It has failed to manage what we expect the state government to have full control over—that is, the state's health system. Today in question time the Leader of the Liberal Party raised the crime statistics, and again and again the government refused to share information so the public can see where the money is going and where improvements are needed right across the board. I have no doubt that the shadow Minister for Commerce; Tourism is going to talk about the impacts on some businesses right across the state as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges that they are facing. I have no doubt that the shadow Minister for Health will stand once again and raise the issues that she has raised again and again, because we know the real impacts that this is having on the lives and livelihoods of the people of Western Australia.

The member for Roe has been dogged in his pursuit of the Premier for the role that he has played, or not played, in securing workers for the agriculture sector. The Premier's performance today was astounding. The commonwealth government has put forward Bladin Village in the Northern Territory for the state government to utilise to bring in essential workers for the harvest, which we are about to start any day. I think the Premier refuses to engage, despite his Minister for Agriculture and Food wanting to secure a deal, because he does not want to concede one bit to the commonwealth. He is in a battle with the feds and prefers to have a political game of ping-pong, leaving our agriculture sector blowing in the breeze. It is absolutely appalling. The Premier prefers to play politics instead of knuckling down and putting a proposal to the federal government, which he knows needs to be done, because on some ideological or political front he does not want to accept that it has a role to play in bringing people into the state to help our agriculture sector. It was an absolutely appalling display from the Premier in question time today. I have no doubt that the member for Roe will be having further conversations on the lack of support for the agriculture sector.

The opposition will be looking at a number of other issues in detail when the budget is released tomorrow, but I have a feeling we have already seen the majority of the budget announcements that will be rolled out. I will leave members with one last thought: the very first thing that this government announced about the upcoming budget was an increase to household fees and charges. I think that announcement was made probably two or three months ago. The state has rivers of gold—a \$5 billion surplus—yet this government will increase fees and charges by \$100. That announcement was made some time ago. I suspect that the Treasurer will not touch on that increase tomorrow; in government members' minds, it will be a celebration of the things that the government is investing in. But bear in mind that the things the state government is investing in are to mop up and bandaid over the mess that it made in its first four and a half years. This Labor government has caused the crises in housing, health and the agriculture sector. From the opposition's perspective, it is simply unacceptable that funding that should be used to set up our state for the next two, three, four or five generations will instead go into fixing the mess that this government has made.

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe — Leader of the Liberal Party) [4.22 pm]: I rise to enthusiastically support the excellent motion put forward by the Leader of the Opposition. If we really look at and analyse this budget, as was outlined by the Leader of the Opposition, we see that it has absolutely no economic plan for Western Australia and no vision. As the Leader of the Opposition pointed out in the press conference today, this government has received \$20 billion cumulatively above forecast over the last four and a bit years. What has happened to a large amount of that money? We have seen a panic spending spree to try to make up for the fact that this government has done nothing

Ms Mia Davies; Dr David Honey; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Shane Love; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Vincent Catania;
Ms Sabine Winton; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Ms Jodie Hanns; Ms Caitlin Collins; Mr John Carey

over the past four and a half years in the key areas that a government should manage. Think about a traditional election—a non-COVID election. During a non-COVID election, the focus is normally on health, education and law and order. Housing may come into it. Although housing has never been an issue in any budget I have ever known, it has to be now.

What we see is a government boasting about spending, and, due to its inactivity, squandering a large portion of the surplus because it has simply failed to do its job for the last four and a half years. The government was facing an electoral rout going back two Februarys because it had destroyed the domestic economy and done nothing in the state. The government was so chuffed with the iron ore royalties pouring in, it had no knowledge whatsoever of what was happening in the rest of the domestic economy. COVID saved this government. That is what happened and the government has hidden behind it ever since. The government has simply done nothing at all about the major problems facing this state. When I came to Parliament about three and a half years ago, we were telling the government that there was a housing and homelessness crisis in this state, and it did absolutely nothing. Then we saw a panic in December last year when the government thought, “Hang on; we are going to an election and we’ll face public scrutiny”, and announced \$800 million in funding. What has been done between then and now? Essentially, nothing. I will go into a bit of detail on that, members. Government members need to get out of the dazed state they are in and saying, “We’ve got all the money in and we had such a big win”, and actually look at what the government has not done. It has been a shameful performance by this government. The opposition recognises that the only thing the government has done is to manage the COVID pandemic; meanwhile, it has stopped managing the rest of the state.

This budget is a panic spend to try to paper over the government’s complete inaction for the last four and a half years. Government members should really take stock of themselves on that. The tragedy of this budget is that because the government is panicking about what it has not done for the last four and a half years about homelessness and the housing crisis, there has been no meaningful action to deal with those issues. It is nothing but spin. If spin were action, we would be in good shape. Now we have a crisis and the government is spending money on it, but we have not seen any meaningful action from this government to develop a future for Western Australia. The government assumes that the iron ore price will stay up at \$US150 to \$US200 a tonne and that the rivers of gold from the GST fix will get it through, but it has done nothing whatsoever to manage those major issues.

As I say, we talk about health, education and law and order. Law and order, Minister for Police—we have the worst violent crime statistics in the history of the state. I was interested in the debate in this chamber today in which the police minister was trying to spin his way out of the government owning the worst violent crime statistics in this state’s history. The first time I asked the minister about this he said it is because of domestic violence due to people being locked down because of COVID. There is no doubt whatsoever that domestic violence has increased due to COVID—that is unarguable. Members on this side of the chamber know that domestic violence is the scourge facing our nation and understand that it has increased with COVID. The minister is trying to spin his way out of it, but if we take domestic violence out of the equation, what do we have? When we take out all the domestic violence figures, the underlying number of violent crimes is still the worst in the history of the state of Western Australia.

Furthermore, we have seen a quadrupling—or just shy of that—of police response times in Perth and Northbridge. How quickly the police can get to an incident is literally the difference between life and death. What did we see? The minister was saying, “You’re attacking the police.” No; we are attacking the minister and his government because they have not stayed on top of violent crime in this state.

This government has a shameful record in housing, and I will go through that in detail. But first I want to talk about the future of the state of Western Australia. Western Australia currently enjoys enormous wealth primarily due to mineral wealth and mining. That is the primary source of wealth in our economy. It is one of the reasons that Western Australia has been able to take such a hard stance on border closures. It is why the other states, in particular New South Wales, have had a more difficult time in terms of how they have dealt with that. In Western Australia, our economy is overwhelmingly dominated by income from mining. We currently account for something like 68 per cent of Australia’s export income. That is due in large part to iron ore and other mineral exports. Agriculture is an important part of that, but that has, essentially, been constant, other than this year, when we are going to have a bumper crop. As we have pointed out, because of this government’s arrogant inaction—playing games and trying to blame the federal government—there is a huge risk that that bumper crop, or part of it, will stay in the field. What a disgrace! The Premier’s performance in question time was a disgrace. He simply refused to take ownership of the matter. In September last year, this Premier sat on national cabinet and agreed to a plan that each state would take responsibility for bringing into Western Australia some of those 25 000 visa-ready workers from Pacific nations with low or no COVID cases to deal with that workforce problem. Western Australia is the only state in Australia not participating in that plan because of this nonsense about who controls the borders. Every other state has done it. Every other Labor state has done it and Victoria did it in March this year. Every other state is bringing in those workers, but not Western Australia. This Premier is holding the farmers of Western Australia hostage because of his inaction.

Mr P.J. Rundle: And his politicking.

Ms Mia Davies; Dr David Honey; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Shane Love; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Vincent Catania;
Ms Sabine Winton; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Ms Jodie Hanns; Ms Caitlin Collins; Mr John Carey

Dr D.J. HONEY: It is just politics. Let us go to the future of the state of Western Australia. As I said, mining is a massive part of our economy and it is very important, but we all know that that is ephemeral. A while ago, just after the election, the member for Willagee gave an excellent speech in this place about the prospects for the price of iron ore going forward. I have spoken with all the major iron ore companies as well as some international experts on iron ore pricing. They all say that in the next five to seven years, we will see a substantial reduction in the iron ore price. I refer members back to the member for Willagee's speech because he outlined the causes for that in great detail. We know that the price of iron ore will come down. In fact, in that sort of time frame, the price of iron ore is likely to come down to \$40 to \$50 a tonne. That is the greater likelihood in the future.

We know that all the other resources that we rely on such as natural gas, and even the business that I worked in before I came into Parliament—Alcoa—have a 30-year time frame on them, after which Western Australia will suddenly not have rivers of gold coming into it. Mining will continue and some of that wealth will still come in, but it will not sustain the lifestyle that we have now or our projected population. The critical role for government is to do something about it now. It should use the surplus that we have now not to paper over its failures, but to create a future for the state of Western Australia. There is no greater opportunity for the future of Western Australia than in green energy, making hydrogen, ammonia and other hydrogen-related products such as urea and ammonium nitrate. This is the time we need to do it. We are not alone in this. All over the world, everyone has identified green hydrogen from renewables as the future for not only energy, but also industrial manufacturing. Every nation in the world is working on this. We know that those nations who develop this first will benefit the most. As I have pointed out outside this place and in here, there is no place in the world with a greater capacity for making the lowest cost green energy, and, hence, the lowest cost hydrogen, than the midwest of Western Australia from Geraldton to Karratha. It is the best place in the world because it has an almost unique combination of reliable wind and solar energy. That gives that area what they call the highest capacity factor of anywhere in the world. It means that we get the effective energy output from the installed capital. What do we see in this budget? Do we see any serious effort on the part of this government to generate a hydrogen industry in this state? What is in this budget is a joke. I will contextualise it. This government is spending \$7 billion on a rail line to Ellenbrook or the Metronet project.

Mr V.A. Catania: It will cost \$10 billion.

Dr D.J. HONEY: It will cost \$10 billion, as the member for North West Central has pointed out. He is prescient in this regard, as I have said several times. It will cost \$10 billion and the Minister for Transport is desperately hiding costs in every little hidey-hole that she can find to make this enormous cost blowout look smaller. As I have said, it is the largest capital cost blowout in the history of Western Australia, and this government says that it is managing the finances. That project will create jobs while it is under construction, but, in effect, it will create only a handful of jobs into the future. It will not create the hundreds of thousands of jobs that young people will need in the future.

If an equivalent sum of money were to be invested in the central midwest region, it would transform the future of this state. This state would be an economic powerhouse for longer than the next 20 or 30 years while our mineral resources hold up. We could be an industrial powerhouse. The simple reason is that cheap green hydrogen could be made in the midwest. However, exporting hydrogen and its products is expensive. The best thing we can do with hydrogen is to use it for manufacturing in Western Australia. As I said, this budget shows us that the government has made a token effort and it has not committed to the hydrogen industry.

I will go to the nub of it. The ideal places to focus a lot of that industry are Karratha and Oakajee, but Oakajee, which is near Geraldton, is probably the best place. The government has said that it has identified Oakajee as the place to develop a hydrogen precinct. What is this government doing to encourage that? It is going to spend money. Here we go! It has really lashed out on this project because it is concerned about the future of young people in Western Australia who will need jobs. In the budget, this government has identified \$7.5 million for an access road into the site. We know what roads cost. We know what simple intersections in Perth cost. Basically, this money will build some sort of minor road into the site. That will do absolutely nothing whatsoever to inspire industry to develop in that area.

The Minister for Mines and Petroleum has just come in here. BP Australia recently reported on its study into green hydrogen and ammonia. It carried out a definitive study because it wants to develop that green industry in the Geraldton area. What has BP said in the report? It has said that yes, it is viable, but that it cannot go ahead because there is no port, no water and no electricity network into that site. That is what BP has said. I have spoken to a good number of companies that have said that they want to develop in that area. All of them have said exactly the same thing—that the government is playing this nonsense game. The government is saying to people who are possibly going to develop in that area, “Yes, you can come here and develop here. We want this area to be the hydrogen precinct, but we are not going to put any infrastructure in. Either you’ve got to put the infrastructure in or you’ve got to work with all the potential developers to put the infrastructure in.” Nowhere else in the world does this. This is why this development will not go ahead. I have heard all the announcements. I have read them in the paper and I have spoken to those proponents face-to-face and they all tell me the same thing: they will not get ultimate

Ms Mia Davies; Dr David Honey; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Shane Love; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Vincent Catania;
Ms Sabine Winton; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Ms Jodie Hanns; Ms Caitlin Collins; Mr John Carey

investment approval for those projects. They want to invest because of the quality of the renewable energy asset, but they will not do it because the basic enabling infrastructure is not being put in by this government. I have seen the studies and we have the cooperative research centres—all of those things are fine. The CRCs are important to train the potential workforce, but until this government is serious about investing in major infrastructure in that area, such as a port or proper road infrastructure that will enable heavy equipment to be transported to that site—not some roundabout or a little driveway that comes off the road and runs into the existing dirt road that goes into an overgrown paddock—that area will not be developed. That is why BP recently announced that it will use its old refinery site in Kwinana for potentially developing a renewable energy hub, because all that infrastructure is there. That is the critical point. In the term of this government, nothing of any significance will happen at Oakajee because this government will not make the critical investment in the future of Western Australia.

The Minister for Energy loves to have a bit of fun about the 330-kilovolt line. Again, all the major proponents I have spoken to have told me that they need the 330-kilovolt line tied to the south west interconnected system for two reasons. First, they need a stable, reliable emergency power backup for major industrial facilities if their own power generation is not available. Second, when they are using renewable energy, they need the option of putting excess energy back into the SWIS. Again, we have a minister who, for whatever reason, refuses to recognise that or to invest in that line. I am sure the minister will get up and make merry and so on, but this is serious. It is about the future of Western Australia, and this government is not making the investment it needs to make. We have seen this across every area—that is, lots of spin from the Minister for Energy and lots of token projects in the area of hydrogen, but nothing that will enable the development of that industry in this state.

We have seen it in housing and in emergency accommodation—lots of notices about emergency accommodation in this state. However, we actually see a tiny amount of general accommodation and short-term accommodation for people who are homeless on the street. Our member for Vasse will talk about the health crisis, but, again, a government failed to invest in housing but boasted in 2018 how it cut health expenditure. Now it is in a panic, spending a vast amount of money to try to catch up to where it should have been and that money is not available for the future development of Western Australia. This is a budget the government should be ashamed of. It is a budget that speaks of the failure of the government over the last four years and its panic to paper over the cracks it has caused through its own inaction and its own ignorance of what is going on in this state. The Minister for Police does not understand his statistics. The Premier wants to point fingers and play games, pointing at the federal government instead of dealing with the major issues such as lack of workforce in not just the agricultural areas, but also all industries in Western Australia. I went to the mines conference and the major issue for the mining industry is lack of workforce.

MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) [4.42 pm]: I rise to support this worthy motion put by the Leader of the Opposition in this place, and what a worthy motion it is. As the shadow Minister for Health, I will speak in particular to one of the most challenging areas that we face across the state at this time, and that is obviously the health crisis our state is facing.

If we speak to anyone in the street, and certainly constituents who have come into my office, or listen to talkback radio, we hear the feedback in the community, in hospitals and outside the walls of Parliament where there is great concern about the preparedness of our health system and our hospitals for any COVID outbreak. There is real concern about to what extent our Premier has delivered on the promise to keep Western Australia safe and strong. It is a state that has no COVID in the community and no influx of the flu and has missed the mark on so many health measures, which has left patients waiting outside hospitals and in the corridors of hospitals or waiting longer for ambulances in the community than ever before because of the failures in the health system.

It has not happened overnight. We heard in this place today during question time countless excuses, whether it is about the support our frontline police officers should be receiving or whether it is about our health workers, and the excuse is always “COVID-19”. This has been highlighted not just by the opposition, but also by key stakeholders. The reality is that this has been years in the making, because in the first term of the McGowan Labor government, it ran down the health system. It did not invest in the health system or keep investment in health up with growth. There were high fives about it at the time. I remember being in this place and hearing the self-congratulations at that time about the reduction in spend on health. If the spend on health has to be reduced, it has to come with good reform and that has not happened. We are not seeing that happen. We have seen the implementation of health boards across the state, but, as we saw following the tragic situation of Aishwarya Aswath at Perth Children’s Hospital, we are increasingly seeing health boards propped up as vehicles to deflect blame and answer the tough questions when things go wrong in the health system, and they certainly have.

One of the real issues in the health system has been the fact that this government has not taken the crisis seriously. I asked questions in Parliament yesterday about 327 shifts that were not covered at Royal Perth Hospital and we heard our Minister for Health state that that was an outstanding result. Little did I know it at that time, but just after

Ms Mia Davies; Dr David Honey; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Shane Love; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Vincent Catania;
Ms Sabine Winton; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Ms Jodie Hanns; Ms Caitlin Collins; Mr John Carey

question time we heard that hospitals, including Royal Perth Hospital, had experienced a triple bypass that day. Our Australian Medical Association president, Mark Duncan-Smith, stated —

... the mismanagement of the health system, with insufficient funding to achieve the hospital capacity needed to manage the call for services, was putting Western Australians at increasing risk of a catastrophic outcome.

A triple bypass is a frightening situation. Three hospitals were unable to accept patients when there is no COVID-19 in the community and no influx of the flu but every other excuse from the McGowan Labor government about why this is happening. Ambulance response times is an obvious area in which this government has failed. It failed last month more than ever in this state's recorded history. The crisis in our emergency departments is now having a broader flow-on effect in the community. St John Ambulance is trapped at the front of emergency departments, which is leading to it being challenged when responding to emergencies in the community. We know that about one in four priority 1 cases were not responded to within the 15-minute response time target last month. Effectively, that is the flow-on effect from bed block in our hospital system. The government will be considering a report into the St John Ambulance service, which is trying to grapple with a hospital system under pressure with the lowest number of available public beds in the country and is challenged also by critical staffing issues. The government's response to all this is to consider a report into St John Ambulance and taking over that service. People in my community and people in the street have raised this concern: why is this area of health under investigation by this government when we are seeing many other failings right across the health system?

The tragedy at Perth Children's Hospital highlighted what many people had been stating for some time, and that is the critical under-resourcing of our hospitals. It was raised in October 2020 by senior clinicians and it was raised in December 2020 by senior clinicians. The Australian Nursing Federation and the Australian Medical Association also raised issues of chronic understaffing and the impact it could have on patient safety before that tragedy. It is concerning that in April this year the minister stated that the health system was operating magnificently. He rejected the suggestion that there were critical staff shortages in our health system, which is quite obviously not the case.

The canary in the coalmine is ambulance ramping. This illustrates that our hospital system is unable to cope—unable to accept patients. It is damning that this government is seeing record levels of ambulance ramping that are over five times what our now Minister for Health described as a horror story when he was in opposition.

I turn to code yellows. Over the last 12 months we have seen 111 code yellows in our health system due to capacity issues and the fact that lack of investment has led to the lowest number of available public beds in the country.

I turn to elective surgery. I hear the Minister for Health talking about the acuity that we are now seeing in our emergency departments. It is fair to say that the numbers in our emergency departments have been predictable and on trend, as with mental health presentations. The increase in acuity in those numbers is predictable, given the restrictions and measures this government has made to turn people away from our emergency departments or restrict elective surgery. The tap of support for these patients cannot be turned off without seeing further implications down the line. That is not just a statement from the opposition; that is what we are also hearing from our health workers. The reality is in the fact that we have seen the elective surgery waitlist increase by 50 per cent under this government's watch since 2017. It leads not only to more patients waiting for these important surgeries, but also to a greater level of acuity. Other people would like to speak, but the outcome of this is that we have a health system on its knees.

The Your Voice in Health survey stated that fewer than half of the respondents felt their organisation cared about their health and wellbeing or that they felt valued in the workplace. Only one in three health workers felt they had the ability to speak up and challenge what was happening in the workplace. That again reflects the issue of patient safety. It has a flow-on effect on patient safety. When these issues are raised in this place, the response from the government is that it is wonderful that it introduced this survey. The reality is that these are damning statistics. Over half of the measures were below the national standard. They reflect a workforce that does not feel supported or comfortable speaking up and challenging the safety of the environment for patients and other healthcare workers. This also reflects a situation that is damning of this government and its lack of investment right across the board.

I turn to the investment in the health system. There was a recent announcement about the Joondalup Health Campus expansion. The government recently re-announced some progress on that important expansion of the Joondalup Health Campus in the north. However, it also illustrated the cutbacks we have seen from this government. It is extraordinary that at this time, when the state is experiencing a health crisis and there are pressures on our healthcare system, we hear a re-announcement of an election commitment that reflects a cut in spending on this important health campus. It is a cut in spending on Joondalup Health Campus that will reduce the number of operating theatres from eight to one and will reduce the overall scope of this extension. Not only was the announcement almost identical to the statement from the Premier in 2017, which illustrates that very little has been done, but also the government has ruthlessly cut the scope of this project.

Ms Mia Davies; Dr David Honey; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Shane Love; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Vincent Catania;
Ms Sabine Winton; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Ms Jodie Hanns; Ms Caitlin Collins; Mr John Carey

There is little mention after four years of this government of what progress has been undertaken on the promise for medihotels that we heard so much about. This is an illustration of where we are now as a state. It illustrates the cuts this government has ruthlessly made to the health system and the implications they are now having. It has meant that although there is no COVID in the community at this time, there is the extraordinary situation of a health system on its knees. We are also challenged by the lowest vaccination rates in the country, making this state particularly vulnerable to COVID.

I briefly touched on staffing issues at Royal Perth Hospital. Regarding yesterday's front page story in the newspaper, the health minister said that there had been an outstanding result, but the reality is that we are 327 nurse shifts short. A code yellow was called later that day. I should say that the 327 shifts were over two weeks, for a 1 541 shift deficit. It illustrates the desperate need in the intensive care unit. That equates to roughly 23 dropped shifts a day at the hospital, which is a shortage of nine staff each morning, afternoon and night shift. I am constantly getting messages from parents of healthcare workers and from healthcare workers themselves about the vulnerable situation they feel they are in in our hospital system. On the back of the front-page news story, I heard from the parent of one healthcare worker yesterday, who highlighted their concern for their daughter working in ICU alongside physiotherapists who are temporarily undertaking nursing roles and others. They are feeling the pressure of being so desperately understaffed. The AMA has warned that there are similar shortages as those picked up yesterday across the entire health system. It is predicted that WA's health system will be short some 500 to 600 nurses. The AMA says that another 150 junior doctors are needed in our tertiary hospitals. There are extraordinary waiting lists for specialists as well. It takes over a year to see a psychologist in the south west region after getting a referral for an appointment. Perth Children's Hospital is experiencing a significant challenge. Because of the lack of investment in the mental health space, not only in early intervention, but also in support services, PCH is expecting an extraordinary increase in the number of presentations relating to child and adolescent health. The revolving door of hospitalisations across our health system because of the lack of investment in the mental health space and early intervention is also having a significant effect. Nathan Gibson, our Chief Psychiatrist, said in his report on Kate Savage late last year that this is not because of a lack of business cases being presented to government by the child and adolescent mental health service. We have seen a countless number of reviews into our struggling health system in the areas of child and adolescent mental health and it is now time to act. There is certainly a significant issue in that area as well.

We have seen an 86 per cent increase in eating disorder referrals at Perth Children's Hospital. The government made a \$33 million commitment for a new eating disorders unit. We hope that that is brought forward in tomorrow's budget because it is quite obvious that there is also a desperate need to address those issues for adolescents. The experiences of those adolescents and the stress on the families surrounding them are very real. It is one of the most preventable areas of mental health but it can also be the most fatal if it is not addressed within a certain period. That is why we need investment in early intervention mental health support services in the community, along with backing up investment in our hospitals. The eating disorders unit is critically important, together with this government taking the health crisis seriously and ensuring that there is real investment beyond the 1.25 per cent increases referred to by the Australian Medical Association that have been committed so far. In effect, that is a \$1 billion investment in our health system that is struggling and under unprecedented pressure. It is literally on its knees. It is not keeping Western Australians safe and it does not have the confidence of our health workers.

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [5.02 pm]: I, too, would like to speak to the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition condemning the Treasurer and his government's inability to address the multiple crises of its own making after four years of underinvestment and bandaid budget solutions.

If we want to see evidence of the multiple crises, we need only look at the multiple times we have addressed issues in question time in this place, and again today. We need to look at the questions asked by the opposition about ambulance ramping; the unpredictable nature of the G2G PASS system, which makes it very difficult to get people into the state to fill necessary roles of employment; the problems of agriculture and being able to secure workers; and the problem that the government made for itself today by its unheard of and uncalled for announcement that it will be suspending logging in native forests without consultation with the industry and affected communities and without going to those people affected at the last election and indicating that it had any intention whatsoever to do that to that industry. I will talk about that in a little more detail later.

I first want to turn to the most damning thing about this budget as a regional member of Parliament—that is, the spin against the reality of what has happened to royalties for regions under this government. It is predicted that this government will be sitting on a surplus of around \$5 billion, yet we see that the royalties for regions program has been absolutely gutted by this government. In fact, it stopped using the name "royalties for regions" on many projects. I noted recently that nothing has been done about the hospital redevelopment project in Mullewa, which is something like five years overdue. A sign has suddenly appeared in front of the hospital that has sat derelict for five years, which says, "This will be a royalties for regions project". Someone in the government has woken up to the fact that royalties for regions is a program and the government is going to use that name, but it will not

Ms Mia Davies; Dr David Honey; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Shane Love; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Vincent Catania;
Ms Sabine Winton; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Ms Jodie Hanns; Ms Caitlin Collins; Mr John Carey

fund it in the appropriate manner. It will take 70 per cent of the money from royalties for regions and put that into cross-subsidisation to support expenditures that should be part of the normal business of government. I am talking about things like running school buses, keeping water coming out of taps in country communities and TAFEs. Things that governments have always done off their own bat suddenly come under royalties for regions. Up to 70 per cent of that \$1 billion a year is being spent in that way and a very small amount in comparison is being used to support communities to enable them to take a comparative advantage in their local areas to grow industries, to grow economies, to grow towns and to give confidence to the communities that exist in regional WA. In order to give confidence to communities, the government should not strip away their prime industries without indicating at any point that it had any intention of doing so.

A series of questions have been asked of the Minister for Environment since she started a faux consultation process earlier this year. She put out a public survey at a cost of \$56 500, from memory. We have not been able to see what that \$56 500 of public money has achieved. She has not tabled the results of that survey. She said that it had overwhelming support. If a survey is conducted by phrasing the questions in a certain way so that people answer in a certain way, it will get support. The government did not go to the industries, the forest workers, the mill owners or the towns in those communities where those people live and work, as they have done for a century or more, and say, "This is what we're going to do." In fact, back in March, the government did not go to those people and say what it would do.

I see the member for Warren–Blackwood in the chamber. I am not denigrating the member personally in any way, but I did not see anything in the campaign that was mounted in the electorate of Warren–Blackwood that announced that one of the major industries in that area would be shut down. If the Labor government made such an announcement before the last election, I would really like to see it. Given the narrow margin that that seat was lost by, the former member for Warren–Blackwood would justifiably feel duded that the government had not been up-front and put its true agenda to the community. Had it done so, there is every chance that Hon Terry Redman would be sitting in this chamber right now. The government did not go there because it knew what the result would be. That was just as deceitful as when it said prior to the election that reform of the upper house was not on the agenda. As soon as it won a majority in the upper house and it knew it could do what it needed to do to push that agenda through, suddenly it was on the agenda within weeks. Within weeks, the government formed a committee that had an eight-week program to carry out the consultation and drop a report on the government's desk so it could get on before Christmas and get the job done.

Mr V.A. Catania: The member for Albany was standing right behind the Premier when he said, "It's not on the agenda."

Mr R.S. LOVE: "It's not on the agenda", member for Albany! In fact, one of the journalists down in Albany interrogated the Premier at great length. Over and again, the Premier said, "It's not on our agenda." Will all the regional members who heard the member say that it is not on the agenda be voting to cut away the regional representation that the Premier said was not on the agenda? We have heard from the Premier that they will be or they will be out of the party. So much for democracy! Labor members have the gall to carry on about who is the Deputy Prime Minister and who is in another political party, yet their own party does not allow them to vote with their conscience and for the good of their communities. The Labor Party is an undemocratic institution in itself. I am absolutely appalled that the government thought that it was fit and proper to not go to the communities concerned to make its announcement about ending the logging of native forests. Where did the government go to make its announcement—was it Mundaring or Mundijong? Where was it?

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

Mr R.S. LOVE: It was Mundaring, which is just on the outskirts of Perth. The government did not go to the industry heartland or the karri country to make its announcement; it was too gutless to do that. The government stayed up here: "We're not going to go down there until we've let a bit of time pass." I do not think the Minister for Forestry will be going down south any time soon. No doubt, if he does, he will not visit the mills and he will not talk to the people who will be out of work. We have heard that workers in that industry will be redeployed into the softwood industry. We have also heard that there is a plan to grow more trees to fill the gap in the availability of wood. I have got news for you. It is not an annual crop; it takes decades to grow trees. What is the government going to do for wood in the meantime? Will it import it from, where—Malaysia or Indonesia? The industry in Western Australia is fully and scientifically managed. We have a forest management program in place to ensure that the industry is sustainable into the future, but the government has decided to shut that down. When people want hardwood, they will look overseas to source it and they will not necessarily get it from responsibly sourced places. That is a perverse outcome, and that decision has been made for political self-advantage and nothing else.

I do not understand how the government could be so dishonest with the community. I am looking at a question that was asked of the minister representing the Minister for Environment by Hon Tjorn Sibma on 5 August. At the very end of Hon Stephen Dawson's reply on behalf of the minister, he said —

Ms Mia Davies; Dr David Honey; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Shane Love; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Vincent Catania;
Ms Sabine Winton; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Ms Jodie Hanns; Ms Caitlin Collins; Mr John Carey

As the honourable member will be aware, further consultation with stakeholders, including industry, will occur throughout the formal drafting process of the upcoming forest management plan.

There is going to be a forest management plan without a forestry industry, and without a forestry industry, there will be increased demand for public funds to manage the forest—to thin it out where necessary and do controlled burns. The government will expose the local community to greater not less risk because the forest is not in its natural state when it is part of a forest management program. If the government stops the logging of forestry without doing the thinning and other things, it will put the community at increased risk of fire, which will increase the cost to the community in fire prevention. All that will happen when the livelihoods of hundreds of people have been put aside. Yes, there might be jobs for them elsewhere, but not in the towns they live in because there are no other industries in those towns at the moment. These things take time. When the Liberal Party went to Collie and said that it was going to shut down the coal industry in the same time frame that the government has to stop the logging of forests, the people of Collie were outraged. The Labor Party said that that was unachievable in that time frame and that it would take longer, yet it is shutting down the forestry industry using the same time line. That is apparently okay. It is not okay when a community mines coal, but it is all right when the community's industry involves cutting trees into viable products to provide furniture and other essentials for the community and avoids the use of unsustainable forest products from other countries.

What is the next industry in regional Western Australia that will feel the wrath of this government in its hunger for popularity in the city? Will it be the fishing industry? Will the government stop professional fishing in Western Australia? That would give it a few votes from the recreational fishers who are based in Perth. Will the government target that industry? At least give it a little bit of time and not just drop the news on the day it plans to shut it down. Let the industry and the community know about the plan. Perhaps the government could even go to the next election and say, "These are our plans. We're going to shut down fishing, pastoralism and a range of other things."

Mr V.A. Catania: Shut down Parliament.

Mr R.S. LOVE: It has shut down Parliament already insofar as democracy goes. We know what it is doing with the standing orders and representation in the other place. This government is out of control. It has actually lost any sense of proportion, fair play and convention. It does not care about consultation and it does not care about the communities that its members represent. Its members are silent when the industries in their communities are shut down. I can tell members that if somebody told the member for Roe, "We're going to shut down sheep farming in your electorate", he would not sit there silently. He would not accept it. But government members are accepting it; they are saying nothing. I wonder what all those Labor members who represent the south west are saying—nothing.

Mr P.J. Rundle: They're following the party line.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Yes, they are following the party line.

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

Mr R.S. LOVE: The electorate should be taking good note of everything that has happened today. It is a disgrace.

We know that the government is intent on keeping this state locked away from the rest of the world because it does not have a viable health system. It has not done the hard yards to ensure that people are getting the vaccines that they need to feel some measure of security against COVID in the future. Recently, I read that one of the local governments in my electorate, the Shire of Chapman Valley, has the lowest vaccination rate of any local government area in regional Western Australia. It is situated on the outskirts of Geraldton, a major city with a population of 40 000 people, but the government cannot get people there vaccinated. What is wrong with you people? A vaccination rate of 14 per cent is terrible. No wonder the government is so keen on keeping workers out of this state.

The government has made it very hard for people to come into this state when we desperately need labour. The mining industry has forecast that it will need around 40 000 more employees. It will probably get those 40 000 people. Where will it get those workers from? The mining industry will get them from other industries in the state because it can afford to pay a bit more than farmers, small business owners and the government. Someone will have to find tens of thousands of people to come into this state to fill the job vacancies that exist now and in the future. We need a pathway for people to come into the state. The Minister for Police thinks it is okay that there is not a transparent G2G PASS system. I am told that at the moment, people who want to come into Western Australia across the border at Eucla have to isolate within 200 kilometres of the border in bricks and mortar. I do not know whether anybody in this chamber has been to the Nullarbor, but there is not much bricks and mortar 200 kilometres from Eucla. There are no towns to speak of. The only border at which people can viably isolate 200 kilometres from the border is Kununurra, and we know that accommodation there is already very stretched.

Mr P.J. Rundle: The police minister hasn't been out to the border.

Ms Mia Davies; Dr David Honey; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Shane Love; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Vincent Catania;
Ms Sabine Winton; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Ms Jodie Hanns; Ms Caitlin Collins; Mr John Carey

Mr R.S. LOVE: I doubt whether he has been to the border. He certainly has not been out to see what the situation is in that respect. The member for Roe knows that area pretty well because his electorate extends across there and I think he will have some things to say about that later. The member for Roe will talk about the shortage of farm workers. An officer in Dongara is spending most of her time dealing with people who are trying to get labour for farms in my electorate. My electorate is at the northern end of the agricultural region. We are looking at September as the start date for harvest. I have a few case studies of people who are desperately trying to get labour in. Experienced header drivers from New Zealand want to come. They have had their COVID vax, and a local regional health centre can make sure that they are tested et cetera. Time is critical. Staff are needed by the end of September so they can quarantine. Crops will be ready to harvest from 10 October. The machines they will be driving will harvest 7 900 hectares of grain, worth about \$7 million. It needs to be harvested in a timely manner to get it to the bin. Another case study is the same deal; this time there is 17 500 hectares to harvest but no-one to help do it. The farmers expect the harvest to take about 10 weeks. On their own, it will take about 10 months, not 10 weeks. Another farm comprising 6 500 hectares requires a couple of drivers, a chaser bin driver, two truck drivers and someone else to help with running around doing odd jobs. That is a tall order given the situation. We know there is no clear pathway to get people in. We heard the Premier say today that he had put a proposition to the federal government, but we understand that he has not put such a proposition—not in the proper way anyway. It is not a proposition to announce in the media that the government wants to do something; it has to go through the government channels to achieve it. We know that nothing is being done in that regard. We understand that, in fact, no such formal request has been made by the Premier and that the workers required for the farming industry are not there.

It is not just the farming industry; transport is in the same sort of situation. The transport industry is desperate. The average age of truck drivers keeps going up and up because the only people they can get to come back to work are retirees or people who want to work only part time. There has been an explosion in demand. There are huge crops in the agricultural region. Many mine projects that are trying to get the ore to port from small mines all around the state do not have rail facilities, so they are using massive trucks. Quads are being used on roads in and around Geraldton, a city of 40 000 people. Quads—that is four trailers on a semitrailer—are operating in that area, bringing in well over a hundred tonnes. Someone who has had a licence for a couple of weeks cannot drive a truck like that. It takes years of experience to safely drive a truck like that. We need to be able to access drivers who can do that. They cannot be trained overnight. People with skills have to be brought in.

This government has a tin ear and turns a blind eye to anybody who points out the reality of what is going on outside this place and outside the little circle of safety that exists around the inner suburbs of Perth, where most government members live. Outside of that, things are getting a bit gnarly.

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe) [5.22 pm]: I, too, rise to support the Leader of the Opposition's excellent motion today that this house condemns the Treasurer; Premier and his government's inability to recognise and address the multiple crises of its own making, especially in health and housing, after four years of underinvestment and bandaid budget solutions. This is a budget fail. I think we have heard most of the announcements pursuant to the state budget, so we pretty well know what will be in it tomorrow.

The housing side of it is something that we have continually brought up. I welcome that announcement from the housing minister, but what I do not welcome is the fact that once again this is based around Labor electorates. It is all about the electorates of Bunbury, Albany and Geraldton. There will be some housing announcements in the Labor electorates, but, funnily enough, we have not heard one word about Nationals WA and Liberal Party electorates. Once again, it is like the Collie slush fund. The Collie slush fund from the last four years was well known: \$80-odd million was put aside for Hon Mick Murray's pet projects. We named it the Collie slush fund. We saw things like builders of emergency service vehicles in Narrogin going out of business. A company in Narrogin was doing a fantastic job, but it was in the wrong electorate. What was done? Some company from Perth was paid millions of dollars to move its operation to Collie, in opposition to another business in Collie and in opposition to the one in Narrogin. The government has managed to wipe out that business in Narrogin. Well done! But this is the pattern that has developed over the last four and a half years. We have heard the announcement, and we heard it again from the Minister for Emergency Services: we will have more firefighters and fire buildings in the Labor electorates of Kalgoorlie, Geraldton and Albany. We have seen it again. All we ask for is some equity in some of our inland areas that are doing a fantastic job. It is not about the National Party, the Liberal Party and the Labor Party; it is about equity for all those communities. There are homeless people in Esperance. I would love the Minister for Housing to recognise that and stop talking about just Bunbury, Geraldton, Albany and those types of places. I digress.

I am really worried about the health crisis. Back in 2016–17, the now Minister for Health said that ambulance ramping was a massive crisis, it was no good and that everything was falling apart at the seams. Now, ambulance ramping is 500 per cent worse than it was when he called it a crisis. During question time this week, the minister said that things are running really well. But hospitals have called code yellows left, right and centre. The member for Vasse has pointed it out time after time. All of us in this chamber—it does not matter which party we belong

Ms Mia Davies; Dr David Honey; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Shane Love; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Vincent Catania;
Ms Sabine Winton; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Ms Jodie Hanns; Ms Caitlin Collins; Mr John Carey

to—are worried about what will happen if there is a COVID crisis because, with the current state of affairs, people cannot get a hospital bed. That is without the Delta variant or anything else coming in. That is what worries me.

What worries me just as much is the ag industry. The agricultural industry is the second-biggest industry in this state. As I said yesterday, we are being treated like second-class citizens. I will run briefly through some of the attempts that we have made to try to bring this to the attention of the McGowan government. We have moved various motions. In August 2020, we debated a matter of public interest on worker shortages. In September 2020, a motion was moved in the Legislative Council about the failure of the Minister for Agriculture and Food to support the ag industry. In September 2020, a motion moved in the Legislative Assembly called on the state government to provide a plan for businesses suffering because of an inability to get staff. In September 2020, another motion was moved in the Legislative Assembly raising concerns about the inability of the McGowan government to handle the impending issues of ambulance ramping and social housing. In October 2020, a motion was moved about seasonal worker shortages. In November 2020, a motion was debated in the Legislative Assembly about keeping key industries operating. In May 2021, there was a motion in the Legislative Council about chronic staff shortages on farms throughout WA. The list goes on.

This shows that we are desperately trying to bring the plight of our agricultural industries especially to the attention of the McGowan government. Over the past two days, the Premier has provided arrogant responses to the questions that I have asked him. The Premier's arrogant response was played on the *Country Hour* to everyone in agricultural Western Australia. I have had a massive response. People have contacted me to say, "Thank you for bringing this up. Thank you for defending agriculture and the grain growers and the broadacre people of Western Australia", because the people of regional Western Australia are starting to wake up to this arrogance. It is unbecoming of the Premier. It is not necessary. I know he has a high popularity rating. We know all that —

Mr V.A. Catania: They don't know him like we know him.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: That is absolutely right.

When farmers are out for 20 hours a day trying to get their crop off, they are not interested in the Premier's popularity rating. All they want to do is maximise their returns. The thing that really frustrates me is that, as the member for Cottesloe and the Leader of the Opposition pointed out in their contributions, in September 2020, national cabinet came to an agreement that all states would participate in getting overseas workers into our agricultural regions. Every state has done the right thing. Every state has made it work, but not Western Australia. The Premier is leveraging his own popularity and thinking about the federal election, pitting Western Australia against the rest of Australia to try to benefit federal Labor politicians. In the meantime, he has forgotten about his job, which is to get workers in to help out Western Australian farmers.

I believe the Minister for Agriculture and Food has probably tried pretty hard to make this work, but I suspect the Premier is fending this off, saying, "No. We need to keep this at bay because I need to keep the rhetoric going about the federal government letting down the side for our success in next year's federal election." The grain growers of Western Australia are waking up to that. After the Premier's arrogant replies in question time over the last two days, the responses I have had from farmers today have really consolidated the fact that our farmers are awake to it. As I said yesterday, as I go around my electorate, there is no doubt about it. The Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition were at the Newdegate machinery field days last week. It was the number one subject that came up when people passed through our Nationals WA stand. I am sure the same thing happened at the Dowerin field days the week before that.

For the information of some members in the chamber, I would like to explain that harvest is coming up in October, November, December and January. There is also hay cutting leading up to that, so the pressure starts from September onwards. Farmers are under pressure from September onwards trying to get their hay cut, baled and delivered. It then flows on to the harvest, which starts in October. It is absolutely essential for the harvest to come in as soon as possible because there is quality drop-off the longer the crop stays out in the paddock. Hon Colin de Grussa, our shadow Minister for Agriculture and Food, has calculated that we could potentially lose up to \$500 million of our \$7 billion grain crop by not having the labour to get the crop off. So many people have said, for example, "I've got a worker from Canada who comes over every year to help us with harvest. She's fantastic. She knows the farm and she knows the machinery. We need to get her in. She is vaccinated and ready to come but there's no way, under this Premier, Minister for Health and agricultural minister's current regime, that we can get her in." I have countless examples of other people who have workers in Queensland and Victoria. We need to find a way for them to come in. On most of these farms, there are cottages and other houses where people can quarantine properly. As the member for Moore said, at the moment, people who fly into Perth have to quarantine within 200 kilometres of the city. I can fly into Perth from Victoria or the like and I have to quarantine within 200 kilometres of Perth. Why is a farmhouse in Wandering, which is within 200 kilometres of Perth, safer than a farmhouse in Gnowangerup or

Ms Mia Davies; Dr David Honey; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Shane Love; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Sabine Winton; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Ms Jodie Hanns; Ms Caitlin Collins; Mr John Carey

Albany, which are 300 kilometres and 500 kilometres from Perth? I cannot understand the logic of that and I do not think the Minister for Police can explain it either, member for Moore.

Mr R.S. Love: No.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: If people cross into Western Australia by car, they also have to quarantine within 200 kilometres of the border. I am not sure there are many places within 200 kilometres of the border between Western Australia and South Australia where people can quarantine for 14 days. Our Minister for Police needs to explain that. While I am on that topic, it is unfortunate that the police minister has left the chamber. I understand that it has been announced today on the Healthy WA website that truck drivers who have still had no response to their COVID tests are, as of 12 noon today, being directed across to either Esperance or Kalgoorlie to wait for their results. Those communities have not been consulted and they are quite concerned about it. The directive from 12 noon today reads —

If drivers have not received their test result, they are required to undertake a rapid antigen test ... at the WA border ... and wait for a negative result before being granted entry.

If drivers receive a non-negative RAT result, they will be directed to travel immediately to either Kununurra, Kalgoorlie or Esperance to undertake a PCR test and isolate until they receive a result.

Those communities are potentially being exposed to these truck drivers who do not have their test results. My understanding is that they have only just been told about it today and that they are still finding out about it. This is a concern for me. I would love for the Minister for Police to be able to explain it.

With the Leader of the Opposition's constant questioning about the inconsistencies of the G2G PASS results and inconsistencies in why people have been knocked back many times for many reasons, the minister does not seem to give anything other than a robotic response. For some people, the only way they can get into Western Australia for their mother's funeral or whatever else it might be, is to ring Liam Bartlett and put some pressure on the government. Funnily enough, that seems to get a response. That is what has happened. Liam Bartlett said this morning that the minister has been asleep at the wheel. It is a real concern when people have to go to the media to state their case for compassionate grounds to get into Western Australia. There is another example today with the parents of the unfortunate young guy who is in hospital suffering from a king hit on the weekend with the increasing violence that is going on around the place.

I will now move on to some of the social media we are being swamped with by our farmers. The member for Moore mentioned it. There are so many jobs advertisements for truck drivers, header drivers and chaser bin drivers. Last year, a farmer rang my office to ask what he should do. He said he could put his children on the header to drive it but, at the ages of nine and 12 years old, they were too light on the seat to start the header. That is the sort of thing that farmers are contemplating. I am asking the Premier and the Minister for Agriculture and Food whether they want children of that age responsible for a million-dollar machine and the safety concerns that go with it, because the sorts of issues that worry me are fatigue and needing an extra person to go on. That example highlights the workplace safety issues that will compromise some of our farming families this harvest. We know that Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd is struggling to get employees. It is advertising positions that are normally well and truly filled by now. It is not only our grain farmers; it is also the dairy sector. Our cows need to be milked twice a day and farmers are struggling to get staff. Our shearing teams are losing staff. As I said yesterday, we have three shearing teams in the locality close to my farm in Katanning that have just sold their runs because they cannot find staff. They have shearers waiting in New Zealand but they cannot get them in. That is typical of what is happening.

I mentioned yesterday that we have a breathtaking double standard with grain and iron ore. The Premier will bend over backwards to make sure an iron ore ship is loaded and taken out of the port—it is all great. But as soon as there is a whiff of someone having a case of COVID or symptoms on a grain ship from Indonesia wanting to load up with our barley or wheat, he says, "Sorry; send it back." He does not even want to look at the alternatives. Our farmers in our grain sector are getting very disappointed about this and they are getting to the end of their tether. When the Premier's arrogant responses to my questions in Parliament are played back to people from Geraldton to Esperance, they get a taste of what is going on in Parliament and an understanding of the way their industry is being treated. We have a \$7 billion harvest coming up and I do not see why that is not important. I know that the royalties from the iron ore sector are very important to the Premier and we will hear all about it in the budget speech tomorrow; the government will make up for all the deficiencies in housing and hospitals that have happened over the last four and a half years. I understand why iron ore is important but a \$7 billion grain crop is just as important. The Premier and the Minister for Agriculture and Food need to stop making excuses and taking veiled swipes at the federal government and start taking responsibility for looking after our grain sector.

MR V.A. CATANIA (North West Central) [5.42 pm]: I rise to support the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition and spoken to extremely well by my opposition colleagues who have highlighted the spin and headlines that the Labor government likes to get. We have called it the "mean Mark McGowan government" over the last four years, and I can tell members that that rings true.

Ms Mia Davies; Dr David Honey; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Shane Love; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Sabine Winton; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Ms Jodie Hanns; Ms Caitlin Collins; Mr John Carey

After saying “We’re keeping you safe” during the election campaign, we have discovered that we are anything but safe when it comes to the health system. I have travelled around some of the top 20 places with the poorest vaccination rates in the country. Meekatharra happens to be one of those places. I have been to Meekatharra and asked people whether they have been vaccinated or why they have not been vaccinated. Places like Meekatharra and Carnarvon have large Indigenous populations and some of the lowest vaccination rates in the country. Just under 60 kilometres up the road from Meekatharra is Karalundi College. The school has been told that nobody is coming to give the students a jab and they have to travel down to Mt Magnet for their first jab, which is 210 kilometres away, and then drive back. We hear a lot about Aboriginal communities. A lot of our towns have a large number of Aboriginal people. I talked to the principal of Carnarvon Community College. The college has 75 per cent Aboriginal kids yet the vaccination rate is non-existent.

Ms M.M. Quirk: Member, you must concede that there are some outsiders who are peddling misinformation in some Aboriginal communities.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: That is interesting and I am glad that the member for Landsdale brought it up. I went to Karalundi, which is a Seventh-day Adventist school and community. People there have no problem whatsoever with getting a jab. I spoke to Aboriginal people. I am talking about towns like Meekatharra that have a large Aboriginal population. Aboriginal people find it very, very difficult and scary to go to a hospital to get a jab. That is pretty much it. I think that is human nature. Having to go through a two-step process to get something is very difficult, especially when we do not have COVID in our community. What is needed? Much like we have our BreastScreen and skin cancer check clinics that travel around regional Western Australia, we need to have a mobile vaccination clinic. It can be in the street so that everyone can see it and they can see people go in and come out of it.

Mr R.S. Love: You need a dozen or two.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: We do; we need a lot more. They need to stay in places like Meekatharra for a week. People need to knock on doors and give everyone a jab. There needs to be effort put into this. There is no effort and no advertising. In fact, I think members will find that many of our hospitals and clinics have thrown out vaccines because they cannot —

Ms M.M. Quirk: Member, I was talking about third parties spreading misinformation.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I have not come across any of that.

Ms M.M. Quirk: I have firsthand knowledge of that at Halls Creek, for example, not in your electorate.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Halls Creek is one area in the state. This is a vast state. To the idea that it is all about religious groups peddling misinformation, I say BS. That may be the case in some small communities but it is not in the majority. The main reason we have low vaccination rates is that it is too bloody difficult to get a jab. I do not want to hear that it is the federal government’s fault, because we have heard how the Premier wants to blame everyone. The issue is that it is run by the state. It is run by the WA Country Health Service in regional Western Australia and it is not promoting or advocating getting a jab because it is not resourced. The Royal Flying Doctor Service is at its absolute limit of capacity transferring patients across this state. It is the taxi of the skies for our regional hospitals. It does an amazing job but it is inundated without COVID. I suppose that is the point: without COVID, our health system is inundated.

Last night I drove from Carnarvon to be here. An old chap who is a volunteer with St John Ambulance stood up at a business after hours where there were about 90 people and said, “For the first time in the history of St John’s in Carnarvon, we were unable to go to a job. The police had to attend.” Why? It was because people simply do not want to volunteer anymore. Why do people not want to volunteer anymore? It is because they are shop, cafe, pub and small business owners and tourism operators who are at their wits end because there are no staff, so they cannot volunteer for St John’s to protect the community. The pressure of not having workers in small businesses in the tourism and hospitality sectors—we hear a lot about agriculture—means that people are doing it tough across Western Australia. They cannot get workers. It is impacting our health system because they cannot volunteer. I cannot remember how many years St John in Carnarvon has been running for, but it is quite a few, and this is the first time in its history that it has not been able to go to a job. It is concerning. For someone who constantly drives around the electorate, it is concerning to think that we may not have the volunteers to attend an accident if something goes wrong. The situation is dire. It has also affected the health system in Perth. The son of a friend of mine broke his arm, but it was not diagnosed and they actually missed the fracture. He then had to be operated on several weeks later to fix the fracture. This happened because the staff were tired. Everyone is tired and it is causing accidents and incidents that could have been avoided if the investment into the health system had been made four and a half years ago.

If the government wants to lay blame, it should look back to 2017 when the foot was put on the hose to try to balance the budget, which resulted in a pay freeze. In 2001, we used to have a parliamentary superannuation scheme. It was very lucrative. It would have helped the member for Wanneroo at some point in the future—probably in 2025. It was designed for members of Parliament prior to 2001. In 2000, the Parliament voted to get rid of the parliamentary

Ms Mia Davies; Dr David Honey; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Shane Love; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Vincent Catania;
Ms Sabine Winton; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Ms Jodie Hanns; Ms Caitlin Collins; Mr John Carey

superannuation scheme, led by Alan Carpenter, a former Premier, and who was standing right beside him? It was the now Premier. They both said that they would give away the parliamentary super scheme—give it away! I remember the now Premier standing on the steps of Parliament House right behind Alan Carpenter saying that they were going to give away the parliamentary super scheme. But today, some members of Parliament are still under that parliamentary super scheme. Today, when we have a public sector wage freeze and a members of Parliament wage freeze, a few members of Parliament left in this place still have wages that keep going up. The Premier is one of those members, the Speaker is another and so is the Minister for Regional Development, Hon Alannah MacTiernan, in the other place. They do not have a pay freeze. We get hypocrisy and spin about having to save the finances, yet the person who is making those statements, the Treasurer, is getting a pay increase.

While we are talking about what has happened in the past and the spin, I remember when the current Minister for Transport was sitting on this side pretty much in this seat, or that seat, and constantly on the then government's back about how bad the stadium was. She asked question after question and said how terrible the stadium was and how it should have stayed at Subiaco. Look at it now, everyone! I will bet that a few ministers and government backbenchers will be going to the grand final! It will be interesting to see whether they all declare who they are going with and in what box they will be sitting. I bet they will be there waving their flags and saying, "How good is this stadium?" It was not so good prior to 2017.

When members opposite were elected to government in 2017, the Schools of the Air was chopped and Moora Residential College was chopped. The community fought hard and put pressure on the Premier, who has a glass jaw. He was silent for two weeks. We used to call him "glass jaw McGowan"—we had to hit him, and they did. He changed his decision due to public pressure. In 2016, in the lead-up to the 2017 election, he said that he would introduce legislation to protect subcontractors. Where has that legislation gone? It was watered down and it does not protect subcontractors. Two major building companies have gone into receivership this year. That legislation that the then Leader of the Opposition, Mark McGowan, said he would introduce but never did in his last term of government, and rushed it in in this term, would have protected those subcontractors. A lot of people have lost a lot of money.

I cannot wait to talk to the Minister for Housing, who says, "Thank God we didn't just tear up the Pindan contract." Do members know what? The Pindan Group is going to get something in the order of 39¢ to 79¢ in the dollar. How many months ago did the government announce that? Not one of those subcontractors has got one cent or been contacted by Programmed or the government—not one, Minister for Housing, and we have had all this spin and announcements.

The Minister for Emergency Services has made an announcement about all this money, but where is the workers' accommodation for Kalbarri so that people can get their houses fixed? It is a safety issue, with people constantly driving, day in and day out, from Geraldton to Kalbarri. The workers have not been able to get accommodation in Kalbarri, but I suppose the member for Geraldton likes that. Perhaps the Minister for Emergency Services has his foot on the hose in that regard because it would take away from those businesses in Geraldton. Is that probably right?

Mr R.S. Love: He'll probably send up some unworthy caravans for you.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Yes; I am not even going to bother with those five unlicensed caravans. In 2021 we have had to talk about electoral reform. I remember the former member for Albany standing right there and saying that it is not on the agenda. We have heard it is not on the agenda, but now it is on the agenda. I think that Hon Alan Swinbourn—I cannot remember his name—says that it is now on the agenda. A member for South West Region then said, "We didn't know we were going to win."

Mr R.S. Love: It was Hon Dr Sally Talbot.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: It was Hon Dr Sally Talbot. A person has to say, "Gosh!"

Mr R.S. Love: I have not heard her say anything about forestry either.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: No, they will be silent on forestry. The changes and damage to regional representation from electoral reform is going to be huge. I do not think that many of the members in this house know of the vast distances that a lot of regional members have to cover. I know that the member for Kimberley will understand it. The member for Pilbara will understand it somewhat. The member for Kalgoorlie is not here, but she will understand some of those distances—oh, there you are, Madam Acting Speaker (Ms A.E. Kent), in the chair! I have not slept because there are not a lot of flights between many of our towns. To get here on time means that I have to drive through the night. I apologise, Madam Acting Speaker. A few members understand the distances and that we have to drive at night to do our work as an elected member, which puts us and our family at risk. If we take away more members of Parliament from the bush, it will just get harder. It is hard to cover a million square kilometres. In the last three months, I think I slept in the swag about 10 times because there is no accommodation; it is all booked out.

Ms Mia Davies; Dr David Honey; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Shane Love; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Vincent Catania;
Ms Sabine Winton; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Ms Jodie Hanns; Ms Caitlin Collins; Mr John Carey

Our health system is not keeping WA safe—far from it! Now we hear about what is happening with forestry—oh my gosh! What is the detail? We need detail about what is a native forest? We need detail on the plan? We need detail about softwood estates? Jeez! Anyone knows that it takes at least 25 years to grow a bit of pine. Everyone knows that there is a shortage of pine. Everyone knows that there is a lot of pine over in New South Wales; that is what we were trying to negotiate for when we were in government. Clearly, nothing has happened over the last five years. To do that to a community through a press release—oh my gosh! People are starting to wake up and see the arrogance of this government. This is what happens when a government has so much control. It breeds these types of decisions, and the community will revolt, member for Warren–Blackwood.

On the vaccination debate, I say to the Premier and all our leaders that they should grow up and set a target that everyone can agree on. If it is 90 per cent, it is 90 per cent. Set a target so that people will get vaccinated. I say this to the Premier: do not say it has to be 90 per cent of the population. It has to be 90 per cent of every city and town because regional WA is the area that misses out. Where do people travel? They travel to regional WA. Tourism is going gangbusters and there is the resource centre. We need people in our regional communities to be vaccinated. If it is 90 per cent of them, let us make it 90 per cent. It is all about providing certainty, especially for people over east. A man 90 years of age came into my office yesterday morning and said that he is resigned to the fact that he will never see his daughter who is in the east, yet the Minister for Police is labelling these people as whingers, another arrogant minister in the mean McGowan arrogant government here in Western Australia.

However, tourism is booming in regional WA but to a point where places are closing because there are no workers. If they can get workers, there is no accommodation. We have a massive problem with infrastructure, telecommunication, sewerage, water and power. They are all the issues regional WA is facing, as is the city. When our hotels have an occupancy rate of 10 per cent during the week, we have a problem. We need to work out how we can get people to stay in our hotels and visit pubs and cafes. However, it can all be undone because we have a health system that cannot cater for an impact let alone one case, 10, 20 or 100 cases as is occurring in Victoria. I want to make this point before I end. The Premier has been constantly criticising the Premier of New South Wales and said that she had to lock down. Victoria did it but look at what is happening there.

It is easy to blame everyone and say we are perfect over here but we are anything but perfect when we have a health system in crisis and a housing crisis that cannot be fixed. If we have a COVID outbreak, our regional communities will be the most vulnerable due to overcrowding because there are no houses. It is a tinderbox waiting to happen if COVID-19 happens. Hopefully, it will not but if it does, it will be a tinderbox in regional WA. Members on the other side, do not be arrogant, as the member for Roe said. I am telling everyone to watch question time and to watch Parliament. They are saying, “Oh, my God, is that McGowan?” I said that I have been telling people for years what he is like. Some old members here know what the Premier was like before he became famous and a “state daddy”. We all know what he is like and he shows his true colours in this house. It is disgraceful; it is arrogant and it is mean and do you know what? Western Australia is suffering and we hope we do not get COVID.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr D.A.E. Scaife): I note that I think the member for Landsdale is an experienced member of this place, not an older member of this place, but I acknowledge the member for Wanneroo.

MS S.E. WINTON (Wanneroo — Parliamentary Secretary) [6.07 pm]: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

I say to the opposition: Is that it; is that the extent of it?

Several members interjected.

Ms S.E. WINTON: I rise to make a contribution to this motion and strongly oppose it. I want to talk about some of the multiple crises that have existed in the four years I have been in the Parliament as they relate to the opposition and to spend a few minutes, if I can, outlining the last four years of over-investment and achievement of this government in the fortieth Parliament, rewarded by being re-elected in, historically, the most emphatic way possible.

Perhaps the opposition is going home early to have a bit of a sleep. I noticed that the budget was mentioned quite a lot today in anticipation of the budget being delivered in this place tomorrow. I hope members keep alive the enthusiasm they had during this debate for tomorrow. I remember last year, new members, that budget day was quite exciting. Many of us will go to briefings early tomorrow morning. Hopefully, we will have a different situation than we had last year when the opposition did not even turn up to briefings offered by Treasury. I remember lunch being served early during budget day and the dining room being full of members of the opposition when they should have been studying the budget papers that were to be released the next day. Instead they were getting stuck into what was in the dining room. It will be interesting to see whether they have learnt from the March election result that, as an opposition, they need to bring something to the table by working hard, grunting it out and going into detail rather than just repeating day in, day out, the same questions and the same arguments on the motions they put up.

Ms Mia Davies; Dr David Honey; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Shane Love; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Vincent Catania;
Ms Sabine Winton; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Ms Jodie Hanns; Ms Caitlin Collins; Mr John Carey

In the last four years of the McGowan government that I am very proud to be part of, we have had many achievements. Of course, one crisis hit us by way of the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to COVID-19 arriving on our shores, at the beginning of 2020, as I have done previously in this place, but will do so again, I will list very quickly some of the significant achievements of the McGowan government in the fortieth Parliament. We put our platform to the people prior to the 2017 election and won, which was a historic win that we did not think we would be able to improve on.

After 2017, we worked hard and these are some of the achievements. We tore up the skilled migration list and created more than 76 000 jobs—I believe it is over 100 000 jobs now. We passed the WA jobs act. We are bringing railcar manufacturing back to WA. We built the Matagarup Bridge here after the stuff-up and bugging up in Malaysia by the previous government. We stopped Roe 8. We delivered the \$600 household electricity credit. We froze WA household fees and charges in response to the COVID pandemic. We finally got our fair share of the GST back for WA. I note that previously some in opposition went on about the GST and somehow it was a windfall to us and this government played no part in getting its share for Western Australia.

We spent a record \$28.8 billion in infrastructure to create thousands of local jobs. We put hundreds of education assistants back into the classrooms, after their number had been gutted by the opposition. I know from personal experience as a teacher the impact that decision had had in the previous coalition government. We converted 200 primary school classrooms into science labs. We invested an extra \$200 million across every WA public school. We froze and slashed TAFE fees. We fixed Perth Children’s Hospital and opened it. Remember what a muck-up that was that we inherited from the previous government, but we sorted it. We passed the historic voluntary assisted dying legislation. We established the GP urgent care clinic network. We made record investment in mental health services. We recruited an extra 1 100 police officers. We cracked down on dangerous methamphetamine use and trafficking. We introduced life sentences for meth traffickers. We expunged historical LGBTIQ offences. We established the first Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence. We removed the statute of limitations for historical child sexual abuse. We delivered on the first 10-year homelessness strategy. Metronet is under construction, building roads and busting congestion throughout Perth and we have built a record number of major road projects around regional WA. We banned single-use plastic bags. We introduced the container deposit scheme. We created five million hectares of new national and marine parks. We invested in, and expanded, the Aboriginal ranger program. We passed industrial manslaughter laws. We doubled compensation payments to families of people killed on WA worksites. We brought jobs back into public hands with the Water Corporation, Wandoo Rehabilitation Prison, Melaleuca Women’s Prison, Fiona Stanley Hospital and of course, Peel Health Campus.

We are the only party that can guarantee the future of royalties for regions. There is no doubt about that. We were rewarded for that in 2021. We have more regional members than any other party. That cannot possibly be due just to COVID. I have been saying this for a while in the speeches I have been making, so I was delighted to have read about it in a fantastic review report. I have been trying repeatedly to make that point in response to the opposition—both the Nationals WA, which thinks it is the champion of the regions, and the Liberal Party—that thinks the only reason we formed government was COVID-19. The member for Cottesloe, in his enthusiastic contribution to this motion, actually said the words “We”—that is, the Labor Party—“were facing an electoral rout.” That is what he thought and that is what he said today. He still says that and is completely delusional by wanting to excuse the absolutely pathetic performance of the Liberal Party on COVID. While he stands in this place and keeps defending that and the actions of “The Clan” upstairs, the Liberal Party will, as the review says, probably be a party due for extinction. They are not my words, but the words of the review. The Liberal Party is facing extinction. It is no wonder. When the Leader of the Liberal Party spoke on this motion, he suggested that just prior to COVID, the Labor government was facing an electoral wipe-out. It is quite extraordinary.

The list I just referred to did not include COVID. A very, very important part of the four years of the Labor government from 2017 to 2021 was that we faced the pandemic. Not only did Western Australians support us in the election in 2021 because of those important reforms and initiatives, some of which I outlined just a moment ago, they supported us because of our response to COVID-19. We kept the state safe and we kept our economy going. In fact, we kept our economy going better than most economies in any country around the world. We have the lowest unemployment rate in Australia. This is the place where people want to live during these difficult times. We have done it all while being financially responsible, taking the opportunity through our strong economy and the mining boom to stay disciplined so we are able to respond to what the future holds. Members on both sides of the chamber will agree that this pandemic is not over. We do not know what it will look like next year or the year after. I do not understand why on the one hand the opposition bleats that we should just throw the surplus away because we have it, but on the other hand, it says that we need a plan for the future after the iron ore price goes down. The opposition says on the one hand that the iron ore price will go down and it is all gloom for the Western Australian economy, but on the other hand, it does not applaud this McGowan Labor government for its strong, disciplined financial management to make sure we can react to the future.

Ms Mia Davies; Dr David Honey; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Shane Love; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Vincent Catania;
Ms Sabine Winton; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Ms Jodie Hanns; Ms Caitlin Collins; Mr John Carey

I think it was Johnny Howard who said, “You can’t fatten the pig on market day”, and I suggest that going into the March 2021 election the Labor government was not fattening the pig on market day. As I said, we faced the election after four years of incredibly hard work, delivering on that platform that we put to the people prior to the 2017 election. We delivered on it in spades during the pandemic. That is why the people of Western Australia have now given us the most historic of victories in this Parliament.

The Minister for Transport mentioned the Liberal Party review report before, and I want to take the opportunity to highlight it as well. This motion talks about crises, and it seems to me that the two biggest crises, which the opposition does not want to talk about, are the crises of its own making. I like the words in the motion “multiple crises of their own making”. Opposition members had a crisis of their own making in the last four years. I do not think we need to argue that. It is not only about the last four years. The report brought out by the Liberal Party clearly states that the problem existed way before 2013. In fact, the report suggests that the Liberal Party’s high point was back in 2013. It all went downhill after that, and it was not because of the pandemic.

I want to quickly quote some of that review about the 2021 election result for the Liberal Party. I want to talk about crises, because it is a real crisis. It is a real crisis for this state if we do not have a viable, operating opposition. Nobody wants that. We joke a little bit about it, but not one member of Parliament sitting here thinks that it is healthy for democracy that we do not have a functioning, talented, hardworking opposition, because it is through that the government can be even better. The opposition needs to lift its game, because we are good, but we could be so much better if we were challenged a little bit by the opposition. It is a bit like playing sport, is it not? When we play a good opposition, we lift our game a bit, and we do not quite know how good we can become. Although I have made a little bit of a joke of it, in all sincerity, the biggest crisis facing —

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Moore!

Ms S.E. WINTON: The biggest crisis faced by Western Australia is the pathetic performance of the opposition over many, many years. That is the biggest problem. The opposition needs to own it, rebuild its parties and offer itself as an alternative government to the people of Western Australia.

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister for Emergency Services!

Ms S.E. WINTON: Until the opposition offers itself as an alternative, and until it offers policies, it will not get anywhere.

Point of Order

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The opposition’s incessant bullying of this member is unreasonable and should be stopped. It is not in accordance with standing orders.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Mr Acting Speaker —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr D.A.E. Scaife): No, I will rule on the point of order first. Take your seat, member for Moore. There is no point of order, but I will make the following observation: most of the members in the chamber this evening have been very respectful of the contributions that have been made by members of the opposition. That seems to me to be quite distinct from the way things have been done in the past. I suggest to all members that we continue to try to elevate the debate in that respect. I will go back to the member for Wanneroo, unless the member for Moore feels the need to press a further point of order. No. Member for Wanneroo.

Debate Resumed

Ms S.E. WINTON: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. It is really nice of you to note that I have been rather well-behaved this afternoon. It has been difficult. I had to sit on my hands quite often, but I have tried very hard to sit in this chamber and listen to the drivel from the other side. I will continue, because there is a crisis in this state right now, and the crisis is of the opposition’s own making. I am not making this up. It is in black and white in the Liberal Party’s review of its own performance in the last few years. I am not making it up. The review states —

The extent of the disastrous result of the 2021 ... Election should not be explained away or minimised by blaming the result entirely on the impact of ... COVID-19 ... when there were other critical factors also in play, and had been for some time.

Those facts cannot be ignored.

Interestingly, the Liberal Party did some polling after the election to analyse its bad result. The report states —

The staggering laziness of the Opposition and lack of action by the Party in creating and ‘selling’ acceptable policies much earlier than the advent of the pandemic were contributing factors.

Ms Mia Davies; Dr David Honey; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Shane Love; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Vincent Catania;
Ms Sabine Winton; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Ms Jodie Hanns; Ms Caitlin Collins; Mr John Carey

As I said, the Liberal Party conducted a poll after the election to drill down into the critical features. Nineteen per cent of people surveyed after the election told the Liberal Party that they did not vote for it because they were not impressed by the performance of the Liberal Party over the last four years. It had nothing to do with the pandemic. Three per cent said that they did not vote for the Liberal Party because of the unchecked influence of party powerbrokers in the Liberal Party. I wonder who they are. Would that be Hon Nick Goiran or Hon Peter Collier, who are part of “The Clan” that we all know about because its little chat group was leaked to the media?

Mr M. Hughes: They said, “It’s clan-destine.”

Ms S.E. WINTON: Yes, it was clandestine. I have already mentioned Hon Nick Goiran in this Parliament. My frustration with him up to this point is what I see as his abuse of democracy, given the amount of time he has filibustered on legislation in the upper house. His performance as part of “The Clan” takes my view of him to a different level. The totally sexist and misogynist remarks made by those key powerbrokers in the upper house is quite breathtaking.

[Member’s time extended.]

Ms S.E. WINTON: It is quite interesting that the member for Moore was lecturing us earlier about the member for Warren–Blackwood and some other regional members. He did not say anything about Labor Party policy. I say to the member for Moore, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition; the Leader of the Opposition; the Leader of the Liberal Party, who is not here but I would have liked to ask him in person; and the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party, who made a comment today or yesterday: what is your response to this obvious treatment or attitude towards women by key players who decide the futures or careers of the kinds of people who come into this place to represent us? There is absolute silence. It is gobsmacking. As we know, the WhatsApp messages reveal that Hon Peter Collier used sexist language towards women. He referred to members of the Liberal Women’s Council as “sandwich makers” and other women as “toxic cow” and “prize bitch”. Of course, we know that Hon Peter Collier has form. Back in 2012, he referred to our first-ever female Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, as a cane toad. That is on the record. Hon Nick Goiran spoke about Hon Alannah MacTiernan and Hon Alannah Clohesy in the chamber where he sat in such awful terms. Members of the Liberal Party were quiet about that; they had nothing to say. The 39 women who are part of this McGowan Labor government think it is outrageous that people like that are members of Parliament without any accountability or any responsibility taken for their attitudes or the things that they say.

Point of Order

Mr R.S. LOVE: I question the relevance of this discussion about the matter that we put forward. Mr Acting Speaker, I take the point you made earlier about not interjecting, but it is very difficult if we are being directly attacked and analysed. In my view, our character is being insulted by the member for Wanneroo. I seek your direction as to whether this is acceptable.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr D.A.E. Scaife): There is no point of order. I did not say that there would be no interjections. That is not the word I used. I just encouraged members to keep the debate elevated. I am sure that the member for Wanneroo is wrapping up her comments. I am satisfied that the wording of the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition referring to crises is sufficiently broad to allow this, but I am sure the member is bringing things to a close, and I encourage her to do so.

Debate Resumed

Ms S.E. WINTON: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. I am glad about your ruling on that matter. I am sorry that the member for Moore feels insulted. He has no idea what being insulted feels like. He should try being a woman when people like that are in the upper house, and then he might know what he is talking about.

When we are talking about a crisis, members of the opposition might sit in this place and say, “But it’s not us.” Members should not forget that the member for North West Central has form. The Nationals WA have form in their own party, in the way that they treat women in their party. That is the crisis.

Mr R.S. Love: I think that’s very unfair.

Ms S.E. WINTON: No, it is a crisis that you actually need to attend to. That might say a lot about why you are losing your votes in the bush.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Wanneroo, I remind you to direct your comments through the chair and not to other members.

Ms S.E. WINTON: The National Party is a party that fosters this kind of stuff. Let me remind the other members. It is a crisis because it happened in the last four years. It was a crisis within the National Party, within the opposition. I am talking about the former Deputy Leader of the Nationals WA, Hon Jacqui Boydell, who revealed that she was subjected to bullying, threats and intimidation during her time in the party. It was reported —

Ms Mia Davies; Dr David Honey; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Shane Love; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Vincent Catania;
Ms Sabine Winton; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Ms Jodie Hanns; Ms Caitlin Collins; Mr John Carey

Jacqui Boydell served as deputy for three years before stepping down in March, announcing she would not contest the next election.

...

“Indeed, there have been situations in which I have found myself subject to bullying, threats and intimidation.

It is those kinds of actions within the National Party that its members need to talk to the grassroots people in the bush about. That is what they do not like about the National Party and the Liberal Party.

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Moore, I want to hear from the member for Wanneroo.

Ms S.E. WINTON: I welcome the opportunity for the member for Moore to get to his feet and tell members of this place and the people of Western Australia how his party has cleaned up its act. I can see the member for North West Central sitting behind the current Leader of the Nationals WA, and I do not think it is all kosher. I am telling you now. You guys know it and everyone else knows it. For you to pretend that there is nothing to see here and the only reason that you have lost your support in the bush and the regions is COVID-19 is outrageous. You need to start looking internally to see that your problems are of your own making, not someone else’s. Like your motion said, your crises are of your own making.

The McGowan Labor government has not had to deal with a crisis like that because we are a party for women and of women. The only crisis that we have had to deal with is COVID-19. The McGowan government has handled that extremely well. Tomorrow, members will see a budget that will show that we have been responsible in our management of the economy in the last four years. Although we have a pandemic, we have kept people safe, we have kept the economy going, we have been able to diversify the economy and we have more people in jobs than ever before. We have had great financial success, despite the pandemic. It is not because we have had a gift from the feds or because there has been a mining boom. The Liberal Party can never understand because it thinks that when we win elections, it is because of COVID, and when we have financial success, as the budget will show tomorrow, it is because we have been given some gift by somebody else. It is inconceivable by those in opposition that a Labor government can not only be strong financial managers of the state, but we can be strong financial managers given the \$43 billion-plus debt that we inherited and given that we have a pandemic and still keep this state going strong and safe. Opposition members find it inconceivable that the Labor Party has been successful because of its own actions, and I have highlighted some of what we achieved in our first four years in office. It is totally arrogant of the opposition to not give credit where credit is due. The McGowan Labor government did an incredibly good job in its first four years and it will continue to do so—I have no doubt about that—particularly while we have an opposition that is so pathetic and incapable of looking at itself. This government will continue to strongly manage the state.

MS J.L. HANNS (Collie–Preston) [6.30 pm]: I rise to speak vehemently against the motion before the chamber this evening. I thank the member for Wanneroo for her contribution and reiterate the point she made about the record debt the McGowan Labor government inherited in 2017 when the Liberal–National government was resoundingly rejected by the Western Australian public, but not so resoundingly as the Liberal and National Parties were at the 2021 election. We did not foresee that being possible. We are very happy that it has happened and, more importantly, we are happy that Western Australians are pleased with the way that the McGowan Labor government has handled both the financial situation it inherited and the COVID-19 pandemic.

When I was doorknocking in Treendale in the lead-up to the election, a man told me that he had the utmost respect for the government and the Premier. He said, “Your government has managed to sort out the mess that my lot left you with.” He identified himself as a Liberal voter at that point. He continued, “But because of the way that you cleaned up my lot’s mess, I will be voting for you, and I cannot guarantee it won’t be the last time I vote for you.” He was particularly glowing about the way the Labor government had managed the pandemic and the finances that it inherited in 2017. This makes me think about kids in a candy shop. People say that we should spend the surplus on health, housing and so on, and although all those things are really important, I am concerned that the level of spending that the opposition and the Liberal Party are talking about would put us back in deficit to the tune of tens of billions of dollars. Western Australians do not want to be in that position. The resounding message from Western Australians at the last election was that they do not want the state to be in that position; they want us to be good financial managers. They want us to keep them safe and the economy strong going forward. I think we have proven that we can do that.

When I was a candidate in the lead-up to the last election—as members know, I represent the electorate of Collie–Preston—the Liberal Party came up with its visionary plan to take WA forward with the biggest jobs and renewable energy projects in the nation, otherwise referred to by the member for Roe today as the Collie slush fund. The Liberal Party’s name for this slush fund was the Collie training and transition fund. The Labor government already had its \$100 million *Collie’s just transition plan*. The Minister for Energy has been working very hard on the

Ms Mia Davies; Dr David Honey; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Shane Love; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Vincent Catania;
Ms Sabine Winton; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Ms Jodie Hanns; Ms Caitlin Collins; Mr John Carey

whole-of-system plan and what our energy system will look like in 20 years. In addition, he has been working with the affected communities in Collie and the greater south west region to determine what the changes in the energy sector will look like.

I refer to the member for Moore's comment today that it takes a long time to train people to become truckies; they do not become truckies overnight. I refer to a media statement released by Hon Sue Ellery, Minister for Education and Training, and Hon Rita Saffioti, Minister for Transport, who have a plan to train people to be truckies. A very successful pilot program in heavy vehicle driving operations that ran in the metropolitan region has now been expanded to the south west. One hundred people commenced that 10-week program in the metropolitan region. It has now been taken to the south west in recognition of the fact that projects such as the Bunbury Outer Ring Road will require a significant number of truck drivers in the future. That 10-week driver training program is run in conjunction with Keens Truck Driver Training Bunbury and is free for eligible students. It is geared towards unemployed people who are looking for work. It is a massive contribution to training and education by the McGowan Labor government.

I remind opposition members that in my previous life before coming to Parliament, I was a teacher and vocational education and training coordinator. Having been a teacher in schools, I can honestly, hand on my heart, distinguish between a Liberal-National government spend on schools and training and a Labor government spend on schools and training. I was particularly outraged, as were lots of parents of children at my school in Collie, when it was reported that the Barnett government had increased TAFE fees by up to 500 per cent for some courses. That meant that young people who relied on training to get a foothold in the employment market were locked out of some opportunities because they and their parents could not afford the TAFE fees associated with that further training after high school. What did the Labor government do in the area of training? It slashed some TAFE fees by up to 72 per cent. Courses such as certificate III in education support, electrotechnology, nursing, early childhood education, training and assessment, and surface extraction operations have all benefited from the McGowan Labor government's massive reduction in fees.

I do not agree with the opposition members who said that we underinvest in very important areas, such as jobs, health and education. I do not view the government's strategies for these important areas as bandaid solutions. I will leave members with the thought of the single biggest example of a bandaid solution that I can recall in the last 10 years—I am sure that the Minister for Energy will probably back me up on this—which was Muja A and B. After the Varanus Island gas explosion, the Liberal-National government decided to restore Muja A and B. Initially, they were to be restored at no cost to taxpayers, but in the end it cost taxpayers \$280 million, and that was without the project firing up at all. Let us not talk about the bandaid solutions of the Labor government; let us focus on the excellent job that the government has done and will continue to do. I look forward to the handing down of the budget tomorrow.

MS C.M. COLLINS (Hillarys) [6.38 pm]: I, too, rise to make a contribution to the absurd motion that states that somehow our government is mismanaging the economy. Firstly, as other members have done tonight, I will point out the hypocrisy of opposition members and some of the inaccuracies in the motion.

The Barnett government was in power during the biggest sustained boom in the resources industry, yet from February 2017, WA operated at a deficit of \$3 billion and was heading towards a debt of more than \$43 billion. That was a direct result of the former Liberal-National government not campaigning for WA's fair share of the GST, its unsustainable spending and its failure to look beyond the price of iron ore. I was not in this place back in 2017, but I can only imagine how challenging it must have been for members to inherit such a mess. The McGowan government, back in 2017 and over the next four years, not only steadied the ship, but also put us on a strong footing, and indeed made us the envy of many states and countries around the world.

The member for Wanneroo eloquently pointed out many of the achievements over the past four years pre the COVID-19 pandemic. Let us look at the situation now. The latest economic forecasts from Treasury show that we can expect more than two per cent growth in gross state product and perhaps even reach 2.75 per cent growth. The unemployment rate is expected to fall from eight per cent to 5.5 per cent by 2020 and we are sitting on a \$5 billion surplus. We have achieved these fantastic targets while being hit by a global pandemic and it is ultimately an incredible display of cautious planning and good governance.

Regarding our mission towards economic diversification, the member for Cottesloe earlier pointed out and tried to lecture us that we were not doing enough around green energy. That was astonishing, given the green energy plan that the Liberal Party put forth before the election would have cost taxpayers more than \$15 billion. This government introduced a Minister for Hydrogen Industry. We are leading the way in this space. We are expecting more growth in this industry and from the export market. A lot of comments have already been made about the incredible initiatives that the McGowan government has recently told the state about. We have heard about the homes that will help vulnerable Western Australians—3 300 houses will be built to deal with some pressures that the state currently faces. The idea that it is just a bandaid solution somehow suggests that it is a temporary solution

Ms Mia Davies; Dr David Honey; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Shane Love; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Vincent Catania;
Ms Sabine Winton; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Ms Jodie Hanns; Ms Caitlin Collins; Mr John Carey

and that these homes will disappear. Those homes will be used well into the future to help these people. The idea that it is too little too late is quite a childish and somewhat irresponsible way to look at this government's economic management. It suggests that the opposition would rather us do nothing now. We are dealing with these pressures in a responsible way.

I would rather use my few minutes that I have to talk about this motion in the context of my electorate. The electorate of Hillarys, without a doubt, has been neglected and ignored by successive Liberal governments and members for many, many years. I imagine the notion that the government has underinvested or has come up with bandaid solutions would be contested by just about every single constituent. I will take this opportunity to outline some of the incredible investments that are going into projects in the electorate of Hillarys. Bricks and mortar is not everything. I recognise as a former teacher that part of a good education is in the teaching and learning, but we cannot underestimate that modern facilities are needed to help achieve this. In Hillarys alone during the last election campaign, the Labor Party committed to rebuild Hillarys Primary School, which is the only primary school in that suburb. It committed \$18.7 million to help that school, which was built in 1973, come into the twenty-first century. We are rebuilding Springfield Primary School in Kallaroo—again, the only school in that suburb. The sum of \$32.3 million is going towards Duncraig Senior High School, which is in the electorate of my colleague the member for Carine, and that will also create 140 new jobs. I do not understand how in any sense of the word this could be deemed an “underinvestment” or a “bandaid” solution. These are clear examples of how our state government is proactively providing for the demands of families in the northern suburbs. These schools will be utilised for many years to come. Also back in 2017, the member for Joondalup committed to a new performing arts centre at Belridge Secondary Education Support Centre. It will now receive \$1.5 million, which many other schools around the state will receive, to implement better STEM facilities.

In Hillarys as well, outside of the schools, we are catering for students by upgrading Ern Halliday Recreation Camp, which is creating a huge number of jobs. We are upgrading surf clubs, cycling networks and Craigie Leisure Centre. We are listening to people's concerns about their safety and about dangerous drivers on the roads. I have committed \$150 000 for mobile CCTV cameras to capture hoons. Again, I am not sure how this could be seen as an underinvestment. This is the most funding that my electorate has ever received and I am very pleased that that is so.

The idea of labelling this government's economic management and its announcements in recent weeks around the budget as a “bandaid” is simply inaccurate. The member for Vasse mentioned funding going towards Joondalup Health Campus. This is, ultimately, the hospital that is utilised by people across the northern suburbs. Constituents have reached out to me to discuss how important that hospital is for their family. We all see the demand at the moment, particularly on emergency departments. The state government has just announced \$256.7 million for this fantastic facility. Last week, I toured the emergency department at Joondalup Health Campus and spoke to some of its dedicated staff. Those workers are deserving of our support. There are challenges, but to simply label every announcement that we will be discussing tomorrow in the budget as a “bandaid solution” is very problematic. It is quite tiresome, it is a negative refrain, and it creates a very negative perception that our state is not helping to support the people who need it.

MR J.N. CAREY (Perth — Minister for Housing) [6.47 pm]: It is my pleasure to speak on this motion and, of course, to reject the proposition put forward. We should be very clear, as we have already heard on the record, that our government has navigated the COVID-19 pandemic extremely well. Whilst we are always very cognisant of the threat of the pandemic, it is because of our management that we have been able to drive an economic recovery that is the best in the nation. We responded to the pandemic with a multibillion-dollar WA COVID recovery plan, which, at its very basis, set foundations to drive economic growth and jobs. All Western Australians should be proud of the current state of our economy, including the fact that we have the lowest unemployment rate of all states in Australia. That strong result was driven by an increase of 7 000 full-time workers in July. Youth employment has surged. We have created very strong economic foundations for our state. We have also seen strong retail growth. We acknowledge that this booming economy has created pressures as more Western Australians have returned. We have seen, as reported in *The West Australian*, the largest interstate migration back to Western Australia since 2013. Of course, we will continue to respond to those pressures in the budget.

I am deeply proud of the investments we are making in health and housing. I have heard some bizarre commentary, particularly from the member for Roe. We announced an \$875 million social housing investment package, the largest in the state's history, and \$2.1 billion over the next four years to deliver 3 300 new homes. The member for Roe had a go because we announced a regional renewal program for Albany, Bunbury and Geraldton. I found it extraordinary. The Nationals WA, which claims to represent the bush, is actually attacking communities for receiving those funds for renewal projects. There are good plans for increasing the liveability of those towns, which also deal with social housing refurbishment, and the member for Roe criticised that in this chamber! At the next election, when the National Party candidates are out in those seats, we will remind people that the National Party criticised those investments directly. Apparently, Collie gets a slush fund. I will be really interested at the next election when the

Ms Mia Davies; Dr David Honey; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Shane Love; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Vincent Catania;
Ms Sabine Winton; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Ms Jodie Hanns; Ms Caitlin Collins; Mr John Carey

National Party is out in Collie attacking Labor for investing in that great regional community. That was the message from the member for Roe. He has provided some really delightful commentary that will make great election material to be used against their candidates because he has criticised investment in regional communities. I find it extraordinary that he would criticise investment in those communities, particularly social housing projects. Of course, as part of the \$875 million investment, we will also invest in regional homes. In particular, we will accelerate social housing delivery by allocating \$80 million for a modular program specifically targeting the regions. We understand the constraints of 27 000 building approvals, which has been facilitated by the state and federal governments.

Today in this chamber we heard attacks on the conduct of ministers. There were some quite nasty personal attacks, particularly from the Liberal opposition. As an openly gay member of Parliament, I am deeply concerned about the direction of politics in Western Australia when we see the state and the shape of the way the Liberal Party is heading. We should be deeply concerned. If we want an open, tolerant and inclusive society and community, we should be deeply concerned about the very narrow ideological position being taken by the Liberal Party, as referred to in the report on the Liberal Party. This is a Liberal Party that wants to dictate to people about every component of their lives; that wants to dictate to women about their bodies and their choices; that wants to dictate to gay couples in same-sex relationships that they should not be able to get married. It is very clear, in reading the report, that an ideological faction is taking over the Liberal Party. I quote —

Every State Division of the Liberal Party has seen religious conservative factions increase their influence ...

There is a push by churches of many denominations who are disillusioned with their political representatives to join the Liberal Party to counter such issues as abortion, voluntary euthanasia and whatever they regard as radical social policies.

The review also said —

... It increasingly failed to project a consistency and predictability of core Liberal Party beliefs and values.

The only conclusion that can be made is that the Liberal Party lost most of its voter base, who deserted it, because of its leadership squabbles, factional activities and loss of principles.

I think most Western Australians fundamentally believe in an inclusive society, where you are free, and I absolutely believe in everyone having the right to practise their beliefs and their religions—but we also respect the rights of the individual.

This report also makes some great commentary about the performance wing of the Liberal Party, and I have to say the bit I liked—having doorknocked most weekends in my first term, and consistently doorknocking now as a minister in my second term; I still do it on Saturday mornings—was the absolutely diabolical performance of the Liberal Party, which shows MPs who had no connection and made little to no attempts to engage with their local communities. I find it incredible that the other side makes calls that we are arrogant. I do not think arrogance is me going out to doorknock my communities every week to engage with them and hear their views. It is not arrogant for other members to do the same. We can see it in our Labor backbenchers, who are out there engaging with their local communities every weekend—not just before an election, but in a range of different ways. That is not arrogance. But I can tell members that this is arrogance when many Liberal MPs did so little to engage with their communities. They took them for granted, and that is why they lost their seats. Let us be very clear on this. If the Liberal Party had some connection with its local community, that would make it easier, regardless of election cycles.

Of course, we are now seeing repeat behaviour. The other element was the laziness of the opposition. The report states —

We were told that many senior parliamentary members did little, if anything, to develop policies in anticipation of the election. Those that did, found it difficult to receive feedback.

...

It seemed that the office of the Leader of the Opposition ... for the three years prior to the start of the election campaign in 2021 was deciding policy with little, if any, participation by senior members of the Opposition ...

The Liberal Party was not even developing policy for most of the time that it was in opposition. It is interesting that we are still seeing that now. It is repeating the faults outlined in this report when we see the Leader of the Liberal Party being more interested in making consistent personal attacks via social media than putting out any policy positions whatsoever. He must be spending a lot of time on the social media side, but nothing on any policy positions.

I think the most disappointing element, as the member for Wanneroo discussed, is the sexist and misogynist language and behaviour used in “The Clan”, which has been met with silence by the Leader of the Liberal Party. Commentary was made about Hon Sue Ellery, the Minister for Education and Training, who is a good personal friend of mine. They called her “the respirator”. They said —

Ms Mia Davies; Dr David Honey; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Shane Love; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Vincent Catania;
Ms Sabine Winton; Mr Bill Johnston; Acting Speaker; Ms Jodie Hanns; Ms Caitlin Collins; Mr John Carey

“She lacks the vibe and doesn’t exactly ooze inspiration after walking the distance from her table to the platform and up the stairs. She sounded like she needed a respirator.”

Mr Goiran said —

... “if I provided you a photo of my view right now it would make you all unwell. I sit opposite (Labor MPs) ... Clohessy & ... MacTiernan.”

That is extraordinary. Can you imagine if a Labor minister did that—the calls for resignation from the opposition? Yet the Leader of the Liberal Party says nothing. He does not call it out. He does not say, “This is unacceptable.” It is silence; it is absolute silence. We are seeing that there is one rule for conservatives and one rule for progressive Labor politicians and ministers. We are held accountable to higher standards, but when they do it and it is made public, we do not hear anything from the Leader of the Liberal Party.

We should be concerned; we should absolutely be concerned, because that is part of the process of democracy, yet we have a Leader of the Liberal Party who has said nothing about it. I just cannot believe that this silence is viewed as acceptable.

I also note that, unless I am wrong, we have not heard any commentary from the National Party, either. I would have expected the Leader of the Opposition to at least stamp down and say that this language was unacceptable, but again: silence. I do not know why there is silence. Why is it that the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the National Party, has said nothing about that language? Leadership is about setting values and about saying, when we come across matters like this, “That is not good enough.”

I acknowledge the member for Vasse, who at least had the guts to say that it was not acceptable. To date, the member for Vasse is the only member opposite who has actually spoken out on this. I would have thought better of the Leader of the Opposition and the National Party, and expected her to actually call this misogyny and sexism out and say, “This is unacceptable in politics”, because it is. We want to create a culture in which everyone feels included to run for office and to be involved in political parties, whether they are gay or lesbian or whether they come from a multicultural background. They should not have fear.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

House adjourned at 7.00 pm
