

Mr Bill Johnston; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Robyn Clarke; Mr Terry Healy; Mr David Scaife; Mr Peter Rundle; Ms Meredith Hammat; Ms Alison Kent; Mr Chris Tallentire; Dr Jags Krishnan; Mrs Lisa Munday; Mrs Lisa O'Malley; Mr Matthew Hughes; Ms Jodie Hanns; Mr Simon Millman; Mr Paul Lilburne

APPROPRIATION (RECURRENT 2022–23) BILL 2022
APPROPRIATION (CAPITAL 2022–23) BILL 2022

Declaration as Urgent

On motion by **Mr W.J. Johnston (Minister for Mines and Petroleum)**, resolved —

That in accordance with standing order 168(2), the Appropriation (Recurrent 2022–23) Bill 2022 and the Appropriation (Capital 2022–23) Bill 2022 be considered urgent bills.

Cognate Debate

Leave granted for the Appropriation (Recurrent 2022–23) Bill 2022 and the Appropriation (Capital 2022–23) Bill 2022 to be considered cognately, and for the Appropriation (Recurrent 2022–23) Bill 2022 to be the principal bill.

Second Reading — Cognate Debate

Resumed from 12 May.

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt — Leader of the Opposition) [3.11 pm]: I rise today to respond to the state budget delivered by the Premier; Treasurer last Thursday. It is interesting that with a number of members opposite well credentialed to be Treasurer, this Premier still chooses to hold tight to the purse strings. Nevertheless, here we are. For the second year in a row, the Premier has delivered the state budget as Treasurer. This is the second year in which the state finances have balanced out to deliver a massive budget surplus—an eye-watering surplus—of \$5.7 billion. When it was announced, was it presented in a circumspect and sober manner? No. This Premier was too busy thinking about how other state Treasurers would react to a \$5.7 billion surplus. This Premier, with great glee, pictured them all looking like they had swallowed a bumblebee, not for nothing, but it is hardly statesmanlike or relevant in the scheme of managing the Western Australian economy. It is unedifying to see our Premier gloating, arrogant and smug. It is also not warranted.

This Premier would have us believe that it is good financial management that delivered this surplus. That is not true. This Premier would have us believe that this is a fair and responsible budget. That is not true. This Premier says that this budget will help families through the challenges of today. That is not true. Last Thursday, the Premier claimed that this budget will help address increased cost-of-living pressure for households. That is not true. This is a budget of good fortune, not good management. The budget papers reveal that this McGowan government has money pouring into its coffers—pouring in from royalties, pouring in from taxation, and pouring in from GST receipts from the deal that was delivered by the federal coalition government.

Let us look at this revenue stream, revised up relative to the midyear figures published just a few short months ago: royalty income, up by \$2.8 billion; increased taxation income; transfer duty up by \$220 million; motor vehicle taxes up by \$147 million; payroll tax—that tax on jobs—up by \$90 million; and increased GST payments. There is \$4.6 billion more in the budget than Western Australia would have received if not for the reforms to the GST system delivered by the federal coalition government. Plain and simple, the \$4.6 billion extra GST makes up more than 80 per cent of the surplus the Premier announced last Thursday. To quote the opposition shadow Treasurer, the good financial position the state finds itself in is the product not of good financial management, but of record revenue. The only part of this for which the Premier can claim credit is higher state taxation.

To add insult to injury, debt is still climbing over the forward estimate. Any claim that this government is dealing with the debt monster that it was so deadly afraid of when in opposition is a farce. Let me repeat: debt over the forward estimates is still going up, based on the figures that were presented by this Premier last week. I recall that when Labor was in opposition, it said that the former government's debt was the worst debt in history. The now Minister for Transport was quoted as saying the Barnett government had unleashed a debt monster that could not be controlled. The former member for Victoria Park, who later became Treasurer, said the debt was beyond the capacity of the state to manage. They hired a blue Cookie Monster suit and raced around the city with this debt monster. It cannot possibly have been the worst debt in history if this Premier and his trusty financial lieutenant, the Minister for Transport, and their cabinet have made no real effort to pay it down, and they have not. This government with its record surplus has made no effort to reduce the debt for future generations of Western Australians. Instead of earnest concern for the future taxpayers of this state, the Premier now arrogantly and smugly points to the embarrassment of riches in his piggybank.

In February 2017, the Labor Party opposition promised to legislate to ensure that half of all iron ore royalties would go towards repaying debt. It said that policy would apply when Western Australia's GST distribution surpassed 65 per cent of its per capita distribution, at the same time as the iron ore price exceeded \$US85 a tonne. At the time this policy was announced, there were sceptics. It was unconceivable at a time when we had seen low royalty rates and low GST returns that that would make a real difference. Labor won the 2017 state election and it won

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the 2021 state election, but, sadly, we have not seen this policy implemented. I think it was a confected and deceitful promise that Labor had no intention of delivering. The government has created a debt reduction account, which supposedly will be the destination for 50 per cent of iron ore royalty windfalls, but this is just an exercise in smoke and mirrors. Money flows in and money flows out. Had the McGowan Labor government followed through with its commitment from 2017, debt would have been reduced by \$14 billion over the last three years alone. That would have been 50 per cent of \$7 billion in 2019–20, 50 per cent of \$11 billion in 2020–21 and 50 per cent of \$10 billion in 2021–22. Had the Labor government kept its word, \$14 billion of debt would have been retired. Members, to date no royalty income has been used to reduce debt. Rather, this government has become accustomed to the trappings of government and intoxicated by record revenue that it will use to buy its way to the next election and beyond. Paying down debt is no longer the focus or priority of this government.

Perhaps for a year after the pandemic had struck, we could accept the rationale that jobs and job creation, and stability, were more important than paying down debt. However, we have not had prolonged lockdowns or economic depressions here in the west. In fact, in the midst of the pandemic, the Premier delivered his first budget and a whopping surplus of \$5.8 billion. This year, the surplus is \$5.7 billion. The iron ore sector is stable; GST receipts are stable, thanks to the commitment from the federal coalition government; and taxation income is increasing. This government has failed to make any serious inroads into debt reduction. That is selfish, it is arrogant and it is hypocritical given the promises and campaigns that the Labor Party opposition ran against the previous government.

Before I move on to the missed opportunities to reform the state's economy that a budget of this nature has presented to the Premier, I want to pause briefly to discuss special accounts. This is something that the opposition will investigate further in more detail. These accounts, known as SPAs, are established under various sections of the Financial Management Act, or by specific legislation—for example, the Royalties for Regions Act. According to the answers given to questions asked by our shadow Treasurer in Parliament, there are currently 24 special purpose accounts in use, with a balance of approximately \$19.1 billion as of April 2022. There is merit in putting aside funding for major projects—we are not opposed to that—as a sinking fund, if you like, for significant projects such as the \$1.8 billion for the replacement of King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women. The debt reduction fund, however, is an artifice. It is smoke and mirrors and nothing more. In truth, these SPAs, which have proliferated under this government, are places for the government to pocket large chunks of money it knows it cannot spend. For the most part, there is very little detail attached to how the funding will be spent in the future. It is lazy budgeting to hide big chunks of money and park them in some nondescript accounts. This government seems to have made an art form out of it.

Let me now turn to the missed opportunity for this government to embark on economic reform, because if not now, when does it address taxes on productivity like payroll tax? Businesses in Western Australia are subject to the highest payroll tax of any in the nation. These rates put our businesses at a competitive disadvantage. There is no reason why government could not have chosen to address those constraints, or at least started to, in this year's budget. Budgets are about choices. The McGowan Labor government has chosen not to reduce the tax on employment. Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia's chief economist, Aaron Morey, is on record saying that with the fix to the GST system, there is now no reason that businesses should face higher taxes for creating jobs. In 2020, he said the higher tax burden was forcing businesses to fight with one arm tied behind their backs. Once a WA business gets to around 20 to 25 workers, it faces the highest payroll tax in the country.

Let us think about the challenges we have faced due to the constraints of global supply chains being disrupted during the pandemic. Think about the sharp focus these constraints have provided for governments of all persuasions around the nation and globally, driving them to think about, encourage and invest in manufacturing and processing closer to home to capitalise on what we know needs to be done to prevent the shortages of supply that we have seen impacting our community. Manufacturing and processing are job-intensive industries. Payroll tax is not their friend. If we are to diversify our economy and reduce our reliance on the mining sector, we need to reduce the tax on productivity for those businesses that can help us to achieve this. It is clear to me that a more competitive tax regime is needed to unlock that potential. Until then, as Mr Morey from the CCI points out, we are forcing businesses to compete with one hand behind their backs. If not now with a surplus of \$5.7 billion, when does government consider these changes? When is the right time to have this conversation? Governments of both persuasions are reluctant to let go of that income stream, but if we are serious about diversifying our state's economy and remaining globally competitive, we have to see action by this government. Sadly, instead of taking a sober look at the opportunity to deliver long-lasting reform for the business sector, the Premier prefers to arrogantly and smugly point to the embarrassment of riches in his piggy bank. It is indeed an opportunity missed.

Another thing was disappointing as well. We just had question time, with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition asking a question of the government about the royalty rate for the fledgling potash industry. It was somewhat surprising that the government has used this budget to slap a higher than expected royalty on a fledgling industry that is

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critical to our agricultural sector. I note that Stewart McKinnon recorded in *The West Australian* last Thursday that potash producers were absolutely livid after seeing the five per cent royalty rate to be applied to sulphate of potash. I understand industry has raised its concerns about why, especially when there had been discussions with government stretching back as far as 2015 for a much lower royalty rate than where it finally landed. Why is this an issue for our state? Australia imports all of its potassium for our agricultural output and there are some significant global factors impacting supply currently, including the war in Ukraine and sanctions against Belarus. It is used in the horticultural sector for fruit and vegetable production, such as for high-value products like avocados, grapes and a number of others. If the government is serious about diversification and shoring up our ability to manage this industry and assist and support the growth of a new sector, it needs to deliver a far better outcome than slugging an industry that needs support, not barriers, with the price for its products at \$20 a tonne.

I turn now to the three issues that truly demonstrate that this government has had the wrong priorities since coming to power in 2017. After five years, a stable GST share, record royalties from a booming mining sector and limited lockdowns, unlike every other state, here is the question we face: should we not have a health system in good nick, a housing pipeline underway that keeps Western Australians in affordable homes and a workforce to capitalise on the opportunity that we know exists? While the Premier basks in the glow of 5.7 billion shiny dollars sitting in Treasury coffers, why was the government not more generous in sharing the wealth in this year's state budget? How can we be the wealthiest state in the nation and have a crumbling health system, a crisis in housing and more and more Western Australian households struggling to make ends meet? That is the question.

Let us start with health. It is the opposition's view that the funding committed in the health budget is now a desperate game of catch-up. This is a government that has tried to spend its way out of the crisis that it created when it stripped funding from operational budgets in the Department of Health when it came to power and did not implement any of the reforms recommended by the sustainable health review, so we have all of the financial efficiencies with none of the actual productivity efficiencies that the reform demands. We have an ambulance ramping crisis. We have a shortage of beds, nurses and doctors. We have massive blowouts in elective surgery and we have equipment failures—and, yes, there have been lives lost.

As we went into the pandemic, we had a health system that had the lowest number of beds per capita in the country. We are the wealthiest state in this nation. The government cannot spin its way out of this. There is a health crisis but it would appear to us that everyone except the Premier and the Minister for Health, and the Minister for Health before her, can see it. The Australian Medical Association's 2022 *Public hospital report card*, which was published in March this year—only two months ago—says that only 43 per cent of category 3, or urgent, patients in emergency departments are seen within the recommended 30-minute period. It also found that the median wait time for elective surgery last year was 46 days—18 days longer than the best performing state and an increase of 10 days compared with the rate in 2019–20. These statistics are not going in the right direction.

We saw ambulances ramped for more than 52 000 hours last year. That is double the number of hours they were ramped the year before. Code yellows were called in our major hospitals as recently as two weeks ago, and this is a regular occurrence. Our shadow health minister has pointed out that there is no clear plan on when the promised Joondalup medi-hotel will be delivered, despite this being a 2017 election commitment. Although we welcome the commitment, finally, of additional funds to progress the Geraldton hospital, particularly members who serve the electorates of Moore and Geraldton and those throughout the midwest who utilise the services of the Geraldton hospital, there is still no time frame. When the Minister for Health was pressed on this, she was unable to say when this project would be completed and delivered. That leaves the people of the midwest in limbo once again.

Likewise, it was very disappointing to see no investment for Margaret River Hospital, despite the WA Country Health Service saying that this is one of the priority hospitals that need work. It needs an expanded emergency department, it needs investment in a mental health unit and it needs maintenance. It is a hospital that no longer caters to the growing population and tourism visitors to that region. It cannot be ignored, but under this government it has been.

For regional patients who must travel to access specialist services, there will be no relief through the patient assisted travel scheme through any increases that have been asked for by the opposition. I draw members' attention to the response from the Minister for Health when asked by the opposition whether this was an issue she had been pursuing as part of the preparation for the budget. It was dismissed out of hand. The house should know that the current Minister for Health was a member of the parliamentary inquiry back in 2015 that found the fuel subsidy offered by the scheme to be inadequate. Members should think about the cost of fuel in the current circumstances. It can only have become more inadequate. The first two recommendations of that committee supported an increase to the subsidy and an annual review to ensure that it reflected the current costs of land travel in our regions. Country people are sensible. They recognise that not every service can be delivered in every regional location; however, they need support when travelling for specialist medical services that cannot be delivered by governments of either persuasion

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no matter how well-meaning they are or how much investment they make. They simply sometimes must travel to major regional centres or the metropolitan area. The current fuel subsidy is 16¢ a kilometre travelled. As a comparison, a public servant travelling on official business is ordinarily entitled to a rate as much as 98.6¢ a kilometre. We are talking about people accessing life-saving specialist medical attention. It truly is a miserly government that refuses to support country patients who have no option other than to travel to access specialist health services.

Staying in the midwest, I note that the Minister for Health, not content with having the Geraldton radiation oncology unit funded to the tune of \$9 million by the federal Liberal–National government, is demanding another \$10 million from the coalition government to deliver that vital project. On such an important project, when the coalition government has put funds on the table already, surely this minister, in a budget that has just been delivered, with the delivery of the Geraldton hospital project yet to be finalised because there is no date, this funding could be found and that unit could be included in the redevelopment.

Mr R.S. Love: It makes sense.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: It absolutely makes sense, member for Moore. Surely it could leverage the commitment the coalition government made back in 2019 as part of a nationwide investment into 13 oncology units. I urge the Treasurer to find these funds. Given that the Geraldton hospital is already delayed, delays that occurred under this government, there should be an opportunity to wind this project into the new time line so that the good people of Geraldton and the midwest are not forced to travel for treatment at what is already a very difficult time.

I return to my initial comments on health—one of the key limbs one would expect a government to be delivering in spades on, having had five years and six budgets and massive surpluses two years in a row. However, this government is furiously trying to spend its way out of a crisis of its own making. It is quite simply appalling that we live in the wealthiest state in the nation but we have a health system that is daily risking the wellbeing and safety of our patients and workforce, both in regional Western Australia and the metropolitan area.

I turn now to the challenge of finding stable and affordable accommodation in Western Australia. I am sure all members agree that one of the bread-and-butter aspects of being a state government and delivering these services is ensuring that there is appropriate housing and that that pipeline continues to have investment. More and more Western Australians are struggling to keep a roof over their heads. Since June 2020, the number of people waiting to access priority public housing has increased by 316 per cent and the public housing waitlist has grown by over 9 000 people. The opposition's shadow Minister for Housing has reported through questions in this place that over 210 people were added to that growing public housing waitlist just last month—210 more people in one month. In my office I have been faced with harrowing stories of families and individuals facing homelessness on an all too regular basis.

Just this week I have written to the Minister for Housing to highlight a case in my electorate of a single mother with two young children who will shortly be without a home. Through no fault of their own, their landlord wishes to sell the property. They have been unable to find suitable accommodation in the town they currently live. There are no rentals available. It means that this person will no longer be able to work in a job for which we are furiously trying to retain and recruit to support those who need it the most in our community. It means that her children will be uprooted from their school and their support network. It means that they will be left vulnerable in an unstable housing situation. This young, single mother is just one of many Western Australians who wanted me to know how desperate the situation was. She came to my office under enormous duress to share her story and to seek my assistance. Members, I feel utterly helpless. We have tried every avenue we can think of, and I am not too proud to ask for help if it means that we can find a solution for this little family. Even if they were to join the public housing list and be declared urgent, they would still be waiting for an average of two to three years. Over 1 300 applicants have been waiting for over six years to access public housing and there are no signs of improvement. Shockingly, there are 10 fewer homes now than there were in June 2020, but over 9 000 more people waiting for a placement. Deputy Speaker, you will hear every single member on this side of the house talk about this because they see it reflected in their communities, and no doubt members of government do, too. I repeat: I feel utterly helpless when I have people like this young woman come to see me. She wants to be a contributor to the community she is a part of. She is working. She has kids who need a stable environment. She is doing everything right, yet we cannot find her a place to live. It is heartbreaking—heartbreaking for her and for the kids.

The opposition has called for some time for the government to increase the spot purchasing of homes to add to public housing stock, particularly in the regions. The \$31 million announced in the budget to purchase private dwellings is welcomed, but there is significant work to do, and fast. Questions asked in Parliament by the shadow Minister for Housing, Hon Steve Martin, revealed that only 143 properties had been purchased using those provisions. As the member for Central Wheatbelt, I might add that none has been purchased in the wheatbelt, just one has been purchased in the goldfields, where we know there is a serious crisis, and only eight have been purchased in

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the midwest. As the local member for the Central Wheatbelt, but also as the Leader of the Opposition, I urge the government to start using these funds swiftly to ensure that families like the one who visited me last week can remain in their communities safe and supported.

Before I move on from the housing crisis of this government's own making, I take this opportunity to raise the failure of this government to invest in the expansion of Pringle Village, a seniors independent living village in the goldfields. The provision of suitable accommodation for seniors, particularly women over 50, is a significant issue for regional people. Pringle Village in Kalgoorlie urgently needs support to expand. This has been on the agenda for the opposition, with both the National and Liberal Parties committing to additional funds at the last election. We did the hard yards of working with Goldfields Masonic Homes and Doug Dawes and his committee to invest in the first stage. It makes good, economic sense to create affordable and safe housing for seniors so they can downsize, freeing up housing stock in a constrained market. This government has dragged its feet for five years to allow them to expand and deliver stage 2. Our commitment to this project cannot be questioned because we provided millions to enable that development in the first stage, with the good work and investment of the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder and the committee from Masonic Homes. This state government has not come to the party and it is time that more noise was made about this and more urgency applied. Projects such as Pringle Village are essential. After five years when a very strong business case has been sitting with government and advocacy from members of Parliament, it simply does not fly that the government has not been able to deliver this project. I think I understand the real reason projects such as this have not been delivered in regional WA. The Minister for Regional Development does not believe that the state should be involved in projects like this. In fact, she made comments to that effect when we were opening a seniors housing project in my electorate, saying that the private sector should be delivering on projects such as that in regional communities. She was missing the point completely that the private sector will not invest in projects like that in thin markets, but it is the right thing for government to pull out the stops and assist with land development, headworks and the like to ensure that we can support seniors and others in our community who require affordable and safe housing. The delays on this project lay squarely at the feet of this government. The government lacks the political will to progress this, and now we are in the midst of a housing crisis, with Hon Kyle McGinn saying that the government is furiously working to try to bring stage 2 of the project to fruition. It has had five years in government. The business plan is ready to go, with commitments from the opposition when we were in government to deliver on the second stage if we had been returned. This government has done nothing, and that lies at the feet of its local member and also this government.

Likewise, the opposition has been a vocal supporter and advocate for worker accommodation in regional Western Australia. This government has dragged its heels on projects such as these. Yesterday, we had the headline, as reported on ABC News, "WA housing crisis forces Exmouth workers to sleep in their cars". The member for North West Central, who is sitting behind me, has been on the record, repeatedly pointing to the fact that we need to see worker accommodation delivered into these tourism hotspots to support local businesses and to allow these communities to deal with an influx of people, the rising cost of housing and the lack of housing. Is the headline "WA housing crisis forces Exmouth workers to sleep in their cars" one that we should have in a state with a \$5.7 billion surplus? I think it is disgraceful, Deputy Speaker. I think it was avoidable and it is entirely this government's fault that it has not acted sooner or with any great deal of urgency. It has belligerently ignored the local community and the local member, and we have now reached crisis point.

Whatever funding is announced by the Minister for Housing or this Treasurer is too late. We are in the middle of an overheated construction market and a constrained labour market. This should have been done far earlier. It is a missed opportunity, and now we see a real crisis, with workers living in their cars. It should do wonders, I imagine, for those businesses and workers who are considering moving to our state! We already have an issue in convincing people that we are safe to come and work in. We have been shut down for two years, they have been repeatedly told by the Premier through the duration of the pandemic that we are closed for business, and there is a nervousness about people returning to Western Australia. Those businesses that rely on those workers desperately need the ability to house those workers and to give them some confidence that they will be looked after. The message that it is sending to those potential workers is nothing good. An excerpt from the article published by the ABC yesterday reads —

In Exmouth in Western Australia, hundreds of workers who keep the town ticking have no choice but to sleep in their cars.

Christian Vogl, who is working at Exmouth's bakery, said he could not find share-house accommodation or an affordable place to stay.

"No local wants to do the job so other people like me come and do the jobs but there's no accommodation available for us," he said.

Josh Mason and Broc Leyr have recently arrived in town to work in construction and said they were two of many also sleeping in their cars.

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“It’s pretty terrible. There’s not much housing at all [and] \$50 a night for a caravan park is pretty expensive,”
Mr Mason said.

This points to a government that has taken its eye off the ball, failing to invest in our regions and failing to respond to the pressures that have been building. Five years of a Labor government and we have people working and sleeping in their cars in a premier tourism town. If I think back to 2008 when we came to government off the back of a Labor government, I could have replaced that exact article with one written by the *Pilbara News* or the *North West Telegraph* in Karratha about double-bunking in caravans and people unable to find accommodation. The legacy of a Labor government is that it takes its eye off the ball, it does not invest until it is too late and we are left to clean up the mess. I am reminded very much of when we came to government in 2008. That task was left to us to normalise the market in places like Karratha and the Pilbara, to make it possible for families to pay an affordable rent.

Dr D.J. Honey: And with criticism from that side.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: We were heavily criticised, particularly by the member for Pilbara, for normalising that market, and it was essential for businesses to attract and retain employees. We cannot have a thriving community if small businesses cannot house their workers. It simply becomes a dormitory town and that is not the model of governance or investment of the state that this side of the Parliament wants to see.

At this point, it is probably worth reflecting on one of the things that we get asked regularly: What would the Leader of the Opposition have done differently? How would we have framed the budget if we were in charge? What would we have chosen to include in a budget when there was a clear and strong revenue income and a \$5.7 billion surplus? I have outlined our disappointment in the government for failing to pay down debt in a meaningful way. I have also pointed to our calls to freeze fees and charges for the 2022–23 financial year, to relieve cost-of-living pressures, no matter what kind of smoke and mirrors the Premier stands and speaks to in this Parliament when we ask him why he did not do more. Many people will look at the increase in fees and charges as they come in over the next months and wonder why the government could not share more of the wealth we know it has accumulated. When it comes to using the budget surplus responsibly, the opposition would have also taken a long-term view of development. I have spoken about this government taking its eye off the ball when it comes to regional investment and supporting industry, commercial businesses and residential development. We propose incentivising our local governments and the private sector to develop residential and industrial projects by cutting the cost of headworks in regional Western Australia. We also propose the creation of a \$1 billion fund over 10 years to support the development of residential commercial and industrial projects in regional WA, turbocharging what is currently in place to support the development of projects that cannot get off the ground without assistance from government.

The high and sometimes cost prohibitive charges for water or power and sewerage connection are a constraint on development in our regions and this government had the opportunity to create a longer term fund to address these barriers, but it did not. A fund of this nature would tip many regional projects over the line to being viable, and this is particularly important when we think that banks are slowly withdrawing their support and finance in areas of regional Western Australia where there are thin markets and greater risk, and there are many reasons for that. I do not want to get on my hobbyhorse about banks and why I am so disappointed that somehow consecutive governments allowed this to happen. When we do not have a presence from a bank in a region, they do not understand the risk or the local economy, they are not prepared to share finance, and it then comes back to government to invest where things do not work. It is an absolute shame that our major banks fail the people of regional Western Australia. Certainly, I have seen that over the course of my political career. It is getting worse, not better.

The opposition’s regional headworks investment fund would be funded through retained earnings from the Water Corporation, Western Power and Horizon Power, with the potential to also leverage additional funds from consolidated earnings or royalties for regions should that be required. We believe this is a responsible and sensible investment strategy to unlock the potential in our regions. I can point to a number of particular industrial sites. We have spoken about the opportunities from a residential perspective, but the industrial sites that would benefit from access to additional funding have been pointed out by our shadow Minister for Planning. North of Geraldton, there is not one serviceable lot in the Oakajee industrial park. At the Boodarie site in Port Hedland, work was done on a critical road intersection, but the site has yet to be serviced with utilities. That will be expensive. Lot 350 in Kalgoorlie has been identified specifically in the budget with an allocation of \$11 million from the fund, but it begs the question about whether that will be adequate given that the intersection for the Boodarie site cost over \$10 million. With opportunities for our state to move to manufacturing, processing, investment in housing, and diverting away from a FIFO mentality, and making sure we invest in residential development, the fear is that we will see those wanting to invest take their investment elsewhere. It makes a mockery of the Premier’s pronouncements about diversifying the economy if the government is not prepared to do the hard yards in getting those fundamentals right.

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As the opposition's member for Mining and Pastoral Region so succinctly pointed out, there is a sense of déjà vu of the Carpenter Labor government's failures. That government left a legacy of land shortages for the incoming Liberal–National government to address. I have spoken about that. We are on track for that happening all over again. We are at a moment in time when we could be capitalising on that. Unfortunately, due to the current circumstances, we are unable to do so. Our plan to invest \$1 billion over 10 years could assist to not only unlock the potential of these important industrial sites, but also encourage residential land and housing developments to ease those shortages impacting our state well into the future—a long-term view.

I want to finish my contribution by addressing the biggest failure of this budget. It fails to address the cost-of-living pressures being experienced by many Western Australian households. Over its first six budgets, the McGowan Labor government increased household fees and charges by \$1 050 a year. In 2022–23, the average basket of goods cost the average household \$6 536.62. That is an increase of \$156.41 on the 2021–22 basket of goods. In this budget, your driver's licence is going up by 6.4 per cent, your car rego will go up by 3.8 per cent, your motor injury insurance will go up by 2.4 per cent, water charges will go up by 2.5 per cent and the emergency services levy will go up by five per cent. If you try to be progressive in your choice of car by transferring to an electric vehicle, there will also be a tax of 2.5¢ for each kilometre driven, which has been met with some concern in an industry that is trying to encourage people to purchase electric cars.

In contrast, the opposition called for a freeze on government fees and charges to ease the pain in Western Australians' hip pockets. Instead, the Premier has increased the cost of water and power bills, vehicle registration and licence fees at a time when Western Australian drivers are bracing for another jump in fuel prices. The opposition called for an increase to the patient assisted travel scheme, another impost that this government could have relieved for regional people needing to travel to access specialist health services. Instead, the Minister for Health callously dismissed the suggestion, saying that the government was doing enough in regional WA to deliver health services.

The opposition called for an increase to the Country Age Pension Fuel Card to assist country age and disability pensioners to meet increased fuel and other household expenses. We hear much about the reduction in cost for travel on the train system, with the two-zone cap within the metropolitan area. That is a good and solid investment, but the reality is that people who live in regional Western Australia, particularly those on fixed incomes, are at the mercy of increasing fuel prices and long distances and are overly reliant—wholly reliant in some cases, particularly in my electorate—on road travel. The Country Age Pension Fuel Card would have been an easy way to assist those on a fixed income, not just age pensioners and disability pensioners. Certainly, the government could have considered widening the support for those categories, but there has been no change.

There are no gold stars for a Premier who has been in charge for five years, delivered six budgets and two whopping budget surpluses, squirrelled millions of dollars into special purpose accounts to fight future elections and then failed to look after the basics. Too many Western Australians are choosing between paying their power bills or buying food. We only need speak to the likes of Mark Glasson, the CEO of Anglicare, or the people at Foodbank. Whether people are in the Perth metropolitan area, Albany, Geraldton or anywhere in between, too many are struggling to keep their businesses operating because they cannot attract staff. It is galling to hear our Premier gloat about a budget surplus when, under his watch, our hospital system and our health system is failing and we face a housing and labour crisis like we have never seen before. It is time for this Premier to cut the spin and rhetoric. He became addicted to that during the COVID pandemic. It is time for him to put in the hard yards to repair what we know has been happening under or below the COVID pandemic. He had the opportunity last week in his second state budget as Treasurer and sixth as Premier, but he missed the mark.

In 2007, under Labor's Treasurer, Eric Ripper, the state government announced a record surplus of \$2.3 billion for the 2006–07 financial year, and it had been debt free for four consecutive years. It sounds good, does it not, until we scratch the surface and delve a little deeper and discover that while Mr Ripper was posting surpluses, the health system at that time was going to rack and ruin. The housing lists at that time had blown out and not a dollar had been spent in regional WA, so we had schools that were in dire condition —

An opposition member: Blackouts.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: That is right. There had been rolling blackouts and inquiry after inquiry into the electricity system and the safety of that electricity system. The government provided housing for essential workers. I remember vividly standing in front of disgraceful accommodation. Not once while the then Labor government delivered those budgets did it look at taxation reform. An arrogance had crept into that Labor government. Now we see a Labor government cut from the same cloth. The Premier-cum-Treasurer has overseen massive budget surpluses but let housing go to rack and ruin. The surplus is cold comfort to those who cannot pay their bills, are sleeping in their cars and are about to become homeless or those who work in our failing health system. The Premier would do well

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to focus more of his attention on fixing this mess and less on worrying about the reaction of his fellow Treasurers in other states, over the border. They cannot vote for him. The people who pay their taxes here in WA, with an expected dividend from the wealthiest state in the nation, certainly do. Western Australia may never have been better off with the GST, record royalty iron ore rates and takings and increased taxes for the state government's coffers, but many families have never ever found it harder to get by.

MRS R.M.J. CLARKE (Murray–Wellington) [3.55 pm]: Today I rise to speak on the Appropriation (Recurrent 2022–23) Bill 2022 and the Appropriation (Capital 2022–23) Bill 2022 and outline what the 2022–23 budget means to the constituents, businesses, community groups, not-for-profit organisations and everyone else who lives and works in the electorate of Murray–Wellington. Last week, on 11 May, the day before the budget was released, I celebrated my fifth anniversary of being sworn into Parliament to represent the constituents of Murray–Wellington—only the second Labor MLA and the first ever female to represent the seat. I was told I was never going to win the safe Liberal seat and when I won, I was told it was a fluke, that I would not retain the seat and there was not much confidence in me delivering for the electorate from those on the other side. Well, here I am in my second term and I am about to give a breakdown on what the latest budget delivers for Murray–Wellington.

At the last election, the McGowan Labor regional caucus expanded, becoming the largest regional party in Western Australia. Every one of those new members, along with the existing regional members, are passionate, hardworking and have the drive to continue to deliver for the regions. I would also like to make a special mention of the amazing female representation in the regions. We are showing them how it is done.

Over the last five years, the investment from the McGowan Labor government into the regions has been unmatched by any government in the history of Western Australia. The McGowan Labor government has continuously met the needs of regional Western Australians in each budget delivered. This one is no different. When I am out and about in our communities, meeting with representatives from the local shires, meeting with business owners, sporting groups, community groups and everyday people on the street, I consistently hear how they have never seen so much investment in our region.

There are 50 towns in Murray–Wellington, ranging from Dwellingup, with a population of around 560 people, to towns like Pinjarra and Waroona, with populations around 5 000. Then there are bigger suburban areas like Australind, with over 15 000 people. The electorate is diverse, it is large and the needs from town to town are different. The McGowan Labor government has worked with the communities, shires and businesses to deliver what is best for everyone without short-changing the next town. Great examples of delivering for towns, regardless of the size of the community, is that a much-needed community hall will be delivered in Ravenswood, a town of over 3 000 people, with an investment of \$750 000. This is one example of many that the McGowan Labor government has delivered in small regional towns across Western Australia.

A very exciting project in the Shire of Murray is the Food Innovation Precinct Western Australia. FIPWA is a state-of-the-art facility built in the Nambeelup region to foster innovation and growth in the agrifood industry. It is an ecosystem that comprises a research and development facility, an innovation centre and a small batch production facility. In 2019, the activation of the precinct was expected to contribute \$11.3 million of economic activity for construction, \$7.1 million of ongoing direct value impact and \$4.2 million of ongoing indirect value-add impact. However, these numbers have been far surpassed, with over \$15 million dedicated to the construction-related activity. Despite COVID-19, Singapore's GrowHub, which is FIPWA's partner, has activated 11 producers from the region to export agrifood product into Singapore and the neighbouring South-East Asian countries, with a current annual value of \$3 million that is expected to reach \$10 million annually by 2024. Close to 50 businesses are part of this export network. It is important to know that these are new export partnerships that have been activated only as a result of FIPWA. Through this partnership with GrowHub, regional producers in WA will soon have access to a captive audience of over five million customers in the South-East Asian market to promote product as well as the region through online and offline channels. Eventually, this should yield indirect benefits to the region through food tourism.

Murdoch University's Bachelor of Food Science and Nutrition program, which will be housed at the precinct, has already attracted over 70 undergraduate students. This growing interest in the field of agrifood innovation will build a much-needed skill and talent pool in the Murray–Wellington region. The state government's commitment of \$10 million to establish the food technology facility at the precinct will also yield dividends as it helps to scale up agribusinesses in the region and provides access to small-batch manufacturing, processing and packaging equipment.

The activation of FIPWA has also attracted other innovative agribusinesses to the business park. For instance, Eden Towers will build WA's first solar powered commercial-scale indoor vertical farm, which will be capable of producing up to 120 tonnes of produce annually. To drive innovative development in the region, the co-founders, Christian and Julia Prokscha, are working with the Bindjareb elders to explore how bush foods can be grown within such a controlled environmental climate. Such innovations will enable agrifood producers in the region and across

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WA to scale up, create new product and help enhance WA's profile beyond our shores. In due course, the FIPWA activity can be spun out as a hub-and-spoke model across the state, which will boost WA's agrifood production and value-added activity in the local economies.

The visionaries who stood steadfast over the years working with the state and federal governments to see FIPWA take shape include former chair of the Peel Development Commission Paddi Creevey and CEO Andrew Ward; Shire of Murray president, Councillor David Bolt, and CEO, Dean Unsworth; Murdoch University Professor David Morrison; and Singapore's GrowHub CEO, Lester Chan.

The 2022–23 McGowan government budget is another strong and fair budget that sets up the state for the long term. A strong budget like this has come from years of hard work, tough decisions and not always doing everything that was immediately popular. Being left with a large debt from the Barnett Liberal–National government, the McGowan Labor government has been set with the task of not only reducing debt, but also spending money on projects and infrastructure that has been neglected for far too long. We have faced hurdles and, obviously, the pandemic. The tough decisions made by the Premier and the cabinet have set up our state to have the strongest economy in the country and one of the best in the world.

Who says Labor cannot manage the economy? I know that everyone who sits in this chamber who represents the Labor Party believes that we are great economic managers. I am also almost certain that those who sit opposite me cannot argue any differently. When I talk to constituents in the street, even before keeping our state strong from COVID-19, many traditional Liberal Party or National Party voters were impressed by the McGowan government's handling of the state's finances. This budget, the third in a row that has reduced net debt, which is now almost \$14 billion less than projected when the Labor Party formed government, is in stark contrast to the skyrocketing debt levels and record deficits under the previous Liberal–National government. This continues to prove the narrative that not only can Labor manage the finances, but is also the preferred party to create a strong economy.

The McGowan Labor government is setting up the Peel and south west regions for the long term by diversifying the economy and creating jobs. This responsible financial management has enabled a record \$12 billion investment in regional infrastructure, with only eight per cent funded through royalties for regions. The \$4.2 billion royalties for regions program will continue to deliver key regional projects and services for regional communities. We are the party that truly represents the regions and all of WA, despite committing over \$11.2 billion to support Western Australia through the COVID-19 pandemic, including equipping our frontline services, supporting small businesses and households, and investing in our economy and jobs. Even though the global pandemic is not over, WA has secured a soft landing, as planned, by putting the health and of our community first, with responsible border policies and achieving world-leading vaccination rates, allowing WA to transition safely, and saving lives and jobs.

Having travelled across the towns of Murray–Wellington over the last few weeks delivering thousands of rapid antigen tests to community members, I cannot express how thankful the community has been. The 15 free RATs provided to each household, which is the only program of its kind in Australia, means households have saved at least \$150. This saving might sound small, but it is a cost that households can put into their local economy instead, such as a family-run bakery or other small businesses in their town. Many of the towns in Murray–Wellington have family-run businesses, so every dollar spent in the town goes towards a child's school fees or a local community group, not to a shareholder outside the area. This is why news of the \$400 electricity credit has been welcomed with joy all around Murray–Wellington. When the \$600 credit was announced in 2020, many community members called my office and were ecstatic about the news. Some have told me that the credit ran out only a few months ago. This electricity credit is providing cost-of-living relief for households and keeping household fees and charges below inflation. This is on top of the more than \$2 billion invested to ensure that people in the regions pay the same for water and electricity as metropolitan users.

Five years ago, one of the issues raised with me by the Shire of Murray, the residents of Pinjarra, trucking companies and the business owners along George Street in Pinjarra was the number of oversized vehicles and trucks driving through the town. Our truck drivers do an amazing job keeping the country running by delivering food, fuel, supplies and other stock from one side of the country to another. George Street in Pinjarra is the main street that runs through Pinjarra and is an extension of the South Western Highway. The speed limit drops to 40 kilometres while driving through George Street, which has small businesses, a pub and many other shops and attractions along the small stretch of road. It is also the main thoroughfare for trucks and oversized vehicles. This presents not only a safety hazard for pedestrians who use one of the few crosswalks on the road, but also the schoolchildren who cross frequently from shopping centres to the schools on the other side. This also slows down the trucks, lowers productivity and has caused some insurance claims from cars having their side mirrors and the side of their cars clipped by the large vehicles passing through. Funding has been allocated in this budget to build a Pinjarra heavy haulage deviation that will divert not only heavy traffic around the town of Pinjarra safely and faster, but also divert the thousands

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of cars that use the same strip each morning and night when workers leave the nearby refinery. That is why I was pleased to read that this budget announced the full \$250 million for the Pinjarra heavy haulage deviation and for the project to be fully funded and done in one go. This news will be welcome relief to everyone who has worked tirelessly behind the scenes on this project over the last few years. Premier and Minister for Transport; Planning, Rita Saffioti, I cannot thank you enough for myself and on behalf of the community for the funding for this project. This will not only transform the town of Pinjarra, allowing a safer route around Pinjarra, but also save thousands of hours, fuel and wear and tear in the transport industry. Many of those companies are based in Pinjarra and the surrounding areas. It will also create hundreds of locally procured jobs, which in turn will boost the local economy.

Another project that is underway in the south of Murray–Wellington is the Bunbury Outer Ring Road, which has received a further boost of \$400 million. With the alignment of Clifton and Paris Roads, crossing the Forrest Highway will be safer and much easier for locals who frequently use these roads to get from Brunswick to Treendale and vice versa. Our regional roads and transport networks have never seen so much work being done to make our regional roads safer. Being a member of a regional seat, I have clocked up thousands of kilometres in my car since being elected, and I can see the difference being done on our roads. We have had community members call and say how grateful they are to see the important work being done on the roads in the region, even if the roadworks slow down their commute. Many roads in Murray–Wellington, including Paterson Road in Nambeelup; Nanga Brook Road, which crosses over the Shires of Waroona and Murray; and various parts of South Western Highway and Forrest Highway, have been upgraded. Many other roads have benefited from the \$828 million regional road safety program, which has provided funding to upgrade shoulders and install audible edges on the roads and has been boosted by \$159 million in this budget. Many lives have been saved due to this program, with commuters having safer roads in our regions.

Our investment into safer roads does not stop there, with \$146 million for the safer roads and bridges program and \$200 million for the resealing program in regional WA. Our regional roads are becoming not only safer, but also greener, with \$59.3 million for the clean energy car fund. The McGowan Labor government is the only government that invests in and supports our rail network. We know how efficient, safe and economical it is to move freight and goods by rail than by road. That is why a record investment in our regional rail network is essential. The McGowan government has allocated \$3 million to upgrade and improve safety at 11 railway crossings along the *Australind* line. Over the next three years, 11 railway crossings along the line will be upgraded in the Peel and south west regions, including flashing lights to be replaced with a boom gate at Lakes Road in North Dandalup; flashing lights to be replaced with a boom gate at Station Street in Yarloop; flashing lights to be replaced with a boom gate at Clifton Road in Yarloop; flashing lights control renewal at Johnston Road in Yarloop; an automatic gate pedestrian crossing upgrade at Uduc Road in Harvey north; pedestrian crossing renewal at Uduc Road in Harvey south; and flashing lights control renewal at Peterson Road in Warawarrup.

Active railway crossings, which feature warning bells, flashing lights and automatically operated boom gates, can significantly improve safety for road users by helping prevent accidental collisions and near misses where regional roads cross railway tracks. Pedestrian safety will also be improved, with several existing pedestrian crossings to be replaced with disability-compliant crossing facilities. The pedestrian crossing works include the upgrade of existing pedestrian paths and the installation of new mazes, signage and pavement markings. The upgrades will be staged over the next three years, with work commencing on the first three projects before the end of 2022.

On the *Australind* carriages, the McGowan government announced Alstom as the preferred proponent to deliver six new *Australind* railcars. Fifty per cent of the railcars must be made in Western Australia, and this will create hundreds of new jobs in construction and maintenance. The new trains are being procured for \$54 million. The new *Australind* design features a modern interior with USB sockets, wi-fi, an improved kiosk, upright bicycle racks and three toilets.

I would like to take this opportunity to talk about another great rail project in our regions that will create jobs, take trucks off the road and help our wheatbelt farmers have a more efficient way of carting their produce.

[Member's time extended.]

Mrs R.M.J. CLARKE: It is the wheatbelt railway. It has \$200 million of joint commonwealth–state government funding. It is the first package secured for the agricultural supply chain improvement program. Four programs will be included in the first package to better connect key WA agricultural supply chains. Western Australia's key agricultural areas will receive a funding boost for freight infrastructure following that joint commonwealth–state funding commitment of \$200 million for the first package for the agricultural supply chain improvement program. On the back of a record 24 million tonne harvest, worth around \$8 billion to WA's economy, the McGowan government is committed to ensuring that freight infrastructure keeps up with the growing demand. The four projects funded under the first ASCI package will help WA grain growers and other primary producers transport their

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products to markets in Australia and around the world. The siding upgrades are to be complemented by at least \$200 million of investment in rapid loading bins and elevators by CBH Group. For CBH and the grain-growing industry, these works will further assist the effort to move grain rapidly to port after harvest to capitalise on strong international demand and high prices. Loading longer trains more quickly at the strategically located CBH bins will bring tangible financial returns to growers in the region. The \$72 million southern wheatbelt project will increase the amount of grain moved by rail and decrease the number of trucks on regional roads. Equally important, it will provide the capacity for other primary producers—for example, hay exporters—to use a rail service. Securing this funding means that the planning and design phase can now commence, with completion of the projects expected in 2025.

The state and commonwealth have already partnered to deliver \$187.5 million in funding for the wheatbelt secondary freight network program. A further \$36 million in joint funding will allow the midwest and great southern secondary freight network programs to commence to further improve export connections throughout the agricultural region.

Creating good local jobs, rail and safer roads is what the McGowan government does, and we have “R4R”—respect for regions. Building roads is not the only industry in the Peel and the south west. We have diverse economies based on agriculture, tourism, resources, retail and many more. This budget continues our great track record of creating local jobs and diversifying the economy in our regions. This includes a \$50 million increase to the industrial land development fund, which will unlock private sector investment and spark new growth opportunities. This fund has already seen land in the Pinjarra light industrial area being sold and permanent jobs being created in the area. A further \$48.6 million will be provided to establish a WA regional digital connectivity program to improve mobile and internet coverage in regional areas across the state. This is welcome news to almost everyone in the electorate. The bungled national broadband network by the federal Liberal government has left behind many regional communities across the country, especially those in Murray–Wellington. When I am out and about, many times my phone signal has cut out mid-conversation. This is common amongst those who live in Murray–Wellington, and this funding will be a great boost to our communications.

Murray–Wellington was home to one of the most devastating fires in 2016, when the fire ripped down the hill south of Dwellingup, past Waroona and burnt out the town of Yarloop and then headed towards the coast, blocking off the towns of Preston Beach and Myalup. Many residents fear that if there is another fire that is as catastrophic as the Yarloop fire, they will be either uninformed or stuck in a dangerous position due to the lack of phone coverage. This investment will improve our communications in the region and give community members better service and peace of mind. These better communications will help community members access the upgraded Emergency WA website, which was boosted in this budget by a \$15.9 million upgrade to ensure that critical information in emergency situations is more readily available. Along with upgrading the website, we have invested \$11 million to secure WA’s first large air tanker to be based in Western Australia during bushfire season every year from December to March. This budget also includes \$3.1 million for the bushfire framework review.

Looking after the state’s finances has meant that the McGowan Labor government can deliver more money to where it is needed, such as the health and mental health sectors. There will be a \$158.3 million funding boost to regional health and mental health services, including \$30.1 million for 18 additional paid paramedics and six additional ambulances in regional Western Australia, which delivers on an election commitment. An amount of \$18.5 million will be spent to expand the WA Country Health Service’s child and adolescent mental health service’s frontline workforce across regional Western Australia.

On top of the 15 rapid antigen tests delivered to each household and the thousands given out by state members of Parliament, 200 000 RATs were delivered to community resource centres across the state. I know that the five CRCs in Murray–Wellington—Murray House, Waroona, Yarloop, Harvey and Brunswick—all reported back to me that the response was overwhelming and very appreciated by those community members who went to their local CRC to receive them. Community resource centres provide many fantastic services and sometimes provide an all-in-one service so that those in the regions do not miss out on the opportunities that those who live in the metropolitan area and bigger regional centres have. The additional \$2 million to CRCs to help provide important services to communities will be welcome news. Over the last few years, each of the CRCs in the Murray–Wellington electorate has had training opportunities via state government grants and a few of those workers have stayed on past their traineeship and continued their employment.

Not only has this budget delivered for the regions and spent money on roads, tourism, job creation, delivering quality health care and upskilling our communities—especially those in the forestry and coal industries—it has also invested heavily in education. This includes \$31.9 million of additional funding for education adjustment allocation to support more students with additional learning needs in developing their literacy and numeracy skills. There is \$2.5 million for the new year 1 phonics initiative to support and develop students’ essential phonics skills

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and the knowledge they need to learn to read. There is \$33.8 million for maintenance upgrades to improve public schools across the state and \$113.1 million in fee reductions to be achieved in regional WA through the successful Lower Fees, Local Skills initiative, which slashes TAFE fees by up to 72 per cent across 210 high-priority courses. There is \$2.4 million to attract international students to live, work and study in regional WA, targeting skills shortage areas including aged care, disability, child care, hospitality and tourism. There is also a \$4.5 million investment in the new tool rebate to support building and construction apprentices and trainees in their purchase of trade-related tools and safety equipment. There is a \$5.1 million investment in a wage gap program to support the new apprentices' pathway for the civil construction sector and to boost civil construction skills.

All in all, this is another fantastic budget by the McGowan Labor government that delivers for the regions, from the party that cares for the regions. Attending both the south west and Peel budget presentations last week, I can confirm that the sentiment of delivering for the regions is recognised by everyone. I thank the Premier and cabinet for listening to local members and delivering on what is needed for the regions. I look forward to being out in the community watching these projects unfold, and to the community putting some of these newer funded projects to work. I commend this McGowan Labor government budget to the Parliament.

MR T.J. HEALY (Southern River — Parliamentary Secretary) [4.21 pm]: I rise to speak to the very, very strong budget that was presented by the Premier; Treasurer last week and to the Appropriation (Recurrent 2022–23) Bill 2022 and the Appropriation (Capital 2022–23) Bill 2022.

I begin by acknowledging the 100th birthday of one of my constituents, Mrs Margetts from Gosnells. She will turn 100 very, very soon—so on behalf of all of us, Mrs Margetts, including Premier Mark McGowan and all of the community, we would like to wish you and your family the best, and we look forward to celebrating your 100th birthday with you very soon. Happy birthday! I am sure every member in this chamber would also agree and concur with me in wishing a very happy birthday to Mrs Muajib of Gosnells. Happy 100th birthday, Mrs Muajib, on behalf of all of us in the Parliament of Western Australia. We wish you and your family all the very best, on behalf of the Acting Speaker, the Premier, and all the ministers and parliamentary team here. Congratulations.

I am very proud to inform the chamber of the fantastic work done by many residents within my community. I would like to comment on Mrs Luul Ibrahim, who has recently been appointed to the Australian Multicultural Council. She is a City of Gosnells resident and one of my constituents, and she has recently been appointed to that federal advisory board. She is already a community leader within the Gosnells community. She was born in Somalia, migrated through New Zealand to Australia, and is raising her family in Gosnells as a stand-up citizen. I would like on behalf of the chamber to acknowledge the great work Luul has already done and will continue to do. Again, I am sure all our community will endorse her selection and wish her the best in her appointment.

I also wish the Gosnells Community Legal Centre a very happy fortieth birthday. The Gosnells Community Legal Centre is an outstanding and fantastic contributor to the Gosnells community and the entire south-east corridor. It began in 1982 as the Gosnells Information Centre. Rona Oakley was the very first manager back in the day, and it was developed to assist local families with myriad community services, including information for tenancy services, family violence services and financial counselling. The Gosnells Community Legal Centre is a stalwart of the Gosnells community. It is one of the places I refer families to quite frequently for constituent and electorate matters, and it is a leader in helping those who do not know all the rights and obligations they are entitled to, and for parking infringements and other issues. The centre has for four decades continuously stood up for those who need our support, and I commend it. I look forward to being part of its fortieth birthday celebrations very soon, and I commend its previous managers Patrick Monger; Linda Saverimutto; Marion Leach; Cr Sarah Patterson, who is currently our CEO at the Gosnells Community Legal Centre; and our senior solicitors Kirsten Gammer and Funmi Adesina. Members will also be aware of the fine role Sharryn Jackson has played as the former federal member for our area, and a previous executive officer for our peak body in the Gosnells Community Legal Centre. They have provided numerous services to so many families throughout Gosnells and up and down the south-east corridor. I commend them. On behalf of all here in the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia, we say happy birthday.

I would like to congratulate the Premier on a very fantastic budget. My community is greatly appreciative of the things that have been done and made available to us. I would also like to briefly speak about the \$400 energy credit that has been provided in this state budget. It is a very important decision, and something that is being made available to every single household. It will be in people's home Synergy accounts sometime in July, at the current estimate. Many members in this chamber will be aware of the cost-of-living pressures that are on all families in our community. Given the rising costs of groceries, bills and government charges in many areas, that \$400 is a very important contribution. It comes about as a result of the strong financial management of the McGowan government and the strong team approach we take to enacting good policy and good financial practice.

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My communities of Canning Vale, Gosnells, Huntingdale and Southern River should be aware that that will be landing in their home accounts sometime in July, and I know it will be very well received. I spoke recently with Sam Lim, who is a champion for our Canning Vale community, and Matt Keogh, who is a champion for Gosnells, Southern River and Huntingdale. They certainly agree that this is a very well decided on initiative. Sam Lim and Matt Keogh are constantly in conversation with myself, the WA Labor government and Mark McGowan about the pressures that a lot of families are under. These are things that are very important and, again, I commend it to the house. I ask residents who have any queries about it to contact my office and we will be very happy to clarify any matters, but, again, they should be receiving that credit in their home Synergy accounts very soon.

Members, very soon I will be helping to deliver the next stage of the consultation on the building of the Huntingdale chicanes. I would like to invite the community to reach out to my office at terry.healy@mp.wa.gov.au and let me know what they think about the design of the chicanes. Many will be aware that the state has delivered on an election commitment and has funded this within the budget documents. We have given the funding to the City of Gosnells as it is one of the best local employers to build the chicanes. For members who are not entirely aware, Huntingdale has a number of speed bumps along Harpenden Street. After numerous community consultations, a lot of doorknocking and a lot of engagement with our community, we will be doing on Harpenden Street what we did on Gay Street. At the 2017 election, when I was a councillor, we made a promise to remove all the speed bumps along Gay Street and put in chicanes.

What I and the community found was that we, as reasonable people, slow down for speed bumps and the idiots do not. Speed bumps are an inefficient and inappropriate way to manage speed or other aspects of community and road safety. We delivered on that promise in 2017, 2018 and 2019. After a lot of community feedback, the chicanes have been very well received, and we will now be doing that throughout the longer stretch of the street that is Harpenden Street. The removal of those speed bumps will happen potentially by the end of this year. Like I said, the designs are now available, and I invite the community to reach out to me or to the council with their feedback on all those designs. We find that hard, sharp corners are the best designs for chicanes as opposed to the soft chicanes in terms of keeping speed on that street down to 50 kilometres an hour. Again, I invite members of my community to reach out to me or to the council so that we can best feed back their thoughts into the designs and get the construction moving as fast as we can. With the support of Mark McGowan and our community and this Parliament, all the things I promise, I always ensure we deliver.

Members, one of the most exciting aspects of this budget is the close to \$80 million foreshadowed from federal government sources and the state government for the Nicholson Road overpass. This has long been needed in the community, and, funnily enough, it is an intersection that is far more complicated now because of the delivery of our promises. The Nicholson Road overpass is funded and will be built by the McGowan Labor government. The \$80 million overpass will go over where the palm trees are at Nicholson Road, Yale Road and Garden Street. It will fly over the intersection and link into the existing railway bridge that is there now. We want to hear from the community what they think of the designs; these are available. Please go to my website terryhealy.com.au or the email address terry.healy@mp.wa.gov.au and let me know your feedback on what you think of the designs.

As we delivered on our promise to build the Nicholson Road and Ranford Road train stations, we also delivered on our promise to widen Ranford Road from a four-lane to an eight-lane bridge. This is the next major project that we need to develop and move forward on. For some time, I have been working with the Minister for Transport, Rita Saffioti, as have our local heroes Sam Lim and Matt Keogh, and also Chris Tallentire, the member for Thornlie, and Yaz Mubarakai, the member for Jandakot, in advocating the importance of those projects. I am very happy that we have delivered the funding within the budget to get those projects moving. Again, this is in great and strong partnership with the federal government. We will work with the local council to develop those projects as well. It is very important that we get the community's feedback on the designs so that we can move forward with that as soon as possible.

Members, I would like to inform the chamber of the newest ice cream store in Canning Vale—Gelato Joy. My daughters and I had the wonderful pleasure of being customers at the store very recently. Gelato Joy is based at the Vale Shopping Centre, and I encourage members to go and visit Gelato Joy. It is a great, local, family business, with wonderful ice creams. It is a new, very well received local business, and I wish Gelato Joy all the best.

Several members interjected.

Mr T.J. HEALY: I have put my cup down, so that is the end of that segment of the video. That is fine. Although, Acting Speaker, I am a chocolate ice cream man—no doubt about it. Controversially, I like my ice cream microwaved for 15 seconds; just try it! For those who are watching at home, when you get your ice cream, give it back to Baskin Robbins or Gelato Joy and say, "Put it in the microwave for 15 seconds." All I am saying to everyone is: it is going to change your life!

[Member's time extended.]

Mr Bill Johnston; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Robyn Clarke; Mr Terry Healy; Mr David Scaife; Mr Peter Rundle; Ms Meredith Hammat; Ms Alison Kent; Mr Chris Tallentire; Dr Jags Krishnan; Mrs Lisa Munday; Mrs Lisa O'Malley; Mr Matthew Hughes; Ms Jodie Hanns; Mr Simon Millman; Mr Paul Lilburne

Mr T.J. HEALY: What I might do is pause there, member for North West Central, and talk about some of the amazing things that are happening in his electorate. I know that the member for North West Central is due to give his speech very soon and I am sure he will concur with a number of the things that are in here, and I thought I would draw his attention to a couple of them.

To the other members of the opposition who might be hiding in the chamber, I am very happy to inform them of some amazing science laboratories, career practitioners and science, technology, engineering and mathematics labs that are being built. From being in this chamber for the last five years, I want to foreshadow that a common theme is hearing members of the opposition say that there is nothing in the budget for their electorates. Although a number of members claim to be regional members, they often say that the government is anti-region. I will go through a number of projects previously announced that continue to be funded and built and are fantastic additions. Again, these are STEM district high school laboratories, primary school science labs and career practitioners.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Would many of them be in the north west direction?

Mr T.J. HEALY: The minister would be surprised that there are actually a number of these projects in the member for North West Central's electorate, and if members do not mind me taking a few moments, I will list them. Forgive me, member for North West Central, if I am taking your thunder. I am sure that in his budget speech, he will commend and thank Mark McGowan and Minister Sue Ellery for the primary school science lab allocation of funds—for those who are playing at home, there are a number of science and STEM labs—in volume 1, budget paper No 2, pages 369 and 370. We have estimates next week and we are more than happy to discuss it; just look up the *Hansard* for the reference in case the member does not get that one.

Burringurrah Remote Community School has \$5 000 allocated for its science lab. Does the member support that?

Mr V.A. Catania: Five thousand dollars?

Mr T.J. HEALY: It is a very important infrastructure investment in the school.

Carnarvon Community College is allocated \$25 000 for its science lab. Again, the importance that that school places on STEM makes this a worthy investment. The science labs in my electorate are very well received by the community. Schools get a chance to purchase 3D printers. Some have bought dinosaur kits and insect laboratories. A lot of schools have a really good focus on some great coding in the member for Central Wheatbelt's electorate; again, I am happy to speak on it.

The member for Cottesloe has some fantastic primary schools in his electorate where science labs are being built and opened, and young people are utilising them. It is part of a fantastic strategy of incorporating real infrastructure and real upgrades within schools. However, I do not want to take away from the member for North West Central's speech.

Cue Primary School has been allocated \$5 000. Exmouth District High School has been allocated \$25 000 for its school science lab—I am sure the member has heard—and it is my understanding that it is greatly appreciated. I know that the member for North West Central has not had a chance to mention that in the chamber yet, but that school is very appreciative of his advocacy in ensuring that the McGowan government is delivering on those aspects.

Gascoyne Junction Remote Community School has been allocated \$5 000. Kalbarri District High School and North Tom Price Primary School have each been allocated \$25 000. Meekatharra District High School and Mount Magnet District High School have each been allocated \$10 000. I seek the member's clarification. Ngaanyatjarra Lands School—have I pronounced that correctly?

Mr V.A. Catania: Yes.

Mr T.J. HEALY: Thank you. That school has been allocated \$40 000.

Again, I am sure the member will appreciate that the Labor Party is the party of the regions. We will always deliver regional education and ensure that we are the champion of regional schools.

Acting Speaker, I am happy to go through the schools in the electorate of Kalgoorlie, of course!

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms A.E. Kent): Please go on.

Mr T.J. HEALY: But I did not want the member for North West Central to think that I was not focusing on his community. Shark Bay School will be allocated \$10 000 towards its science laboratory. Useless Loop Primary School, Wiluna Remote Community School, Yalgoo Primary School and Yulga Jinna Remote Community School will each be allocated \$5 000.

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

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Mr T.J. HEALY: I would be very happy to do that. Minister, that is not a bad idea. Perhaps the minister and I could write to each of those schools and suggest that because the member for North West Central has not had a chance to raise this in the chamber —

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members! Let us stay on topic.

Mr T.J. HEALY: We could send all those schools a nice copy of the *Hansard* debate, with his face on it, saying congratulations to those schools, and saying thank you to the minister for delivering that infrastructure and ensuring—I am speaking in the member for North West Central's voice—that we are championing these things for our schools.

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

Mr T.J. HEALY: I am sure that the member will let them know that he has endorsed and said congratulations for the great things that are being done by Mark McGowan and Sue Ellery.

Those are primary schools. There is also some other pretty big infrastructure. I do not want to minimise the \$5 000 that will be given to those schools. Some of those schools are working in very challenging circumstances. They are often small schools. They are not in remote communities, but they are in regional communities that have their own challenges. I know that the National Party does not always understand the challenges that are presented for regional communities, but dollars and investment like this were not seen during the Barnett Liberal–National government, when large chunks of money were allocated for singing toilets and royalties for regions programs and other things. I want to commend the McGowan government for speaking to school communities and delivering on the infrastructure that they had asked for. They engaged with us and we found out what they were after. As I have said, each school was listened to. Each school has the opportunity to invest in STEM and to grow the capabilities of its young people.

Member for North West Central, of course I do not want to not mention the district high schools that are also receiving a large chunk of that money. Kalbarri District High School will receive \$1 million towards the repurposing of classroom space. Carnarvon Community College will also receive \$1 million. That is being delivered in the member's community for those schools. Tom Price Senior High School will receive \$600 000, again for the repurposing of classroom space. We are ensuring that those communities receive the funding that they are seeking. Exmouth District High School will also receive \$60 000, which is a combination of the science resource grant and the refurbishment program. Kalbarri District High School will also receive \$60 000. Exmouth District High School will get \$160 000 under a separate classroom refurbishment program. I again concur with the member for North West Central that these are fantastic investments. These are fantastic things that are being done in his community by this fantastic regionally focused McGowan Labor government. I echo his appreciation for the education minister, Sue Ellery, and for the great work that is being done in regional education.

The member for Roe would also be aware, as the shadow Minister for Education and Training, of a number of investments that are taking place in his region. Gnowangerup District High School and Kojonup District High School will each get \$460 000. Wagin District High School will get \$60 000. A number of extra career practitioners are also going into schools in the member for Roe's electorate—namely, Esperance Senior High School and Katanning Senior High School. Again, I do not want to take too much time, but some amazing investments are going into those schools. I am sure that all the Liberal and National Party members will seek to discuss and champion all the great things that are happening in those schools.

I would like to bring the chamber's attention to a fantastic local business in my community. That is Charco's the Flaming Chicken. Charco's the Flaming Chicken is based on Warton Road in Huntingdale. Premier Mark McGowan came with me to this fantastic business not long ago. It makes some of the best ribs we can find around. Charco's is a champion of Huntingdale. I commend Sam and all his team. They actually have a photo on the wall from when Mark McGowan and I came to visit.

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

Mr T.J. HEALY: It is not bad is it, minister? It has the best ribs around. It is a fantastic local business. It has a fantastic community vibe. On behalf of all of us in Huntingdale and all of us in the community, I want to say congratulations to all the team at Charco's for the great work that you do.

Mr V.A. Catania: You should say that we should go there and eat the ribs.

Mr T.J. HEALY: Next time the member is out that way, let me know.

I would like to inform members of the opening of Kebab Express on Canna Drive, Canning Vale. I was very honoured to open this new store recently with Sam Lim. I would like to congratulate Shashi and his team for a fantastic local business. It is part of a new complex outside Nicholson Road train station. Kebab Express has numerous local produce

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and beautiful kebabs and food. I would like to commend the team and wish them prosperity and all the very best. Thank you for inviting me to open your business recently.

I would also like to congratulate another local business in my electorate, Domino's Pizza at Vale Shopping Centre on Amherst Road, Canning Vale. GK and his team run one of the busiest local Domino's in my community. As a person who once upon a time worked at Domino's, I have a soft heart for Domino's. I wish the staff and all the team the very best. They were looking after us all and delivering food long before food delivery was popular during the COVID pandemic and through UberEats, and I would like to say thank you.

I would also like to congratulate and welcome to our community a new business, Mazaj Foods. It opened last month at unit 3/466 Warton Road, which is conveniently next door to my electorate office. Mazaj offers amazing coffee and has a wonderful supermarket and groceries that are available for the community. Sief and your family, we wish you the very best. We look forward to growing and working with you as you look after all the people within our community.

I would also like to congratulate another local business in my community, Baskin Robbins in Willetton. That is a fantastic local business that the member for Riverton and I both endorse. It is located in the member for Riverton's electorate, but is owned by a family that lives in my electorate of Southern River. It looks after a number of families. I do not think I need to tell people how much young people, and all people I am sure, enjoy the beautiful ice creams and waffles that Baskin Robbins looks after us with. I would like to congratulate and thank all the team at Baskin Robbins. We greatly appreciate the work that you do.

I look forward to informing the chamber about Liba's, which is based at Thornlie Square. The member for Thornlie and I know Thornlie Square. Liba's has some amazing African cuisine, and if anyone is looking for a fine meal with some soul and love, it has an amazing selection of foods. It is a great local business and a great supporter of our community at Thornlie Square. I encourage all members of our community to partake at Liba's and support this fantastic local business—check out the menu and be aware of the amazing products offered.

I would like to congratulate and thank the White family that runs The Batter Fish and Chips Shop in Canning Vale. I was very honoured to doorknock the family recently. They popped into my office recently as well for some of the free rapid antigen tests when we distributed them. The White family has been running The Batter Fish and Chips Shop in Canning Vale for many, many years. They make some of the best fish and chips. I cannot say they are the best, but they are certainly one of the best, because I am very, very honoured to have eight different fish and chip stores within my electorate. I am not sure whether I will have time to mention all eight of them today and provide them with the official copy of the parliamentary *Hansard* for their wall, which will be framed, but I would like to congratulate the White family and say thank you for all the work it does within our community. Good Friday and Easter is a peak time for all of our fish and chip stores and they always look after all of us. I would just like to say thank you again to all members in the chamber for their patience and tolerance.

The ACTING SPEAKER: For their journey down the food chain!

MR D.A.E. SCAIFE (Cockburn) [4.51 pm]: I am not going to say how many fish and chip shops I have in the electorate of Cockburn, but I am sure that the fish and chips that are dished up in Cockburn are superior to the fish and chips that are served up in the electorate of Southern River, and I will say nothing further about that!

It is a great pleasure to rise to speak on the Appropriation (Recurrent 2022–23) Bill 2022 and the Appropriation (Capital 2022–23) Bill 2022, because this is a Labor budget that this government has handed down. It is a Labor budget through and through. It is a Labor budget built on this government's strong management of the state's finances. I said last year that last year's budget was a great Labor budget, so I think this year I have to say that this is a greater Labor budget than the one from last year. This budget not only makes sure that our finances are in a good condition going forward by paying down the debt left to us by the previous Liberal–National government, but also will make important investments in reducing the cost of living for Western Australians, improve our health and hospital system, and make our education system and schools even better.

I want to put on the record that I and all members of this government know that the cost of living has been going up for people. We have seen, unfortunately, large increases in the price of petrol, for example, because of a number of factors, including the war in Ukraine. But the rise in the cost of living has been made much harder for people because wages have not been keeping up with that rise over the last 10 years. In fact, wages have pretty much just flatlined over the last 10 years. I made this point last week, but I want to make it again: it is not a mistake that wages have flatlined over the last 10 years. The federal Liberal–National government has said that low wage growth is a deliberate feature of its economic strategy. The federal Liberal Morrison government made it a deliberate feature of its economic plan to keep wages low.

Mr V.A. Catania: Can I interject?

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Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: Go for it, member for North West Central.

Mr V.A. Catania: I understand what you are saying. The state wages policy has had limited growth over the last five years. How do you think that has impacted? You are criticising —

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: This is a great example of why the member for North West Central probably should not pipe up. Remember what happened last time when I got you in the chamber? It did not end well for you! The Minister for Police and I got you nicely on the firearms bill, member for North West Central! You can pretend you do not remember it, but we all know that you got slapped around by the Leader of the Opposition in private later on that day. This is why you should not pipe up on these issues. The member for North West Central wants to claim that the cost-of-living pressures in this country are somehow caused by some sort of obscure government instrument around wages competition.

Mr V.A. Catania: What's your position on your government's wages policy?

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: The member for North West Central knows the position because his party belongs to this federal coalition. His party belongs to a federal government that has had a deliberate strategy of suppressing wage growth, and that is what I want to put on the record right now. The member for North West Central is complicit in this. He pipes up here, but he has nothing to say to his colleagues in his own party. He has nothing to say about the fact that he and his mates in the Liberal Party—he is mates with Clive Palmer—those federal Liberal–Nationals, have made it a deliberate strategy of their economic plan to suppress the wages of people in this country.

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Okay!

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: We hear from the member for North West Central today that he is quite happy to be part of a political party that is deliberately suppressing the wages of people in towns like Carnarvon, Kalbarri and Exmouth. That is what he is saying. I say to the people of Carnarvon and North West Central that at the next election, they should remember that their member of Parliament wanted to keep their wages low. That is a real shame. Nonetheless, it is all right. This McGowan government is getting on with the job of dealing with the mess that was left by the previous Western Australian Liberal–National government, which the member for North West Central was a parliamentary secretary in. I think he was parliamentary secretary for forestry. There were some years when the previous Liberal–National government planted, I think, zero hectares of softwood pine in the plantation estate. Crickets to that one from the member for North West Central! It is curious that he does not have an answer. That is the reason that he is not answering that.

Of course the former government did not leave us with any softwood pine plantations, but it did leave us with a mountain of debt, because that is all the WA Liberals and Nationals are good for. They left us with mounting debt because they based their spending on outrageously optimistic forecasts for things like the iron ore price. They did not make the investments that needed to be made in our economy, so we are here picking up the tab. We are delivering cost-of-living relief to households and we are able to do that because in just six budgets, we have managed to restore the state's finances. We are paying down debt, but we are also making sure that money is put into the pockets of Western Australians. One of the ways that we are doing that is by delivering a \$400 electricity credit to households in Western Australia, and that is on top of the \$600 electricity credit that this government provided in October 2020. That is a \$1 000 electricity credit that has been provided to households, and that is a really significant thing for families. I know that many of my constituents in Cockburn will be pleased to receive that \$400 electricity credit.

As a result of that electricity credit and also as a result of the fact that this is the third consecutive year in which this government has kept rises in household fees and charges for things like water and vehicle registrations below the consumer price index, household fees and charges in total will be reduced by 3.8% from 1 July. We had a bizarre situation in question time today when the Leader of the Opposition asked about the increasing cost of living. It was another example of what we have just seen from the member for North West Central—an economic illiteracy that is seemingly endemic in the Liberal and National Parties. There are only six of them in this chamber but between them I think they would fall in the bottom six for economic illiteracy. The Leader of the Opposition asked a question about the rising cost of living. However, if she looked at page 327 of budget paper No 3, she would find that there is, as there has been for many years, a summary of the estimated impact of the budget on the changes to household tariffs, fees and charges on the representative household. There it is, members; there is the table. I have highlighted the bottom of the table just in case the Leader of the Opposition or the member for North West Central needed assistance with their economic literacy. At the bottom of the table is a figure—a –3.8 per cent impact on overall household fees, charges and tariffs in this budget. That is a 3.8 per cent reduction. Liberal and National members could not find that page in the budget papers. The member for North West Central has been here for years and years. It is embarrassing how bad he is given how long he has been here. The opposition could not even find this page in the budget papers. It should be easy stuff that opposition members know that this table is there; it has been there for years.

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They could not even find the summary table. There it is; I have found it for them. For households in Western Australia, fees and charges in total will be reduced by 3.8 per cent from 1 July. It is unheard of for a government to send those charges backwards. I suspect that the reason the opposition has not found that page in the budget is because opposition members have not read the budget papers; in fact, they have probably not read any budget papers.

I want to speak about the budget and specific investments in utilities that have importance for my electorate. My electorate is home to one of the state's significant water facilities—the Woodman Point water resource recovery facility in Munster. It is the largest such facility in Western Australia. This government has already invested significantly in upgrading that plant, but these budget papers confirm that further upgrades will be undertaken to that plant. In 2020, this government completed upgrades that, importantly for my constituents, improved odour control systems at that facility. As a result, many of the odours that were affecting residents in suburbs such as Munster and Lake Coogee were largely eliminated. Unfortunately, processing upsets occur from time to time and one did happen over the heatwave in summer and caused some odour problems for my community, particularly in Lake Coogee and Munster. That issue was raised with me by residents on a weekend and I immediately contacted the Minister for Water. I would like to thank him and his office for being so responsive to me on a Sunday afternoon; they got straight onto it. I would also like to thank the team at the Water Corporation for responding so quickly via the minister's office to my concerns. As a result of that contact, the odour was eliminated within a day or so and my residents were able to go about their business without having to suffer through that odour. Permanent changes have also been made to preferentially waste the tanks at that facility on an ongoing basis.

I did not stop there; I wanted to be satisfied that changes had been made at the facility that would assist my constituents, so I toured the facility not long after and I was very satisfied with the information given to me by the Water Corporation and with the way the facility is being managed. It was clear to me that the Water Corporation took my concerns seriously and responded promptly; however, I know that we need to constantly improve. That is why I want to put on the record that this budget includes an additional \$44.7 million to upgrade the Woodman Point water resource recovery facility. That is part of a total estimated value of \$202.4 million to upgrade that facility. I have been assured by people at the Water Corporation that the upgrades to that facility will see further improvements to the odour situation, which is welcome news for residents in Munster and Lake Coogee.

I turn now to the government's investments in the health and hospital systems because health, particularly mental health, are areas that are close to my heart. I have spoken with a number of my constituents over the past year about the pressures that our hospital system is under. Those pressures are as a result of a number of things, one of which is obviously the challenge of being in a pandemic and the way that changes how people connect with their health services, but also the restrictions on recruiting health workers through overseas labour. I want to make the same point that has been made by the Minister for Mines and Petroleum previously: it is not the case that the state's border arrangements have had a significant impact on labour shortages in our health and hospital system. For labour from outside the state, Western Australia is overwhelmingly reliant on overseas skilled migration. It was a decision of the commonwealth Liberal–National government to close the international border. I do not take any issue with that decision. However, the Liberal–National opposition in this place keeps trotting out the idea that somehow these labour shortages are as a result of the state government's decisions, and that is just a furphy.

One of the other things that has changed is an increase in mental health presentations at emergency departments, which has put emergency departments under a lot more pressure. We cannot fix all the issues overnight, but this government is putting in the long-term effort and making the long-term investments to get the job done. It made record investments in health and mental health in the last budget, and it builds on those investments in this budget. I would like to highlight a few initiatives. The first is the \$252 million emergency department reform package, which is designed to improve access to emergency care. Much of the funding in that package is about picking up the tab for the federal Liberal–National government. People have an opportunity on Saturday to kick out the dreadful federal Liberal Morrison government. I am certainly looking forward to that happening because that Liberal government has overwhelmingly failed the people of Australia, and it has particularly failed the people of Australia in aged care and the National Disability Insurance Scheme. As a result of the Liberal government's neglect of our aged-care system, people with complex needs who would be better off in supported aged-care and disability facilities are being left in hospitals, which has the knock-on effect of fewer hospital beds being available, and that causes a backlog in emergency departments. Members do not need to take my word for it. The word "neglect" was the one word that was singled out by the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety as its overall description of that system under the Liberal Morrison government.

The state government's package includes \$74.1 million to provide more appropriate accommodation for long-stay patients. These are the patients I am talking about who have been failed by the federal Liberal government. There are also great initiatives by the state government to improve our health system, quite separately from the neglect

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of the federal Liberal government. That includes the \$55.2 million commitment to embed registered nurses 24/7 across 15 metropolitan and regional emergency department waiting rooms.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: Another part of our investment in the health system is our \$180 million investment in mental health services that we allocated to the Mental Health Commission. That includes \$47.3 million to respond to the recommendations of the Ministerial Taskforce into Public Mental Health Services for Infants, Children and Adolescents Aged 0–18 Years in Western Australia. Of that amount, \$18.5 million will be spent to fund an 11.6 full-time equivalent increase in the child and adolescent mental health service frontline workforce and \$12.9 million for additional peer support workers. I mention that because I am passionate about mental health services, but also particularly on behalf of a constituent of mine, Sam, who approached me about her daughter's experience with the mental health system a couple of months ago. Sam is known to me because I doorknocked her during the election campaign. I remember having a lovely chat with her then and she emailed me and I recognised the name. It turned out that it was the same person. Sam explained to me the difficulties that her daughter has had as a young teenager seeking help for some significant mental health issues. I not only reassured Sam that as someone who has experienced mental health issues myself I understood and sympathised with the situation that her family and daughter found themselves in, but also committed to undertaking advocacy on the issue. I did that and I spoke with the Minister for Health's parliamentary secretary, the member for Mount Lawley, about that issue. I am very pleased to see these additional investments being made in the budget. One of the particular asks from Sam was to see more frontline workers engaging with the community in the mental health space. I very much welcome that additional 11.6 full-time equivalent increase in the child and adolescent mental health service frontline workforce.

The third topic I will speak about is the investment that we are making in education. Many investments are being made in my electorate and across the whole state, of course, in education. We have seen funding for new or refurbished science classrooms and resources at schools in my electorate. Those include Coogee Primary School and Beeliar Primary School. We have also seen investments in things such as the virtual power plant that has been installed as a pilot at Success Primary School. But the really significant project that I want to mention is the upgrades happening at Lakeland Senior High School. It is a fantastic high school in my electorate. It covers suburbs like my suburb of Yangebup, and Beeliar and South Lake. Lakeland Senior High School has been around for several decades. It is a great school, but its facilities are a little on the old side. It is great to see this government investing in upgrading those facilities. It is a significant investment, with a total investment of \$12 million split across two projects. I want to let families in Yangebup, Beeliar and South Lake know about those upgrades.

The first project at Lakeland Senior High School, which has been allocated \$6.15 million, involves a whole range of work including refurbishing the performing arts space and sports hall, the demolition of the South Lake Leisure Centre pool area, the reroofing of the men's change rooms in the sports hall, the refurbishment of existing music practice areas and staff study areas, significant changes to the existing leisure centre music and dance facilities, and the provision of a new grassed skills area. That is a huge amount of work happening for that \$6 million. That work is expected to be completed later this year. There is then also a second project, which has been allocated \$6.23 million. This project includes a new education support hub with four classrooms, a life skills room, a sensory room, a therapy room and a staff study and associated amenities area. The funding will also refurbish two general classrooms in the main school site to support students with a disability, and there will also be new block built, with six classrooms and a staff study area for the humanities and social sciences curriculum. That work is expected to be completed by next year. If members drive past Lakeland Senior High School, they will see that it is an absolute hive of activity, because there is so much work going on to upgrade and build new facilities at the school.

To the people of Yangebup, Beeliar and South Lake, Lakeland Senior High School is already a great school that was recognised recently when Cathy Baron, the principal, was named the Department of Education's International Women's Day Principal of the Year. I congratulate Cathy again on receiving that award. It is a testament to her fine work in leading Lakeland Senior High School and I look forward to continuing to work with Cathy. Clearly, that very good school will become an even better school with all these new facilities. Young people in Cockburn have those new facilities to look forward to at Lakeland Senior High School, and I am certainly looking forward to touring them when they are completed.

As I said at the outset, this is a great Labor budget. It is an even greater Labor budget than last year's budget, and I did not think that was possible. It will relieve the pressure of the cost of living on people in Western Australia. It will make necessary investments in our health and hospital system and make important improvements to our education system, most notably in my electorate at Lakeland Senior High School. On that basis, I commend the budget to the house.

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe) [5.15 pm]: I appreciate the opportunity to speak on the Appropriation (Recurrent 2022–23) Bill 2022 and the Appropriation (Capital 2022–23) Bill 2022 and respond to the state budget. I would like to call

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it the budget of missed opportunity, because, as was pointed out earlier today, some real opportunities have been missed with this \$5.7 billion surplus. When I was first elected in 2017, how many times did I hear from the former Treasurer and the current Premier that the previous government had run up too much debt? This was an opportunity for the current Labor government to actually do something about the debt situation. The debt has been paid down to \$29.9 billion, so there has been a small amount of debt reduction, but I notice an increase in the forward estimates, going back up to that \$33 billion mark. To me that was a disappointment, along with, of course, the fees and charges increase in water, at 2.5 per cent; vehicle registration, at 3.4 per cent; power, at 2.5 per cent; and the emergency services levy, at five per cent.

As the Leader of the Opposition pointed out today, there is nothing on payroll tax. This was an opportunity to kickstart our small business sector with some payroll tax reform. Instead of that we have a scenario whereby it can be paid in a different format on a quarterly basis. That has not actually changed anything as far as the payroll tax regime is concerned. I will come back to that later.

Firstly, I want to talk about agriculture, which is close to my heart. I quote Geoffrey Blainey from the last *Weekend Australian*. In his article, referring to the Australian federal election, he said —

... the farms and their contribution to the economy are barely touched on. Yet we hardly hear the news that agriculture here—highly efficient and innovative by world standards—has just experienced two prolific harvests ...

Thus the lives of tens of millions of adults and children on the far side of the equator will be saved or prolonged.

That is a very important and very relevant quote, because as we have seen with the situation in Ukraine, one of the world's largest grain producers, there is real concern about food security. Once again, in this budget, agriculture seems to have been overlooked. It does not even have its own fact sheet as part of the budget. One of the largest amounts of money being spent on new projects in the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development portfolio is on the solar eclipse. That is fine. That is a good tourism project. Agriculture is important to Western Australia; it is one of our largest industries. We seem to have a minister who is hell-bent —

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I am not taking interjections from the minister.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr D.A.E. Scaife): Minister for Water!

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Thank you, Acting Speaker.

Once again, our Minister for Agriculture and Food seems hell-bent on changing the role of our farmers, who are essentially preventing world hunger, into hydrogen-fuelled, organic, compost fertilising, non-livestock producing growers of carbon. That seems to be the path we are going down. We need protein and livestock, and we need an agriculture minister who understands that. As far as I am concerned, agriculture has been overlooked in this budget.

I welcome the commitment from the government for the \$25 million agricultural project to collaborate between CSIRO, the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, the University of Western Australia, Curtin University and Murdoch University. Hopefully, those institutions can work together because we all value good research and good results from that research. I hope that collaboration works well. We have seen the conjunction of large super departments with ministers trying to juggle enormous portfolios, directors general and their staff, and that has not worked well. We need good collaboration and we need good value for our research. We have a fantastic quality farming sector in WA and it needs our support.

Further to that, there is the addition of the five per cent royalty on the fledgling potash industry. This is a new and emerging industry. There is an opportunity for a locally sourced fertiliser for our farmers. This could mean the difference between a surplus and a deficit budget for our farmers. There is an opportunity for a local product. We want to move away from Russia as a supplier of potash. There is an opportunity to establish a quality potash industry in this state, but, once again, it needs government support. As the Leader of the Opposition pointed out today, it is not just about broadacre farmers; it is about the fruit and vegetable industry and the like. It covers all our industries. I am certainly right behind the potash industry. I hope this government has another good hard look at itself.

An article in the *Countryman* on the weekend pointed out —

WA farmers have thrown their support behind WA's fledgling sulphate of potash industry after aspiring producers were sluggish with a 5 per cent royalty in Thursday's State Budget.

The rate puts the product in the same category as a mineral concentrate, but a handful of ASX-listed players, that are already struggling to get their remote projects off the ground, argue the impost is patently wrong and unfair.

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We will certainly be asking questions about that in the days ahead. This is a great opportunity for our domestic agricultural industry.

I move on to the \$400 power rebate, which of course was welcomed by everyone in Western Australia. A summary of opinions was found in the letters to the editor in *The West Australian* on the weekend. Just about every one of the people who wrote in roundly criticised the Premier; Treasurer. I was quite taken aback, to be honest, when I opened the paper on Saturday morning and had a look. I will read some of the letters to the editor. The first reads —

... a massive \$5.7 billion surplus ... means diddly squat to people on the minimum wage paying half their salary in rent, \$2 a litre for fuel, \$5 a loaf of bread, \$9 a kilo of tomatoes and fruit ... forget it ... and don't get sick!

Another one reads —

The emperor giveth, and the emperor taketh away.

...

Your total disregard of the plight of the people who voted you into office will be remembered.

Another one states —

Mark McGowan, we see through your smoke-and-mirror act. I am not happy.

And another —

... to suggest that they —

Other states and territories —

would be “green with envy” ... is exceptionally disrespectful, uncivil and unnecessarily provocative. It is so provincial.

Where is the grace and modesty which are signs of a true leader?

This show of excessive parochialism is both childish and churlish.

That is a summary of a few of those letters. Those views were not from the Nationals WA and the Liberal Party; they are just the opinions of people on the street and their reaction to the budget. There is a concern that the people of WA have not been fooled. They appreciate the \$400, but they do not appreciate the increase in fees and charges. Most certainly, they were looking for something more solid when the government has a \$5.7 billion surplus.

I want to raise the issue of wages. When unions voice their disapproval of a Labor budget and the public sector is crying out for a wage increase, we know that there is trouble ahead. An article in *The West* today reported that the Premier is offering a choice of a one-off \$1 000 bonus plus consecutive 2.5 per cent pay increases or two years of 2.75 per cent increases. We saw a reaction, as the article stated —

UnionsWA secretary Owen Whittle rubbished the Premier's position, pointing out while the new policy might be better for “the very lowest paid” over the next two years, the benefit of the \$1000 sign-on bonus was only temporary—and that the base salary of anyone opting for the upfront payment would slip even further behind the rising cost of living.

As we know, the March quarter inflation rate was over seven per cent. These are signs that we have not seen the response that was needed for not only the average person in WA, but also our public sector workers. They have played the game and done the right thing over the last few years. They have worked hard and were hoping for something better, none more so than our health workers, our education workers and the like, whom I will be talking about shortly.

I will address a couple of elements within my electorate. The one that I was probably most disappointed with was the lack of any funding whatsoever for Esperance Senior High School. The main two wings of the building were built in 1966. In the middle of winter, it is that dark in the canteen, underneath one of those main wings, that people can barely see what is going on. Some classrooms have concrete cancer. The P&C wrote to the Minister for Education and Training last year. It has been advocating strongly, along with the school council, the Esperance shire council, the Goldfields–Esperance Development Commission and the Esperance Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Everyone in Esperance wants to see something done to the Esperance Senior High School. A letter was written to the minister asking if there was a master plan or something in the pipeline. The minister wrote back and said that the school community, the P&C and the school council were more than welcome to write their own master plan. That to me is a sign that there is an opportunity ahead, but there is not even one cent in the forward estimates for planning money for Esperance Senior High School. That was a real disappointment to me as the local member.

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister for Water, the member made it clear earlier that he was not taking interjections.

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Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Thank you, Acting Speaker.

We have also seen \$3.9 million allocated for berth 2 at Esperance port and \$13 million allocated for cladding for iron ore shed 3 and a fixed wireless repeater tower. That is encouraging for the Esperance region, I guess.

Another project is the sheep research and sheep feeding facility at Katanning. I went along to the opening of that the other day, as the local member, even though I was not invited. Having a farm 20 kilometres down the road, I was very disappointed that I was not informed about that. Regardless, I strongly support that project. I strongly support the measurement of sheep intake and of what is produced. I think that is going to be a very good project. The minister has followed on by providing another \$4.2 million to try to measure methane emissions and the like. That is one project in the electorate of Roe.

If I can, I want to move on to health. I think the Leader of the Opposition spoke about it very strongly. We have had some real disappointments in the regional areas. Recently, record ramping was reported at country hospitals. There were 128 hours of ambulance ramping at Geraldton Health Campus. Records show that Hedland Health Campus was up there with the worst. My concern, once again, is that this government has been in place for five years, yet we are still talking about Geraldton Health Campus. In five years, it has a car park and a facade. This government needs to do better. We do not want to be talking about it at the 2025 election. The same goes for the Albany oncology project, which has had quite a large amount of federal as well as state funding. Once again, it has been on the radar for many years. Mary Williams, a well-known identity in the Denmark and Albany region, is a great advocate. She has been very strong in following it through. Once again, it has taken too long. This government needs to really focus on delivery.

The sustainable health review has been spoken about since 2018 but still has not come to fruition. That is a really important element. As we have said, ambulance ramping is a real issue. I remember when I was first elected, hearing the Premier say, “The government has cut this funding. How great is that?”

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: We are now seeing the results of those cuts early on in this government’s tenure. We are now getting large cash splashes, but, unfortunately, due to the building cycle and other things such as COVID and the like, we are not getting the results.

Elective surgery is a real worry to me. I think the government has been too blasé putting off elective surgery. We had over 27 000 people on the elective surgery waitlist. Over the last six, eight or 10 weeks, we did not have patients coming into the hospitals. I understand that around 60-odd theatres were basically empty over that period and so now, no doubt, the number will have well and truly blown out to over 30 000. It will take years and years to get the waitlist numbers back down. That is something the government needs to focus on. We still do not have a CT scanner at Katanning Hospital. This has been identified as a critical need for that town. I certainly will be making the health minister well aware of that. I know of at least two patients who have had a stroke in the last year or two. They have gone to Katanning Hospital, which, unfortunately, does not have the equipment that is needed. Eventually, they were flown to Perth. A lot of stroke patients need injections in the first three or four hours and a scan to determine whether they have either a clot or a bleed so that the right injection can be given. That is a real focus. I was hoping that might have been in the mix in this budget as well, but it was not to be.

As the Leader of the Opposition pointed out, we are looking at 16¢ per kilometre for the patient assisted travel scheme, which is about one-sixth of the public service rate. It was a real disappointment to me that that did not come forth. That is so valuable to our regional PATS clients, if you like. The average cost of a patient assisted travel scheme trip is \$528. Members can imagine where 16¢ per kilometre goes, especially with the current price of fuel. But I do want to say well done to our health workers over the last couple of years, basically. They have done a great job right throughout the metropolitan and regional areas.

I also want to move on and say well done to our principals and staff in our education system, because they have done it pretty tough. I will say to the government’s credit that our students have stayed in school and have had very few periods when they have not been able to attend in person, so I think that is a positive. I will hand it to our principals who, basically, certainly in term 1 this year, were well and truly on the back foot. They had to do a lot of work, such as the likes of COVID tracing, which was never in their job description, of course. That really was the job of the health department. Well done to them for keeping the schools open. It was a really difficult period, which I believe, hopefully, we are through the worst of. No doubt our principals and staff will be finding some difficult times ahead as the COVID case numbers go up and down.

As far as education goes, \$20 million will be spent on transportable classrooms in 2023, but there is no indication of where they might be used. I refer to page 364 of volume 1 of budget paper No 2, which states —

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The State's population growth over the forward estimates period continues to be slower than previous years. It is projected there will be a period of low, sustained growth in student enrolments over this period.

We will see how that plays out. I have seen a substantial number of newish schools that have also had accommodation added. I will never knock back any funding to any school, but I question why somewhere like Esperance Senior High School, which was built in 1966, does not seem to find a place in our state budget. As we know, the renovations at Hedland Senior High School have been dragging on for several years. This government needs to focus on wrapping that up, considering where the wealth of this state comes from. I do not think we can underestimate that.

I would like to mention a couple of other things in education. There has been no increase in the boarding away from home allowance. We saw the funding drop during the previous Parliament from around about \$2 100 per student. At the same time as it was dealing with Moora Residential College and the Schools of the Air and the like, the government reduced that allowance on a sliding scale and now it is down to its lowest point of \$1 300. It is disappointing that, with a \$5.7 billion surplus at this time, the government has not seen fit to start increasing the boarding away from home allowance to our families who are a long way from Perth and whose children are a long way from their education providers.

There are a couple of other matters to do with education, including relief teachers. The education system is stretched at this time. It is absolutely essential that support is given to all our teaching staff, principals and deputies, and relief teaching is one area that we need to make sure that support is given to.

The delivery of rapid antigen tests has been slow and has not been in place for a lot of schools during this term. My office has been inundated with teachers, teacher aides and parents who have come to get rapid antigen tests from their member of Parliament, which I find disappointing because I understood that there was going to be a controlled rollout throughout our schools.

We talk about housing for our principals and teachers almost every week. Once again, there will be a reduction in funding over the forward estimates for Government Regional Officers' Housing, until there is finally an increase from 2024 to 2026. That is another element that we will not relent on.

I want to talk about some of our state school programs that I have not been able to find in the budget. Last week we saw the figures on the number of attacks on principals and the increased use of weapons in our schools. In 2017, there were 2 002 incidents of threatening behaviour towards our principals, deputies and staff. In 2022, there have been 2 577. In 2017, there were 661 incidents of weapons being brought to school. In 2022, it is up to 1 060, and there was another incident at Gilmore College today. That is a concern right now. Support for principals, teachers and families is paramount. In last year's budget, there was an \$11 million increase for the provision of school psychologists. That was an important allocation and I am surprised that it is not listed in the budget. I cannot locate it at this stage, but I will certainly be seeking clarification during the estimates hearing, along with clarification on the \$30 million for specialised career practitioners. We need to support our teachers, principals and deputies. The attacks that are happening are not acceptable.

A member interjected.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Thank you, member.

One of the positives in the state government's budget is the spending on mental health. I will say that that was a highlight for me. I know that the member for Cockburn also spoke about the matter and I agree on that particular element of the budget.

Just briefly on sport and recreation, prior to the budget, I called for an increase in funding for KidSport, but that seems to have fallen on deaf ears. It is also used to fund our scouts, girl guides and cadets, but apparently it is more important to fund Metronet than it is to look after our young students, families and sportspeople. If our kids are not active, the flow-on effect to our health system is quite massive. The long-term health and social benefits of these programs are vast.

The one item in the state budget that probably disappointed me more than any other is the regional athlete support program. It is funded with \$1.1 million for the 2022–23 financial year, but that will be dropped in the forward estimates. Once again, I will be asking questions during estimates. Where has that funding gone? Why is it that the government is making regional athletes who want to attend training—they have hundreds of kilometres to travel as it is—feel like second-class citizens? Our regional athletes deserve support from this government. In all fairness, it is hard enough for these athletes to travel these distances from our regions without having their funding support pulled.

They are some of the items in the budget that concern me. It seems as though royalties for regions is a distant memory. We have heard certain members talk about how it is coming through, it is eight per cent of the funding and so forth. Royalties for regions was about doing those extra projects. It was not about providing money for water

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subsidies, orange school buses and those sorts of things. It was about doing extra in our communities. I am concerned about that. I am concerned about the retention accounts of our government trading enterprises, whereby dividends and the like seem to be being held up. Some of the other issues that concern me are blackouts during summer, pole-top fires and housing.

MS M.J. HAMMAT (Mirrabooka) [5.47 pm]: I also rise to speak on the Appropriation (Recurrent 2022–23) Bill 2022 and the Appropriation (Capital 2022–23) Bill 2022 before the house today. I welcome the opportunity to speak on these bills and another outstanding budget from the McGowan Labor government. It is a great delight to have the opportunity to speak. Of course, there is a wide range of things that one could speak about when considering the content of this budget, so I think the challenge lies in concentrating on a few things, because there are many excellent initiatives and much that I can see that will assist people in my electorate of Mirrabooka and all around the state.

Before I start talking about specific things in this budget, it is worth remembering the context that we are in. It is easy to forget that we have just come through a global pandemic that started in early 2020—just over two years ago. The circumstances surrounding that are easy for us to forget—the uncertainty, the instability and the fact that we were in uncharted territory, not just in Australia, but around the world, in how we would respond to not only the health crisis that the pandemic presented, but also, clearly, its impacts on the economy and our society more broadly. It was quite a dramatic set of events, yet it is easy to forget that context. But I think it is essential that we remember that because it underlines the great success of this government in navigating extreme circumstances. Now, in 2022, this government has not only delivered an economically sound budget, which is a remarkable outcome, given that we have lived through the pandemic and given the financial mess that was left by the former Liberal–National government, but also contributed significant funds to the health system and our community so that we could come through the pandemic with not just a strong economy, but a strong health system and, indeed, a strong society. To date, we have invested a total of \$11.2 billion in COVID responses, with an additional \$1.6 billion provided in this budget. It is a significant investment in navigating once-in-a-century circumstances. We inherited from the former government an enormous debt, yet we have been able to navigate all that to deliver an outstanding budget.

As others have said before me, it is truly a Labor budget. It is a budget that continues the work of repairing the debt and deficit that was left by the Liberal–National government. This government has worked on improving the finances of the state, and it has done that because having sensible financial management means that we have the opportunity to invest in a great future for this state. We do not just manage the budget for the sake of it; we do it so we can invest in this state and in the future. We can invest in building a strong and diversified economy for the future. We can fund our schools and our hospitals to be strong and effective. Most importantly, we can provide a strong safety net for those in the community who are the most vulnerable and who need it most.

This is a great Labor budget. It is worth remembering that it is only ever Labor governments that have, at the heart of what they do, a prosperous economy, a fair society and a better life for all Western Australians. That, really, is the heart of the difference between Labor governments and Liberal–National governments. It is Labor that is committed to making our state, our economy and our society prosper and grow—for not just us, but also the future generations of Western Australians who will come after us. In Western Australia we can look back over recent history and know that the Liberals and Nationals in government squandered the opportunities they were given through the previous mining boom. They wasted an opportunity to build something substantial for future generations. This government will not miss that opportunity, and I am very proud to be part of a government that understands that to be part of our really important mission.

This budget will deliver for everyday people in Western Australia. By delivering a \$400 energy credit to every household in Western Australia, the McGowan Labor government is helping everyday people meet cost-of-living pressures. That \$400 payment will benefit everyone. It will be delivered when people need it the most, without the need to apply or qualify. It will apply to people's bills from 1 July this year. This is an outstanding initiative that will provide people, on average, with three months' relief from their energy bills. It will provide much-needed relief to families and households. It follows on from the success of the \$600 energy credit that was paid from 1 November 2020. This announcement has been very well received in my electorate of Mirrabooka. Along with a program to ensure that households have access to free rapid antigen tests, the McGowan government is providing WA families with real, practical help in meeting the cost-of-living pressures they are currently experiencing.

I want to also talk a little about the investments in this budget in the area of health. Members before me have also made comments about that. It is significant. This is a government that has responded to the pandemic and to all the pressures that has put on people's health and mental health in this state. This budget continues to deliver on the biggest ever investment in WA's public health system. As members before me have discussed, there is a \$252 million program to improve access to emergency care. There is \$1.6 billion of investment in health and mental health infrastructure over the next four years that, importantly, includes Joondalup Health Campus, which is of great

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importance to the people I represent in Mirrabooka. We have also allocated \$1.8 billion for the new women's and babies' hospital, which will be a significant piece of infrastructure that will deliver for many generations—an excellent facility for the birth of new babies in this state.

Our government has delivered 342 new hospital beds, with a total of 530 beds to be delivered before the end of the year—a significant investment in the health of our state. We have also been growing the health workforce. It has increased over the last two years by 15.6 per cent. That is the largest growth in our health workforce on record, and it is a clear demonstration of our commitment to ensuring that the health and welfare of Western Australians is addressed. It is, I think, a significant achievement, given the constraints on the labour market over the last few years—brought about mainly because of the closure of our international borders and the internal demand for labour in WA. In that context, it is a significant growth in our health workforce.

I am particularly excited about the investments into mental health in this budget, including into alcohol and other drug services in Western Australia. There is \$181 million of additional funding for the Mental Health Commission, and that will be very well received, not only in Mirrabooka but also, indeed, around the state. This is a key concern for people in my electorate. People regularly raise with me that they want to ensure that we have appropriate supports in place for people who need it because they are struggling with mental health issues. That is not always because they or people in their families have particular concerns; it is because people understand that there has been a growing demand for mental health services, and they want to ensure that we have appropriate services to meet those needs. It comes up regularly in my discussions with constituents as well as in discussions in schools and other places that provide support to families and young people, in particular. These initiatives will be very well received as part of the package of responses that this government is delivering; they will provide additional mental health support. I think we all understand that addressing mental health requires a range of strategies and different settings to be able to provide the support that people and their families need, so I welcome this additional funding commitment, and all this government is doing to support those who face mental health challenges in our community.

I want to also acknowledge the investment of an additional \$3.7 million to establish Aboriginal health practitioners here in WA, and the investment of \$6.1 million that has been allocated to continue a range of foetal alcohol spectrum disorder prevention initiatives. I am really proud to be part of a government that is taking seriously the systemic disadvantage our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people face. Aboriginal health practitioners play an important role in addressing the substantially poorer health outcomes affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, not only in this state but also across Australia more broadly. These practitioners can work with Aboriginal people and Aboriginal communities to address not only health issues, but also the social determinants of health issues, which often contribute significantly to the greater likelihood of disease and illness, and lower life expectancies, that are experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. I think these are important initiatives that will help to ensure that our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can live with dignity and justice. We are funding important initiatives that will help them address the lower health outcomes they have experienced for some time.

Along similar lines, I want to also include in my comments tonight the fact that I am proud to be part of a government that is providing \$350 million to establish the remote communities fund, which will improve water, electricity and other municipal services in remote Aboriginal communities. It is a disgraceful matter of record that the federal conservative government removed funding that was supporting those remote communities. That is something the opposition should be incredibly ashamed of. These are remote communities in which people are experiencing systemic disadvantage. Removing the funding that supported people in those communities is, I think, an incredibly outrageous decision. I am therefore really pleased to be part of a government that is seeking to reverse that outcome by creating a fund of \$350 million. I hope that this time next week we will have a new federal government, and I hope that that federal government will match our funding to ensure that we provide appropriate support to our First Nations people so that they can live in remote communities that are very important to them, to their families and to their way of life.

We have many excellent schools in the electorate of Mirrabooka, and I want to talk about them and some of the commitments that have been made to education in this budget. This budget is just one piece of work amongst a lot of work that this government is doing to ensure that our schools are equipped to assist our young people. Schools in my electorate of Mirrabooka, and all around the state, do incredibly important work to ensure that our young people get the education they need to succeed. I believe very strongly that our schools should be supported to do their work—not just to deliver education, skill and opportunities, but also their important work in transforming the lives of young people and giving them hope. Our public schools in the electorate of Mirrabooka are doing an outstanding job, and I want to commend them for all the important work they do. It is particularly important in my electorate, where many people come from migrant or refugee backgrounds, that we provide specialist support and assistance so that people are able to get the education they need.

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.00 pm

Mr Bill Johnston; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Robyn Clarke; Mr Terry Healy; Mr David Scaife; Mr Peter Rundle; Ms Meredith Hammat; Ms Alison Kent; Mr Chris Tallentire; Dr Jags Krishnan; Mrs Lisa Munday; Mrs Lisa O'Malley; Mr Matthew Hughes; Ms Jodie Hanns; Mr Simon Millman; Mr Paul Lilburne

Ms M.J. HAMMAT: Just before we broke for dinner, I was considering some of the education outcomes in this budget so I will pick up my train of thought from there. As I was saying, we have many excellent schools in the electorate of Mirrabooka and, in fact, all around the state. They are doing important work to help our young people get the education and skills that they need to succeed. Like many members in this place, I am passionate about our schools being able to deliver education, skills, opportunity and hope to our young people. Our public schools offer the opportunity to transform the lives of our young people and they are particularly important in my electorate, where many people come from migrant and refugee backgrounds. I am really pleased that this budget continues the important work of investing in our local schools. I am excited about the performing arts centre that is to be built at Balga Senior High School and I know the whole school community and, in fact, the whole community in Balga, is looking forward to this work commencing. It will be a great community resource and it will provide a really great boost to this fantastic local school.

In addition, our government is providing funding to schools like North Balga Primary School, Rawlinson Primary School and Waddington Primary School so that they can install solar panels. This is a really great example of the McGowan Labor government's approach to teaching our children about climate change and renewable energy, while also just taking practical steps that will help those schools to reduce electricity costs. I am also very pleased about the additional funding that has been allocated to support students with additional education needs. To expand the education adjustment allocation, \$31.9 million has been provided to support more students with additional learning needs and an \$18.2 million investment was made in specialist learning programs for students with autism spectrum disorder. From my discussions with school leaders in Mirrabooka, I know that they are very concerned about the increasing incidence and complexity of autism and other special learning needs. Providing this additional learning support will ensure that those students get the support that they need to be able to make a great start as well.

Our local schools are achieving excellent results for our young people and this additional funding will particularly assist them to continue to do that great work. Our government is also committed to ensuring that Western Australians have access to the skills and training that will equip them for jobs so that industry will have the skilled workers that they need to build our economy. Balga TAFE will be upgraded as part of the biggest TAFE capital works program in Western Australian history; \$40.1 million has been allocated for improvements to Balga TAFE. These improvements will include a new multistorey specialist teaching block to provide technology-enabled classrooms for building and construction trades, community services, general education, hairdressing and adult migrant education.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms M.J. HAMMAT: I am a strong advocate for our TAFE system. TAFE provides outstanding skills and education opportunities for not just school leavers and young people; it also plays a role in supporting many people to navigate career changes in later life or assisting people, often women, back into the workforce after career breaks. It performs a critical role of ensuring training is relevant to the needs of industry and it is the cornerstone for achieving a strong economy. The McGowan Labor government has delivered free and low fee training opportunities to so many Western Australians through the Lower Fees, Local Skills program. We continue to invest in making sure that TAFE is affordable for people who want to go there. We are investing \$38.4 million to keep TAFE fees lower for 210 high-priority courses. This program is making training affordable and it is helping people find and keep work. Our government is also providing \$25 million to assist TAFEs to purchase new state-of-the-art equipment to ensure that students, apprentices and trainees will train on the equipment that will then be used in their industry. I am very proud of the investments we are making into TAFE and training to provide young people and many others with the opportunity to get a skilled, well-paid job. These initiatives are great, not just for Balga TAFE, but for TAFEs right around Western Australia. It is also great news for ensuring we build a strong and diversified economy for today, and also for the generations of Western Australians that will come after us. It is also great news for jobs, which remain a central concern for the people of Mirrabooka and right around Western Australia and Australia. We need a strong economy to deliver the good, well-paid jobs that everyday people rely on.

This government has an outstanding record on jobs. We have created more than 160 000 jobs since the McGowan government was elected in 2017. Our unemployment rate is the lowest in Australia. Our participation rate is high, with more women in the workforce than ever before. A good job is the cornerstone for a good life and I am proud to be part of government that is committed to making sure that Western Australians have the jobs they need. I am also very pleased that this budget continues the excellent work of this government in building a prosperous and a diversified economy. Although mining has served us well and will continue to do so, our long-term fortunes rely on having a vision and a plan for future prosperity based on a diversified economy. As well as investing significantly in diversifying the economy with a record \$1.3 billion, our government is also investing in infrastructure that will help drive future productivity and economic growth. Our significant investment in infrastructure like ports, roads and rail will help make our state more prosperous in the future.

Mr Bill Johnston; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Robyn Clarke; Mr Terry Healy; Mr David Scaife; Mr Peter Rundle; Ms Meredith Hammat; Ms Alison Kent; Mr Chris Tallentire; Dr Jags Krishnan; Mrs Lisa Munday; Mrs Lisa O'Malley; Mr Matthew Hughes; Ms Jodie Hanns; Mr Simon Millman; Mr Paul Lilburne

In talking about diversifying the economy, I also want to talk a little bit about our climate change initiatives. Climate change initiatives are good news not just for anyone who cares about the future of the planet, which seems to be everyone except for the current members of the federal Liberal–National government—the only ones who continue to deny there is a place for climate change—but also for the economy. The federal National–Liberal government has always presented action on climate change as a kind of binary choice; you can have either a strong economy or you can take action to address climate change. But our government understands that confronting the reality of climate change head-on makes good economic sense; that in fact it is not a binary choice but that addressing climate change will help ensure that we do have a strong economy into the future. Although members of the current federal government might wish to be Luddites and have shown a dogged determination to ignore the realities of climate change, I really welcome the leadership that this government is showing in this area. The announcement of a \$500 million boost to the climate action fund, taking the total commitment to \$1.25 billion, is a really important step that will allow us to respond to projects that will assist in the transition to a low-carbon economy in the future. The contribution of funds to accelerate the use of low and zero-emission vehicles is a positive initiative to encourage more people to take those steps. The investment of \$30 million to boost *Collie's just transition plan* to support the end of native logging in 2024 is also important in managing transitions in our economy that confront the reality of change. An investment of \$31 million for climate action research and planning to help reduce emissions across various sectors is a sensible way of assisting all parts of the economy address this challenge head-on. I think the federal Liberal–National government has set a disgraceful example on the question of climate change by denying, for most of its term, the reality of it and what it would mean for everyday people and their communities. By dragging coal into the House of Representatives, presenting it as a stark choice, they have done nothing to serve the people of this country and the people of Western Australia in confronting the reality of the transitions that a changing climate will bring on all of us. Burying one's head in the sand will not diminish the reality that change is happening. Business in this state and large businesses right around the country understand the reality of needing to adapt their businesses to meet the changing needs of our climate and the changing expectation of international markets. The federal government has done no service to anyone in denying the reality of climate change. Our largest and most successful companies are embracing the reality of climate change, and so is this government.

As I said at the beginning of my comments, this is a very Labor budget. It will make life better for everyday people through sensible initiatives to help cost-of-living pressures. It will build a strong economy, one that is diversified and sets us up for the future. Importantly, this budget will help to build a fair society. Again, I am very pleased with the work that is being undertaken in this budget to protect some of the most vulnerable people in our community. The McGowan government has invested an additional \$408 million in housing and homelessness measures in this state budget. This additional money, together with the housing and homelessness investments from the last two state budgets, takes the total investment to \$1.3 billion. This state budget will build on the commitment in last year's budget to invest record amounts in social housing and deliver 3 300 additional homes. I know that everyone wants a place to call home. It is an important issue for the people whom I represent in Mirrabooka, and I am very pleased that our government is making record investments in this area. Only a few weeks ago, I visited, with Minister Carey, three new homes in Balga that have just been completed and will soon become a home for someone who needs it.

I also feel very strongly about the work that we are doing to address family and domestic violence, so I welcome this government's continued commitment to fund a range of family and domestic violence prevention and support measures. I congratulate the Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence for her excellent work in this area, and I commend her for the increases in funding that she outlined in question time that have come as a result of this government's serious commitment to addressing what we know is a significant issue in society.

I am very proud to be a part of the McGowan Labor government. This budget is testament to our values as a party and as a government. Labor governments have always been the ones to change our state and nation to make things better. It is our mission as a Labor government to make life better for everyday people. We will do this by building the wealth and success of this great state and sharing that wealth so that everyday people can lead better lives. We will do this by using that wealth to lift up the most vulnerable in our society. This budget demonstrates our commitment to that vision and the vision of a fair and prosperous society.

The story of this budget is not just about the \$400 energy credit that will help all Western Australian families and it is not just about this government's sound financial management, which is the envy of Australia and possibly the world. The story of this budget is not just about the massive investment in infrastructure that will lay a foundation for productivity and economic success for generations to come and it is not just about record investments in health and significant investments in education. All these are good stories, but the story of this budget is that this is a government that is committed to delivering for the people of Western Australia. This government has the maturity, foresight and discipline to deliver for the people that we represent not only today, but also in the future. This government has at its heart the values of fairness, equality and economic prosperity that includes us all, no matter who we are or where we come from. With that, I commend the bills to the house.

Mr Bill Johnston; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Robyn Clarke; Mr Terry Healy; Mr David Scaife; Mr Peter Rundle; Ms Meredith Hammat; Ms Alison Kent; Mr Chris Tallentire; Dr Jags Krishnan; Mrs Lisa Munday; Mrs Lisa O'Malley; Mr Matthew Hughes; Ms Jodie Hanns; Mr Simon Millman; Mr Paul Lilburne

MS A.E. KENT (Kalgoorlie) [7.14 pm]: I rise today to speak to the Appropriation (Recurrent 2022–23) Bill 2022 and the Appropriation (Capital 2022–23) Bill 2022 and to discuss the remarkable 2022–23 state budget. As my colleagues have already mentioned, this budget is commendable for many reasons. I will talk about what it means to those in my electorate of Kalgoorlie.

The future looks great for the goldfields region and regions throughout Western Australia. Prior to the historic election last year, the McGowan Labor government released a plan for the goldfields—a plan to keep the goldfields strong, to invest in quality local jobs, to fund a pipeline of infrastructure works and to deliver on key services, such as health and education. I stood here in September last year and spoke of a budget that included a record \$9.1 billion investment in regional infrastructure and here I am today to tell members that, incredibly, that investment has been increased. The McGowan government's responsible financial management has meant that a record \$12 billion is being invested in regional infrastructure, with only eight per cent funded through royalties for regions. This is on top of the more than \$2 billion invested to ensure that people in the regions pay the same for water and electricity as metropolitan users and the \$4.2 billion royalties for regions program that will continue to deliver key regional projects and services to regional communities. The McGowan Labor government is truly a party for regional Western Australia.

Mr P.J. Rundle interjected.

Ms A.E. KENT: Sorry, member for Roe, but it is the truth!

I cannot adequately express how proud I am to be standing here as part of the McGowan Labor government, a government that is setting up the goldfields for the long term by diversifying the economy and creating jobs, boosting regional health and mental health investment by a record amount and providing important cost-of-living relief for local households.

I spent last year talking to businesses, key stakeholders and my community and bringing the matters that they raised with me to the attention of ministers in this house and the other place. I can tell members that this government has listened. I will start by highlighting a matter that is raised with me a lot, a matter that I said I would focus on at the outset of my term. In my inaugural speech last year, I talked about how important it is to create services for those with mental health issues, especially young people. I spoke about the difficult journey that local resident Sharon Duffy had had with her son's mental health journey and that her son Bryce had sadly ended his journey last year. As soon as I was elected, I put Sharon in touch with key people in the health system so that she could provide her lived experience. Unfortunately, Sharon is not on her own in this space. I was particularly pleased to see Sharon play her part on the, at the time, newly created Ministerial Taskforce into Public Mental Health Services for Infants, Children and Adolescents Aged 0–18 Years in Western Australia. Sharon sought out other parents who had suffered similarly and provided a vehicle for their voice, too. I know that this has helped her journey considerably—to be able to participate at this level, to be heard and to be a part of effecting change.

The task force has a comprehensive plan for reform. Services around the world are dealing with increasing volumes of children struggling with mental illness. Children are presenting younger and with more complexity. In WA, approximately 14 per cent of kids up to 17 years of age experience a mental health issue. The number is even higher in regional Western Australia. Referrals to a specialist public health mental health service for kids are up by 70 per cent since 2014. In 2020, 14 000 children across Western Australia had some form of contact with a specialist mental health service. Governments across Australia and around the world are challenged by this demand overtaking capacity. Every Australian state and territory has experienced a significant increase in the number of children who have presented to an emergency department because of a mental health issue. We need to get children and their families the help they need before it escalates to a hospital admission. It is outstanding that this government is fully committed to the reform recommended by the task force to improve outcomes for children and families. This McGowan government will implement all 32 recommendations of the ministerial task force final report. This means that the WA child and adolescent health system will be radically reshaped to ensure better outcomes for families, with actions such as more intensive community-based treatments for kids in crisis; keeping more children out of hospitals; better support for families; a more inclusive approach between families and clinicians in treatment decisions; and better coordination and information sharing between government agencies and services, such as Health, the department for child protection and Justice.

Because of the size and complexity of the required reform, it will be a staged approach. However, the most immediate challenges will be addressed through this budget. I am proud to say that the McGowan state government has invested \$47.3 million to respond to the recommendations of the task force. This includes \$18.5 million to expand the child and adolescent mental health service frontline workforce across seven regions by 11.6 FTE, \$12.9 million for additional peer support workers, \$10.5 million to deliver a two-year virtual support service for at-risk children, and \$1.3 million for mental health workforce development initiatives. As the final report was handed down, Sharon said —

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What a huge relief all the hard work, gathering submissions, media, trips to Perth were worth it ... I now live in hope that future generations of children will get the mental health and wellbeing help they need. Regional and remote areas of WA will benefit enormously from these changes. Won't happen overnight but the wheels of change are turning. If only these changes happened earlier, Bryce might still be alive ...

That is such a poignant message for all of us. It is not just the implementation of the task force recommendations that will be funded. There is also \$30.1 million for 18 additional paramedics and six ambulances across regional Western Australia; \$11 million to ensure that there is a nurse 24/7 at emergency departments across regional Western Australia; \$39.6 million for COVID home-monitoring program telehealth services; \$10.5 million to provide video and telecommunication mental health support to children and families in the transition phase between services; \$5.1 million to continue the mental health emergency telehealth service, to ensure that regional residents will be able to access mental health services; \$5 million for upgrades to health staff accommodation in regional Western Australia; and a \$6.1 million funding boost to help prevent foetal alcohol spectrum disorder.

I am hoping, of course, that we will have a new federal government on Saturday—one that values people and shows that it listens to regional communities. In particular, one important policy that Anthony Albanese has released on this matter is that a federal Labor government would restore the 50 per cent regional loading to telehealth psychiatric consultations that Scott Morrison cut during the pandemic—a move that was nothing short of disgraceful.

I now turn to the mining industry. We all know what the resources industry has meant to both the Western Australian economy and the national economy during the pandemic. The Chamber of Minerals and Energy of Western Australia has praised the government time and again for its approach in keeping the resources sector not only operating but also generating export revenue of almost \$400 billion. It was not luck that this government managed to gain a surplus; it was because of its amazingly good financial management and the strong and brave decisions made by the McGowan government that enabled mining companies to continue operating. As I told the house last week, and it is worth repeating, Northern Star Resources has seen year-on-year growth, totalling \$3.2 billion for the calendar year 2021—a 57 per cent increase from 2020. This was all during the pandemic. Gold is booming. Nickel is booming. Rare earths is booming. What an exciting time for the goldfields. Of course, with any boom comes its challenges. If someone wanted to buy a block of land in the golf course area of Kalgoorlie from 2016 to 2020, there were lots available—14 in fact. In response to the increase in demand, the state government, through Development WA, released 31 more blocks in November last year, and they sold within two weeks. I talked and talked and the government listened. This project brings us 35 new residential lots in Kalgoorlie's GreenView estate. This has been applauded loudly and strongly in my electorate. Added to this incredible announcement, \$11 million has been provided to facilitate the development of industrial land in lot 350 in Kalgoorlie. I thank the Minister for Lands for this. These are important ways in which the McGowan government is looking to the future.

When speaking at the inaugural Minerals Forum in Kambalda in March this year, the outgoing Chamber of Minerals and Energy's WA boss, Paul Everingham, said that after four years in the role, he was still excited by what the goldfields miners had to offer. He said —

“The Goldfields is way more exciting in the next 10 years than the Pilbara,” he said,

“The home of mining in WA is the Goldfields. It started here, and it's very much a more diverse commodity base.

That is all very good news for the goldfields. A couple of other major points from the budget that I would like to highlight include the \$113.1 million in fee reductions that will be achieved in regional Western Australia through the successful Lower Fees, Local Skills initiative; \$2.1 million to attract international students to live, work and study in regional Western Australia, targeting areas of skills shortage, including aged care, disability, child care, hospitality and tourism; \$30.1 million for 18 additional paramedics and six ambulances across regional Western Australia; and, as I have said, \$11 million to have nurses 24/7 in regional emergency departments. Then there is the \$5 million in funding to fully seal the remaining lengths of the Outback Way, to provide a third sealed route across Australia. An additional \$159 million will go to the regional roads safety program, bringing the total funding for the program to \$828 million. This program has already delivered upgraded shoulders and installed audible edging to more than 1 495 kilometres of road in the goldfields–Esperance region. Excitingly—I am sure the member for Roe will be excited about this—more than \$2.9 million will be spent on eight new fast-charging stations across four locations on the section of national highway 1 between Norseman and Eucla —

Mr P.J. Rundle interjected.

Ms A.E. KENT: Thank you, member. This will ensure that WA's fast-charging network extends to South Australia.

As I have said, this government listens. There is \$19.8 million in funding for the regional airfares zone cap, which will be up and running by 1 July. Residents were able to start booking in April and will not pay more than \$199 each

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way. This initiative has been wonderfully embraced by goldfielders. The high cost of airfares affects every resident in many different ways. For some people, it is regular medical appointments in Perth; for others, it is an unexpected family emergency or the costs involved in running a small business. I will give members an example of the difference this will make to residents. If I had to go from Kalgoorlie to Perth tomorrow, I would pay \$682 one way. Seriously, if I was coming from Kalgoorlie to Perth tomorrow, that is what I would pay. What a difference it will make to residents to know that they can go and visit a sick relative at a moment's notice and not pay more than \$199 each way. I know this initiative will mean so much to our community. I am proud of the McGowan Labor government and the Minister for Transport for putting in the hard yards and getting this policy together.

There are many more funding initiatives for the goldfields in this budget. This outstanding budget is a testament to the hard work the McGowan government has undertaken to create a big surplus. The government's financial management is the envy of the nation, and this budget clearly demonstrates the McGowan government's continued support to keep regional Western Australia and the goldfields strong. We are delivering our plan for the goldfields, giving people every reason to live, work and raise a family in the goldfields. I commend the bill to the house.

MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Thornlie) [7.28 pm]: It really is a great honour to address the Appropriation (Recurrent 2022–23) Bill 2022 and Appropriation (Capital 2022–23) Bill 2022, and the state budget. I marvel at the fact that this budget is such a great achievement when it has been prepared in the most difficult of circumstances—this COVID era. Yet, it seems that meeting the two challenges of reducing state debt and providing a budget with a magnificent surplus, while at the same time dealing with the challenge of COVID, is something that the government and the Treasurer, Premier have been more than equal to. We have delivered on this. Western Australia is unique amongst jurisdictions around the world. We have really pulled off something absolutely remarkable here. We have done all that hard work of budget repair. There is still more to do. By the end of this financial year, our state debt will be below \$30 billion. It is absolutely remarkable to see what we have achieved at the same time as using all kinds of fiscal restraints and meeting the challenges of COVID. It is a really remarkable achievement.

We have learnt some fascinating things through this COVID era. We have seen the benefits of having Western Australians stay in Western Australia and spend their money here so that we have had this incredible pulsing through of consumer expenditure. Whether in the south west or other tourism places right across the state, whether to do with household consumption or investment in housing, we have seen this money being spent here in Western Australia rather than going overseas, and what a benefit that has been. That is the reason we have this estimated growth in gross state product of 3.75 per cent, and we can look forward to similar projections. They will perhaps dip as people start to go overseas again and spend their money there, and we will see a little bit of a decline, but we can hope that that will eventually be offset by an increase in overseas demand for our various export products. It is also interesting to see and learn that, in fact, the revenues currently brought in by international visitors and students do not equal the amount that we spend when we are overseas. This is a very interesting thing.

I have told the house about my journey from Perth to Albany via the Munda Biddi Trail. That is a 1 000-kilometre trail, and I hold the honour of being the first member of this Parliament to ride on the Munda Biddi Trail from end to end. I was able to see the level of tourism activity that is there in the south west for all to behold, such as the fact that cafes and restaurants and what have you are all overflowing. We have great attendance. I was back in the south west this weekend and had the honour of representing the member for Warren–Blackwood at the SEVEN mountain bike race event held over 125 kilometres from Nannup around the Blackwood region. That is another magnificent event and a demonstration of what can be delivered in active tourism and active sporting events that appeal to people of all ages. I have a little bit of a thing, and I have mentioned to various sports ministers over the years that, yes, it is great to invest in big stadiums, but what we really want in sport and recreation is investment in activities that enable all of us to be active and engaged, not sitting on a seat in a stadium. That is not really sport; that is passive recreation. I am very fond of events like the great SEVEN event. It is magnificent. Well over 1 200 participants take part in that fairly gruelling sporting contest. It is a magnificent event organised by Brendan Morrison and Rebecca Cotton. They do a magnificent job. They are looking to develop that event.

I know that the member for Warren–Blackwood will be very interested to learn about the Blackwood bike park and the idea that we can have in the triangle of Bridgetown, Nannup and Balingup all kinds of great cycling opportunities appealing to people such as mums and dads with kids out on bikes, people who want to do some serious road riding or mountain biking, the gravity-defying people who speed down hills at incredible rates and all sorts of other people, as well. It is very interesting to note that an activity or project such as the Blackwood bike park touches on many portfolios. Naturally, it touches on the tourism portfolio and the sport and recreation portfolio. It touches on the environment portfolio, because so much of the activity happens outside. I notice in the state budget lots of wonderful funding and I commend the Minister for Environment on his contributions to various trails. It also touches on the forestry portfolio. Much of the activity at the weekend was held through the forestry estate, so full commendation to the Minister for Forestry and the Forest Products Commission. Indeed, we have to see more contributions from

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the education portfolio. We have this problem at the moment that so many kids are getting to school in private vehicles. They are being chauffeured to school rather than getting there under their own steam. We have to turn this around. If we could have it in people's minds that cycling is a sport like any other sport, kids might be inclined to ride to school, as well. Of course, the south west is becoming a place for all sorts of mountain biking opportunities and other sporting events, with the Tour of Margaret River coming up, so it really makes sense to invest in this.

I notice the industry transition package for forestry industry people. I acknowledge that mill owners and others in the industry are struggling because they are coping with having to come to terms with the changes that will result from the cessation of native forest logging in 2024. We have added another \$30 million to that package to give a total of \$80 million for an industry transition package. How good it is to see that there are plenty of transitional opportunities there.

I will just finish off on the event of the weekend and the tourism budgetary implications of that. There was international interest all round. The United Kingdom cycling media and the Union Cycliste Internationale, the international cycling body, all took great interest in the event.

I want to turn to some local Thornlie-based initiatives. I refer to the expenditure on the Canning River in the Thornlie electorate and the activation and, indeed, environmental restoration of the Canning River that has been performed by the Armadale Gosnells Landcare Group, and the opportunity that gives people to connect with their area, acknowledging that many people in the Thornlie electorate have perhaps recently arrived in Australia and are just in the formative stage of creating a bond with and an appreciation for the Australian natural environment. A project like this gives those people the opportunity to realise that they can help nurture the environment, enjoy it, and see it come back to what it should be after it has been allowed to get into some level of degradation. I especially want to acknowledge the proposed contribution by the local federal member, Matt Keogh, the member for Burt; the candidate for the seat of Swan; and others, who are proposing to invest in what we can call an urban river. Around Australia rivers in urban settings have been allowed to go into some state of decline. The people who live in proximity to these rivers are often from that recently arrived background. They perhaps were not born in Australia and so they are on that journey of connecting with Australian ecology. Programs like the urban rivers program really are most welcome and ideal as a means for helping those people find their feet in the country, make friends and connect with people. They might not necessarily be interested in sporting opportunities or other activities, but being involved in a tree planting or weeding day along the Canning River could be the perfect opportunity for them to be more involved with things. This and other projects are really great opportunities for people.

I also want to look a little bit further at some of the qualities of this state budget relative to other states, and especially acknowledge that WA now has a stable net-debt-to-revenue ratio of around 50 per cent across the forward estimates. That compares with the commonwealth's general government net-debt-to-revenue ratio, which was projected to increase to 75 per cent prior to the pandemic, but now, after the pandemic, is headed to 132 per cent by 2025. We can compare that—50 per cent against 132 per cent. The federal government made some brave and necessary decisions to invest in our response to COVID, but, clearly, the state government's economic management in Western Australia has been absolutely outstanding.

Also in the state budget there is a record \$2.5 billion investment in the state's health and mental health systems and a \$252 million package of measures to help ease the waiting time at emergency departments. I hear a lot about this issue from my constituents, but I think it is driven a lot by the media. People are very concerned that if they front up to a hospital emergency department, they will have a long wait, but this \$252 million package of measures to help ease that wait time is very welcomed indeed. Occasionally, when people tell me that they have gone to the emergency department, I must admit that I am sometimes left thinking that maybe they could have waited until the Monday or Tuesday to see a general practitioner. But people like the idea of receiving instant treatment, so we have to find ways of ensuring that the various triage systems are effective and enable people to make the right choice and not to abuse the magnificent system we have. I think the \$252 million package will have all sorts of components to it that will enable people to make the right choice on how they use our fantastic health system.

I note that there will be a further \$652 million for climate action and environmental issues, which includes \$500 million for the Australia Climate Action Fund and \$59.3 million to accelerate the uptake of electric vehicles. I am thrilled that we encourage the use of electric vehicles. I congratulate my colleagues who have already purchased electric vehicles, but must admit I will be sticking with my bike whenever I can. Electric vehicles are clearly the way to go. One of the unheralded benefits of electric vehicles we will see, and it amazes me that people put up with it at the moment, is an improvement in poor air quality. I notice when I ride up the Kwinana Freeway bike path that if there is a bit of a light easterly, there is a waft of car fumes. Of course, I am physically exerting myself so I inhale fumes from those vehicles. I even noticed dreadful fumes and what have you on my walk into Perth at lunchtime today. I really do wonder whether it is time that we did something more about restricting vehicle access into the CBD. I am often affronted when standing at a set of traffic lights, along with numerous other pedestrians, that one or

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two cars will be given priority over us. Meanwhile, they chuck out all their fumes and things. That issue needs to be addressed as well. Clearly, there will be enormous air quality benefits from converting the car vehicle fleet to electric vehicles, but it will not solve the problem of traffic congestion. The whole fleet of vehicles could be converted to electric cars tomorrow, but we would still have the problem of traffic congestion. I will come to this later, but that is why I think the investments around other means of transport are absolutely magnificent.

Another matter I want to address are the fantastic initiatives in the environment portfolio. One I want to highlight is the Return to 1616 on Dirk Hartog Island program—1616 being the date on which Dirk Hartog arrived on the island. The idea of the program is to return to the island the full suite of species that were on the island in 1616. These species became extinct because of pastoral lease activities on the island from early the 1800s through to, I think, 2008 or 2009, when we took back the pastoral lease. The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions has had various programs in place to eradicate cats and, of course, the sheep and goats to enable the habitat to be re-established. A whole suite of native animals that once lived on the island are now being reintroduced, including an animal known as the dibbler. I was witness to the first captive-born dibblers when I was working at the Perth Zoo in 1999. It was very exciting. Dibblers are carnivorous dasyurid marsupials and I was a humble zookeeper when I worked under the supervision of Dr Harriet Mills, who, I notice, is now one of the board members of the Perth Zoo. Harriet's research led to the breeding in captivity of these animals, which has given us a number of animals to reintroduce to places such as Dirk Hartog Island, along with a whole lot of other animals, including the Shark Bay mouse. It is amazing to be on that island and see the ecological paradise that is there. The number of ghost crabs and the Simpson's pythons are absolutely magnificent.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: I was on the island on 30 March this year to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the French taking possession of the western coast of Australia in 1772. It all came together in the telling of an environmental and historical story—a very interesting story to enjoy on the island, and one that makes it a very special place indeed. The Minister for Environment can be very proud of the work that is going on there, and hats off to his staff for the great work that they are doing on the island.

I also want to highlight something in the environmental portfolio that I think is long overdue—that is, the creation of an environmental impact assessment fund provided for under part 4 of the Environmental Protection Act, something that has been talked about for a long time. When various projects come before government, they will go for environmental assessment. It can take many hours of government resources to look at these projects. I recall in the days of the Barnett government, there was talk of charging about \$3 million a year—it was even in a budget perhaps six or seven years ago—for environmental impact assessments. That never happened, but now the account has been created, so congratulations to the minister for its creation. Similarly, the Pilbara environmental offsets fund is another worthy initiative that is up and running at long last to make sure that people do not just get the benefit of a service and not have to pay for it. It is very important that they pay for it.

There are some great features in the state budget around various diversification opportunities. I am particularly pleased to see that \$7.1 million is being put towards increasing Western Australia's overseas presence. WA has various trade commissions and an agent general office in London, which strikes me as odd; I believe the office is styled as the agent general to the United Kingdom and Europe. But, clearly, if we want to be in Europe, we need to be in Europe, so I am very pleased to see that we are putting some money towards the creation of an office in Frankfurt so that we can be physically located in what is, after all, the world's biggest single market. That will have many benefits for us.

I am very pleased that we will be continuing our investment in various space and science initiatives. There will be the continuation of programs to support the space sector such as the Australian Remote Operations for Space and Earth program. WA really has great skills in this area. We are able to operate mines remotely and there is potential to also operate spacecraft remotely. We are well placed to do that. We are capitalising on a skill set that we have developed, which is very exciting. Curtin University has its Binar Space program as well, which is creating these quite small spacecraft—the next generation of very small spacecraft. Binar is the Noongar word for fireball. That program will attract a lot of attention amongst young students who want a career in any part of the science, technology, engineering or mathematics areas. Their skill sets will be incredibly valuable to us there. It is the sort of work that draws on people's technical knowledge and can attract a lot of money as well. That has exciting opportunities for us.

I will conclude my remarks by highlighting the great work that many of our candidates are doing in the lead-up to the federal election. House of Representatives candidates and sitting members are doing magnificent work. They will put forward to an Albanese government some great projects for the state, which will be of great benefit to Western Australia.

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The people of the Thornlie electorate, like me, are especially impressed by the strong surplus in this state budget and our state's long-term future, with record investment in health and mental health, and support for Western Australians with cost-of-living challenges. They welcome the \$400 electricity credit and that we also have climate initiatives embedded in the budget. We have record investment in infrastructure and a range of other measures to diversify our economy and boost capacity. The McGowan government's budget management is in dramatic contrast to the record deficits we saw under the Liberals and Nationals. I commend this state budget to the house.

DR J. KRISHNAN (Riverton) [7.52 pm]: I rise today in support of the Appropriation (Recurrent 2022–23) Bill 2022 and the Appropriation (Capital 2022–23) Bill 2022. As all members are aware, I am very new to this house. This is the second budget since I was elected to this house in March 2021. I am fortunate and proud to be part of this McGowan Labor government that delivered a \$5.8 billion surplus in its previous budget and now, keeping the consistency going, another \$5.7 billion surplus in this budget. Many governments in this country and around the world can learn from this robust economic management. There has been no reckless spending. There has been careful investment. There have been some tough decisions taken during the pandemic to get the economy going that have resulted in this strong budget allowing us to further invest in important projects and put the money in the right place to benefit the people of Western Australia.

It has not been an easy couple of years. We can only imagine the situation if the opposition had got its way and brought the borders down and the mining industry had shut down. We can only imagine the state of affairs if the opposition had got away with supporting Clive Palmer and brought our borders down and the mining industry was shut down; we would have been struggling to make ends meet and not have a surplus to invest in important projects and look after the people of Western Australia.

The government has made a further investment of \$1.6 billion into the COVID-19 response. It has been able to do this because of strong economic management in the past few years. There is a \$635 million investment for rapid antigen tests. That only takes into consideration the cost of RATs, but the actual impact is that the person who is testing positive is not spreading it to other people and shutting businesses down and having a bigger impact on the community and the people of Western Australia. It is a useful investment so that people are able to get to where they have to get to and get on with their routines without much interference because they have access to free RATs, which helps them to make a confident decision to go about their jobs.

I come to education. It is obvious that education is close to my heart. I have repeated several times in this house that education is in the DNA of the people of Riverton. The best-performing schools in Western Australia are in the electorate of Riverton. I take this opportunity to thank the principals, teachers, parents and citizens associations, volunteers and board members in the schools of the electorate of Riverton for our schools having the highest level of education in the state. I am glad to say that this budget is on track to deliver the government's \$12.5 million commitment to Willetton Senior High School and its \$35 million commitment to the construction of stage 1 of Rossmoyne Senior High School. I look forward to being part of all four stages of the Rossmoyne Senior High School development, with a total investment of over \$110 million. To be able to deliver these commitments, the government needs to consistently provide surpluses and strong economic management so we do not have any hurdles to delivering the infrastructure for the future. There is a \$595 million investment into upgrades of schools and new schools, and a \$54.6 million investment to support kids with disability and special needs. I can only imagine how thankful the parents of these kids with disabilities and special needs are with this government being able to invest in and further support them, which is critical.

An amount of \$2.5 million will be invested in phonics skills development. I can personally relate to this because when my son was in year 1, he could not pronounce the alphabet letters K and S. A lot of his communication was mumbled because he was losing the confidence to communicate. Fortunately for him, both his parents are GPs and were able to pick this up and take him to a speech pathologist for intervention really, really early. I am so proud that Aishwarya, a speech pathologist, was able in three sessions to fix the problem and he got his confidence back. I can only imagine what would have happened with his progress in school and how his confidence would have been hampered if I had not intervened at the right time. I am proud to say he is doing third year medicine at Curtin University. He became a top performer right from year 1.

An amount of \$33.8 million will be invested in maintenance upgrades. Many of the primary schools in my electorate commenced close to 50 or more years ago and they require essential maintenance work. We are able to invest the money without blinking because of the strong economic management of this government resulting in the strong surplus that we have.

The issue of community safety often comes across when I talk to my constituents in Riverton. An investment of \$16.4 million will go to recruiting 950 new police officers in the next four years. It will improve safety and the confidence of people going about their normal lives.

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There is a further investment of \$408 million in housing and homelessness initiatives, an issue that is close to many people's hearts. If we put this investment to one side and took into consideration, or assumed, that there was a problem with the budget and the government was not able to spend that money, and there was a problem with the economy that means people are struggling to find jobs, we would find that the crisis of homelessness and in housing would be even worse. With strong economic management, a low unemployment rate and the highest participation rate on record, we have a small problem, but it could have been much worse if the economy was not doing so well. Our further investment will resolve that problem as well, and we hope to get on top of it early, Madam Acting Speaker.

Organisations like Zonta House Refuge Association in my electorate do a fantastic job. Recently, the Minister for Education and Training, Hon Sue Ellery, and I were able to go to Zonta House to support it with 1 000 rapid antigen test kits when it had an outbreak of COVID in three of its the refuge centres. The people at Zonta House were very grateful that they could continue to support clients, with workers confident they could go into the refuges and remove and isolate the people who tested positive.

There is a further \$34.4 million investment for family and domestic violence prevention activities. Speaking to the senior sergeants at both Cannington Police Station and Murdoch Police Station I came to know that overall crime statistics for the last five years have come down, but one particular crime is gradually going up—that is, domestic violence. I am very thankful that the McGowan Labor government is further investing in activities to prevent family and domestic violence. An investment of \$114 million will go into child protection and support services to strengthen the already excellent services provided by the McGowan Labor government.

We will invest \$19.7 million into Aboriginal short-stay accommodation. As a general practitioner, I understand and have empathy for Aboriginal patients who are culturally sensitive when they come to the metropolitan region. They will feel comfortable having access to a short-stay facility.

Why is training important? That is a question that crosses my mind. It reminds me of a story my grandfather told me when I was a kid. There was a king who had his workers construct a building during the day and then a different bunch of workers came in at night to demolish the building. The first set of workers came back again to construct and the next set came to destroy. Someone asked the king, "Why not just give the money to them rather than make them work day and night?" The answer given by the king was, "The economic situation can change. When the good times come and my people do not need help from me, they will have the skills they require to look after themselves. When bad times come and I am not able to help them, they will still have the skills to survive and look after themselves."

Skills are very important for any government, and that is why this government is investing in skills and training. There is \$76.5 million for training initiatives in this budget to train the next generation. Of that, \$38.4 million will go towards lowering fees, allowing people to take up the training that they require to secure their future so that they do not have to depend on anything but their skills to survive for as long as they want to.

There is \$14.3 million to support training people in the construction industry because the industry is doing it tough at the moment.

There is an investment of \$2.4 million to fund international students going to the regions to fill the skills shortage. As a migrant, I interact with and understand a lot of people overseas who look forward to getting an opportunity for a better life in a country like Australia and a state like Western Australia, and they are more than willing to contribute in the regions.

There is a \$216 million investment for TAFE capital works. This will, again, build infrastructure for the training we will require to secure our future.

I come to infrastructure, and there is a \$1 billion investment, along with the commonwealth government, towards Metronet. Again, we are building infrastructure for the future. Because of the strong economy, we can continue to deliver that infrastructure, overcoming the hurdles and without hesitation.

In close proximity to my electorate are the Nicholson Road and Garden Street improvements. This a joint investment between the state and commonwealth governments. There is a \$47 million investment for local cycling infrastructure. We can all appreciate how much more cycling infrastructure contributes to the health of a community. There is \$46 million for riding and walking facilities as well. We can make these investments because of our robust and successful economic management, resulting in a surplus and money available for useful investments.

I come to climate action, Mr Deputy Speaker. Another \$500 million will be added to the climate action fund, taking the total to \$1.25 billion. Climate change is real. I realise that particularly young people in my electorate want to know what action is being taken on climate change. They are very enthusiastic and they do their research. They

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understand and accept the science and they want the government to act on climate change, and that is what the McGowan Labor government is doing by investing in climate action.

There is \$22.6 million going into new charging infrastructure that will allow people to travel without the burden of not being able to go to certain places due to the lack of charging stations. There is an investment of \$36.5 million that will go towards 10 000 rebates of \$3 500 for people buying electric cars. Eventually, we anticipate that electric cars on the secondhand market will come down in price with this initiative.

We will support people with cost-of-living pressures with the \$400 rebate on their electricity bill. The rebate will be reflected in the electricity bills of every household in Western Australia in July some time. It has been well received by the people of Western Australia. Yesterday, I was at the pre-poll place in Willetton. I represent the people of Riverton, so I talk to anyone and everyone.

[Member's time extended.]

Dr J. KRISHNAN: I speak to everyone, irrespective of what party they belong to. A Liberal Party volunteer wearing a blue shirt handing out how-to-vote cards walked up to me and we had a conversation. In that conversation, she repeated at least three times, "Will you carry the message to Premier Mark McGowan that I thank him for the \$400 rebate?" That is how well it resonated among the people of Western Australia. We will be able to do more such things only if we have strong economic management. I am very, very proud and fortunate to be part of this government providing these services.

Before I conclude, I have left the topic of health towards the end of my speech. The government's health funding is my favourite investment. There is a \$2.5 billion investment going into health and mental health. Multiple studies around the world clearly state that the demand for mental health services has doubled post-the pandemic. It is not only Western Australia. It is not only Australia. It is around the world. It is a timely investment to meet the demand to make sure that there is adequate funding available to provide the services for the needy, particularly in mental health.

We already spoke about the \$1.6 billion towards the COVID response.

I would like to expand on the \$252 million being invested in the emergency department reform package. The experts recommended 17 different initiatives to ease the pressure on emergency departments. This government is adopting 17 initiatives to ease the pressure. I will not have time to go through all 17 initiatives, but let me give members one example. When an elderly person has a fall, a dizzy spell, it does not necessarily mean that they have had a heart attack or a stroke. Our paramedics, who have been working extra hard during the pandemic, within minutes are capable of concluding whether a person needs emergency care or just a geriatrician, and this is being trialled in the south metropolitan region. If a paramedic recognises that it is a non-urgent ambulance transfer, instead of clogging the only entry into the emergency department, they will take the patient to the aged-care assessment unit. Therefore, the elderly person does not go in the emergency queue and wait to be seen. Straightaway they get to see a geriatrician and be admitted. That pressure of the extra patient in the emergency department is removed. Very innovative new methods and initiatives are being used to ease the pressure. The demand for emergency services has gone up by roughly 20 per cent. It is not only in Western Australia. Again, it is not only in Australia. Around the world, the demand for emergency services has significantly increased. That demand has caused problems with ambulance ramping and providing efficient emergency services. I am confident that these initiatives will ease the pressure on emergency departments.

The McGowan government has already delivered 342 new beds. By the end of this year, the McGowan government will have delivered 530 additional beds in Western Australia. It is a significant achievement. We can have the money, but building the infrastructure is a challenge and we can only imagine the challenge of finding the workforce to provide the services for that infrastructure. I am proud to say I am part of this government that has recruited 1 456 nurses and 512 full-time equivalent medical staff, mostly doctors, up to March 2022. That has increased the health workforce by about 15.6 per cent. In challenging times of recruitment, with people not coming from overseas and it being difficult to find people available to work, this government was able to deliver a 15.6 per cent increase in the health workforce, thereby allowing the people of Western Australia to access services when they need to access them.

A \$2.5 million investment will go into preparing a business case for a WA comprehensive cancer centre. This is an investment in the future. Things are getting complex and difficult. Investment is going into research, new methodologies, recruitment and new infrastructure—all to benefit the people of Western Australia.

With this government's responsible and strong economic management, we are making very useful investments into the future. We should only look forward to more budget surpluses and strong support from the opposition for

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the useful investment we are making in Western Australia. Thank you for the opportunity. I commend the bill to the house.

MRS L.A. MUNDAY (Dawesville) [8.16 pm]: I rise to contribute to debate on the Appropriation (Recurrent 2022–23) Bill 2022 and Appropriation (Capital 2022–23) Bill 2022. I want to thank the McGowan Labor government for delivering the 2022–23 state budget with record investments for people all over WA, particularly regional areas such as my electorate of Dawesville. The electorate includes the suburbs of Dudley Park, Erskine, Halls Head, Falcon, Wannanup and Dawesville. With rapid population growth for over a decade and growing economic and tourism opportunities, there is a huge amount of potential for our area and, as a result, we have seen an increase in demand for services and funding.

This state budget has met the demand from regional areas. We have seen record investment in areas such as health, mental health, community safety, education and training, infrastructure and more—everything that our everyday constituents are looking for. Our government continues to provide ongoing and long-term social and economic outcomes in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. WA's stable and responsible budget management continues because of our safe handling of the pandemic, which has supported our strong economic and financial position, helping record another strong surplus.

The McGowan Labor government is setting up the Peel region for the long term, diversifying the economy and creating jobs, boosting regional health and mental health investment by a record amount, and providing important cost-of-living relief for local households—the \$400 electricity credit is an example of this—by keeping household fees and charges below inflation. This is on top of the \$2 billion invested to ensure that people in the regions pay the same rates for water and electricity as metropolitan users pay. The people of WA have seen the difference that strong, persistent and decisive leadership from their government can make. This budget shows our strength as a state and that we are using our successes to deliver for our future. I support this budget delivered by Mark McGowan, particularly with its focus on the Peel region.

I became the member for Dawesville just over one year ago. After 20 years as an ambulance paramedic and more recently qualifying as a registered psychologist, my experience in the areas of health and mental health and improving patient outcomes in our community are the reasons I decided to enter politics. I am proud to be giving my second state budget contribution as part of the McGowan government with the knowledge that the state budget is set to include a massive investment of \$2.5 billion in our healthcare system and mental health services across WA. This package will deliver more doctors and nurses for the regions, hundreds of new beds and new expanded services for WA patients right across our state. This will include a range of important projects in WA, including over \$30 million for 18 additional ambulance paramedics and six ambulances. This area is incredibly important to me and the investment will have a huge impact on the people of my region and addressing the increasing demand on the healthcare system.

Our government is committed, now more than ever, to putting patients first in regional Western Australia. What does that mean for our Dawesville electorate residents? It means quality health care closer to home. Over the past five years, the McGowan government has invested millions in regional healthcare infrastructure and continues to do so. This budget has committed another \$5 million to continue the mental health emergency telehealth service to ensure that regional residents can access mental health services. Western Australia's strong financial position also gives the state government the capacity to boost regional health and mental health investment by \$158 million, in addition to \$1.6 billion of statewide COVID-19 response and recovery measures, including free rapid antigen tests for our regional communities.

A key part of the ongoing investment is the \$152 million towards the redevelopment and expansion of Peel Health Campus. This will end the privatisation of services, meaning it will be brought back into public hands. The redevelopment will deliver such things as 63 additional inpatient beds, 12 chemotherapy places, 20 mental health inpatient beds, one additional operating theatre, 15 palliative care hospice beds, more outpatient services, better medical imaging services and the introduction of a 10-bed mental health emergency centre. This is in addition to the redevelopment that has already happened to expand the emergency department, along with the extra parking availability. This is a massive win for patients in not only the electorate of Dawesville, but also the entire Peel–Murray region. With building and development in the Florida Beach estate and Erskine and our ageing population facing more complex health issues, this commitment will greatly benefit my electorate and address the high demand for an expansion of health services in the area, something I have experienced firsthand as an ambo. I look forward to Peel Health Campus coming back into state government hands next year.

John is a constituent in my electorate and he wrote to me saying how he was excited to hear about the upgrades to Peel Health Campus. He has been living in Dawesville for three decades—30 years—and he has seen the need for upgrades to the hospital. After a recent visit to the doctor, it was explained that he would need an operation that

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would have to happen at St John of God Murdoch Hospital, a procedure that, if Peel had adequate staff and facilities, could have been performed there, closer to his home and his support networks. This is one of the changes I am looking forward to coming up, starting next year. The previous Liberal–National government went for over eight years without any upgrades. The Labor government is committed to putting patients first in our area.

Other notable commitments to healthcare services for regional patients are: \$10.5 million to provide video and telecommunication mental health support to children and families in the transition phase between services; \$39 million for COVID-19 home monitoring program telehealth services; \$18.5 million to expand child and adolescent mental health services across regional Western Australia; and a \$6.1 million funding boost to the prevention of foetal alcohol spectrum disorder project. The McGowan government will also fund \$55.8 million for more nurses to be available 24/7 at emergency departments across Western Australia, helping ease the pressure on hospitals, which is greatly needed at this moment. People living in regional areas should not be punished because of where they live. These residents have a right to access the same level of high-quality health and mental health care that is close to home and that is exactly what the McGowan Labor government is delivering for them.

The COVID pandemic has reminded us all of the importance of investment in a strong economy. The McGowan government is continuing to create local jobs and economic diversification in our regions, including a \$21.1 million boost to Tourism WA's destination marketing to encourage tourists to come to Western Australia and travel across the state. Who would not want to come and visit? Our coastline is one of the most spectacular on earth. I am privileged to be the state representative of the Dawesville electorate, which has both the coastal and estuary views with our trademark dolphins, boats and amazing cafes. Our state government has allocated \$17.7 million to Tourism WA to develop new tourism experiences in Western Australia's national parks. On top of that, \$480 000 is allocated to the Peel–Harvey Catchment Council, on which I am proud to work alongside members of the group and am proud co-chair of the Bindjareb Djilba coordinating committee, with the member for Mandurah, David Templeman, as my co-chair. This committee works to support and protect our valuable ecosystems.

In addition, \$80 million was allocated to the investment attraction fund to attract new industries and economic diversification across the state, bringing this to a total of \$180 million. There is \$25 million for the Western Australia Agricultural Collaboration to grow agriculture research and development in WA. Bringing regional road maintenance jobs in-house to Main Roads will secure 490 jobs in regional Western Australia. A \$4.5 million boost to the local capability fund will assist local businesses to increase their capability and competitiveness.

Investment for community infrastructure is something that has been needed in the Dawesville electorate for over a decade. My region has experienced rapid growth over the last 15 years, putting a demand on the need for new social infrastructure, community facilities and services. Our population is expected to increase by nearly 50 per cent more than its current population by 2036. I am confident that our community will grow and prosper under the McGowan government's investment of over \$12 billion in infrastructure for regional Western Australia. In addition, there is more than \$4.2 billion through the royalties for regions program and billions more committed to delivering quality services across the state so that, no matter where you live in Western Australia, all Western Australians can thrive.

Another area incredibly important to the Labor government is ensuring that our young people receive a quality education. This state budget will continue to invest in Western Australia's TAFE and training sector with \$113 million of fee reductions being achieved in regional Western Australia through the successful Lower Fees, Local Skills initiative, which slashes TAFE fees by up to 72 per cent across 210 high priority courses. I was able to join the Premier last week at the South Metropolitan TAFE in Mandurah, which is one of the many TAFEs throughout WA that will benefit from the \$5 million committed for a wage gap program to support the new apprenticeships pathway for the civil construction sector and boost civil construction skills. This will service many students in Mandurah and in my rapidly growing electorate. They will have access to more varied training opportunities across different industries. It will help TAFE students gain employment closer to home, diversify our local economy and strengthen youth engagement.

No matter what school a child attends, they deserve to have quality education and be able to attend a modern school. The McGowan Labor government has recognised that investing in our children now means investing in jobs for the future. Over \$30 million of additional funding has been allocated to the education adjustment allocation to support more students with additional learning needs in developing their literacy and numeracy skills. I am pleased for these schools to receive this funding as it is important for students to have access to quality and advanced education as early as possible. That is especially the case in my region, having a higher than normal population of neurodiverse students. This includes autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, dyslexia, dyspraxia, Tourette syndrome and so on. This is something I will continue to push hard for more because these exceptional kids need to be seen, heard and supported to fulfil their dreams as well, alongside our mainstream students.

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My area is growing and it is just over an hour away from Perth, depending on when you are driving. It can be two hours during some peak periods. The issues of improving access to and affordability of transport systems is important to me and was another one of the reasons that drove me to run as a candidate in the last state election. I was pleased to see the introduction of capped fares for all Metronet train and bus journeys to a two-zone maximum on 1 January this year. This has had an extraordinary direct impact on the pockets of passengers who live in the Mandurah and Dawesville electorates who travel to the CBD or surrounds for work, uni or school. For example, a Dawesville resident who commutes daily to Perth is now saving over \$3 000 per year. This is an outcome of a \$60.6 million investment by the Labor government. The two-zone fare helps reduce travel time and congestion on our roads with people opting for a cheaper transport option. The recent Mandurah station multistorey car park, which officially opened in November last year, has also helped to provide our commuters from across the Peel region with access to almost 1 900 parking bays. This is also a game changer, knowing that you can park and ride without the stress of wondering whether you can get a park. Before this multistorey car park was built, sometimes I would personally choose to drive to Perth rather than fight for a car park, especially if I was not due to leave until later in the day, which meant that, with almost certainty, no car park would be available.

Probably one of the most incredibly important new infrastructure builds is the Mandurah Bridge duplication, with an investment of \$55 million from the state government, which was matched by the commonwealth to upgrade our roads, to help ease congestion coming out of the Mandurah area and create more access for cyclists and pedestrians. Site works are due to start this month and I am looking forward to the upcoming community consultations following that, with construction due to begin in 2023. Road safety is incredibly important to me as the member for Dawesville. Having served in the Rockingham and Peel regions as an ambo for nearly two decades, I have seen firsthand the devastation and tragedies that occur on our roads. Recently in Parliament, I submitted a grievance to Minister Saffioti about Old Coast Road and its most dangerous intersections. I am pleased to see that investigations are underway to improve and upgrade this stretch of road as well as the \$146 million funded in this budget for the safer roads and bridges program in regional WA.

Our government is also focused on delivering community safety initiatives, with \$11 million delivered to expand the Target 120 program into an additional nine locations, including Mandurah, which will assist in protecting and supporting the vulnerable members of our community. Another issue of community safety that many residents have raised with me is targeting hooning and antisocial behaviour in the suburbs of my electorate, particularly Dawesville. It is clear how important this is to local residents and the disruptions and distress this causes them. I have had many meetings and conversations with local residents in my office and offsite about what they think is needed. As a result, the member for Mandurah, David Templeman, and I delivered a joint commitment of more than \$200 000 towards covert cameras to target hoon drivers. These cameras have been procured and the police are currently working on delivering them to the Peel region hotspots that require extra attention. All this builds on our government's commitment to provide existing community safety measures in WA. We can see the McGowan Labor government's commitment to implementing community safety measures and the access, availability and affordability of these for those in regional areas.

These are just some of the ongoing projects that will be worked on over the next few years. This funding will benefit our communities by growing local tourism and developing the land, which will lead to improved economic outcomes while also improving conservation outcomes and maintaining a light footprint. I am proud to be a part of the Peel Labor team that is making these investments for the future of our area so that it can be enjoyed by generations to come. I am also very proud of this state budget delivered by the McGowan Labor government and its commitment to invest in the Peel region, particularly in the growing electorate of Dawesville. We have seen investment in community infrastructure, quality training and education programs and the much-needed expansion of our health and mental health care systems to include more innovative services. It is clear in this budget that the McGowan government has not forgotten about regional areas. It has worked to ensure that we have the same level of access, affordability and availability to service delivery as the rest of the state. I am excited that my electorate will see the benefit of these policies for a long time to come. Again, I thank the Treasurer for his investment in the state budget for people living in the south west region and the suburbs of the Dawesville region. I commend the bills to the house.

MRS L.M. O'MALLEY (Bicton) [8.32 pm]: I rise to add my contribution to the second reading debate on the Appropriation (Recurrent 2022–23) Bill 2022 and the Appropriation (Capital 2022–23) Bill 2022. I will begin by acknowledging and thanking the work of the Premier; Treasurer and cabinet ministers on the preparation of this unashamedly Labor budget, the second budget of this forty-first Parliament and the sixth of the McGowan Labor government. I would also like to congratulate the Premier and cabinet for their exceptional work in leading our state through the ongoing COVID-19 global pandemic.

This budget exemplifies what good financial management can achieve and illustrates the best of balanced fiscal governance; indeed, it is what good economic management looks like. The 2022–23 state budget is further evidence of the success of the McGowan Labor government's strong and sensible approach to managing Western Australia's

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finances. It continues our commitment to responsible financial management, a commitment that has seen the McGowan government, once again, drive down debt—the only state to do so. This budget delivers an operating surplus of \$5.7 billion, which will enable the McGowan Labor government to pay down the debt left by the mismanagement of the Liberal–National government. We will do this with the knowledge that although it is crucial to provide funding to support those under financial pressure and invest in critical infrastructure and job-creating initiatives now, we must also shield future generations from the debt burden of past Liberal–National governments. This balance requires a deft, diligent and compassionate approach, which is what Labor governments provide and what this McGowan Labor government does best.

I am proud to be giving my sixth budget contribution as the member for Bicton. I do this with the knowledge that it is an incredible privilege to represent my constituents of Bicton in the Parliament of Western Australia. I am here because they trusted me and Mark McGowan's government to keep them safe and this state strong. We are committed to leading WA through a time of great uncertainty. We have approached this task with a determination that has not wavered. I take the responsibility very seriously, as does every member of the McGowan Labor government team. The evidence here before us is that their trust is well placed. WA is safe and strong despite the ongoing pandemic, and I join my constituents of Bicton in saying thank you to Premier and Treasurer McGowan, the cabinet ministers, our COVID-19 response and recovery teams and all those on the front line and behind the scenes who have worked incredibly hard over the past two years. We know that the work is not done yet, so I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their continued efforts during this time of transition to COVID normal. I also acknowledge every person in my electorate of Bicton and beyond for their patience and resolve in taking the necessary steps to play their part in protecting the vulnerable and ensuring that our small businesses can stay open. You have all contributed to the positive economic story of this budget, thank you.

This budget is reflective of the McGowan government's strong economic leadership, which has set us up for continued financial stability and provided the confidence to set out a positive plan for WA's future. This is a big budget. It is expansive, responsive, ambitious and responsible. It sets out a plan that is financially disciplined while building on a strong and diverse economy through our Plan for Jobs. It continues to transform our transport system through investment in Metronet, cycleways and road safety, and it invests in our ports and trade economy with a freight future that will see long-term growth across the sector that will create sustainable high-skilled jobs and permanently remove trucks from local roads. This budget increases our already record-breaking investment in health and mental health. It recognises the significance of education and training for future opportunities for our children, young people and those wishing to retrain and upskill with funding for our schools, support for additional learning and by keeping TAFE affordable through our Lower Fees, Local Skills initiative. The budget acknowledges that stronger and safer communities mean resilient and thriving communities, which is why the 2022–23 state budget significantly invests in community safety and wellbeing.

A significant part of the electorate of Bicton is bordered by Derbarl Yerrigan, the Swan River. The impact of climate change is on our doorstep and very much on the minds of my constituency. This budget provides vital investment in and a tangible commitment to responding to climate change and setting up WA for a prosperous, low-carbon future. It invests in sustainable WA jobs and industry innovation while protecting and enhancing the state's unique environmental heritage values and assets and supporting our transition to net zero by 2050.

Our regions and remote places are integral to what makes our state so extraordinary in its landscape, people and prosperity, but the vastness and distance bring a unique set of challenges, which this budget addresses with its substantial investment in the regions and remote communities. The past five years has seen the McGowan Labor government deliver on budget repair, jobs, major and minor infrastructure, health, education, the environment, community safety and much more for the people of Western Australia. This budget sees us deliver another surplus to continue this essential work. I am immensely proud to be part of a visionary government, one that is committed to increasing the standard of living for all, supporting workers and small businesses, easing cost-of-living pressures on households, and investing in our health system and our economically diverse and environmentally sustainable future.

As we review the sixth McGowan government budget, we on this side of the house do so with optimism, energy and enthusiasm, which is in stark contrast to the negativity of the tired members of the opposition. This is an optimistic budget, but it is also sensible and disciplined, and contains the necessary safeguards against the possibility of future economic downturns based on sensible and conservative forecast assumptions. This state budget, like those that have come before it, is in stark contrast to the big spending, careless and optimism bias-driven approach of the previous Liberal–National ones, which saw a debt trajectory heading towards \$43 billion. This government's approach to financial and COVID management has culminated in this McGowan Labor budget's strong position, which sees an operating surplus of \$5.7 billion this financial year, with the budget to remain in surplus over the forward estimates period, including a \$1.6 billion surplus in 2022–23 based on cautious and conservative commodity price forecasts. Net debt is expected to fall below \$30 billion this financial year, our third consecutive year of debt reduction and the lowest level of net debt since 2015. Despite committing more than \$11.2 billion in responding

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to COVID-19 and investing a record \$33.9 billion in infrastructure in this budget, net debt is now almost \$14 billion lower than projected when we came to office. This is an extraordinary and noteworthy achievement, and I find it disappointing and, in fact, quite troubling that opposition members seem so angry and upset about this. It is almost as if they do not want our state to be doing so well. It is quite sad, really.

The McGowan government never loses sight of the fact that it is here to serve the people of Western Australia. We are all too aware of the great responsibility that comes with this service. Further, as a Labor government, we commit to making every decision with the most vulnerable top of mind, whilst also getting on with running the state, repairing debt and building for the future.

Good financial management is important to the people of my electorate. I know this because when I knock on doors in Attadale, Bicton, Melville, Palmyra and East Fremantle, I am told over and over that it is this McGowan Labor government that has turned things around from the record debt days of the previous Liberal–National government to the record surplus days under this government. That is why the 2022 state budget's confirmation that the WA economy is not only powering ahead but also powering the nation's economy is welcome news. Western Australia's domestic economy has grown by 7.2 per cent over the past two years of the pandemic. It is the strongest in the nation and among the best performing in the world. Additionally, WA was the only mainland state to record gross state product growth in 2019–20 and 2020–21, contributing almost 40 per cent of growth to the national economy over the past two years. Other important highlights of WA's strong economic growth include WA merchandise exports reaching a record \$240 billion in 2020–21, which accounted for more than half of Australia's exports, and that our state's domestic economy is forecast to grow by 5.25 per cent in 2021–22 and a further four per cent in 2022–23, fuelled by household spending, business and government investment, and housing construction. With Treasury forecasting gross state product to grow by 3.75 per cent in 2021–22, it is the fastest rate of growth since 2013–14. It is important to note that it is a consequence of our border control settings and approach to COVID management that WA's economy has remained strong throughout the pandemic, particularly with the uninterrupted operations of the resources sector. Our state has provided valuable support to the national economy, resulting in billions in revenue flowing to the eastern states, including through company tax collections and the GST. This government's strong economic and financial management has reduced net debt in 2021–22 to an astounding seven-year low.

Small business represents about 97 per cent of all businesses in Western Australia, from manufacturing and business services to retail, hospitality, transport and so much more. The sector is a significant employer and job creator. Small business owners form a significant cohort in the electorate of Bicton, with some parts home to over 40 per cent of residents who derive their main income from small business ownership. The sector is an important economic driver domestically and locally. That is why our small business assistance grants and initiatives have been so important over the past two years, alongside the guidance and support of the Small Business Development Corporation, the Buy Local policy, red tape–reducing changes to legislation and the WA jobs strategy. With this budget's additional investment in economic diversification, WA Labor is proving once again that it truly is the party of small business.

As I look over our past five budgets and forward with this sixth one, I see many great things that the McGowan Labor government has delivered, is delivering and will deliver in my electorate of Bicton and beyond. These things are making both an immediate and a long-term positive difference to the people of Bicton and right across WA. We are delivering to our schools. I would like to acknowledge the many improvements and commitments to my local school communities, from basketball court upgrades to ICT support, solar panels, air conditioning, nature playgrounds, shade structures, playground equipment, canteen refurbishments and more. Although modest in funding terms, these commitments have provided massive outcomes for the students, teachers and families of those schools, and for the local small businesses and contractors who engage in delivering these improvements. My local schools are continuing to enjoy the benefits of these commitments. This includes schools like Palmyra Primary School, which continues to record great savings on its energy bills since the installation of solar panels in 2017. This budget confirms our commitment to our schools and education, as we continue to invest in high-quality infrastructure and facilities at public schools while also ensuring there is support for students' learning and wellbeing, including \$595 million to be invested in new and upgraded school facilities in 2022–23; a \$54.6 million increase in support for students with disabilities and additional learning needs; \$42.5 million for COVID measures in schools, in line with health advice; \$2.5 million to support phonics skills development for year 1 students; and a \$263.7 million funding increase for the delivery of education this financial year. This comes on top of previous commitments of \$23 million to commence the staged redevelopment of John Curtin College of the Arts, including science, technology, engineering and mathematics facilities, and \$9 million for a new gymnasium and STEM facilities at Melville Senior High School, plus a big boost for science funding delivery, with classrooms at two more of my local primary schools, Melville and Richmond, to be converted into science labs. An additional \$50 000 at each of my local public primary schools will see Attadale Primary School provide air conditioning to its assembly hall; Bicton Primary School fit solar panels; Richmond Primary School create a new nature play space; Melville Primary School undertake a number

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of minor upgrades to its play and garden spaces; and Palmyra Primary School upgrade its playground equipment. There is also \$100 000 to refurbish Melville Senior High School's canteen.

Our investment in education and student wellbeing is further complemented by our investment in training and preparing Western Australians for the jobs of the future, as well as today. Just like many of my constituents in Bicton, I am mum to a young adult as well as a young teenager, and these investments in our current and future workforce are very welcome. The McGowan Labor government came to office with a clear commitment to make training affordable and accessible for Western Australians. We set about restoring and revitalising the neglected TAFE sector, and since 2017, we have slashed fees, introduced free courses and invested in the biggest TAFE infrastructure program in WA's history. This has delivered strong results, with enrolments increasing significantly, putting more Western Australians on the pathway to quality local jobs.

The protection of our natural environment and action on climate change is also very important to my constituents. I am proud of our government's action on climate change and the environment, through our commitment to ban the logging of native forests in Western Australia's south west; permanently protect the Beeliar wetlands; ban single-use plastics; massively expand the conservation lands estate; and increase funding for our Aboriginal ranger program. There are also further investments in this budget, including a \$500 million boost to the climate action fund, taking the total to \$1.25 billion, and almost \$60 million to accelerate the use of zero-emissions vehicles.

[Member's time extended.]

Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY: There is \$62 million to power Rottneest Island with 75 per cent renewables and to upgrade water assets, \$31 million for climate action research and planning, and a \$30 million boost to the native forestry just transition plan to support the end of native logging in 2024.

In Bicton, I am proud to support the delivery of \$2 million towards the establishment of an artificial shellfish reef project in local waters of the Swan River. This will improve water quality and increase food sources for aquatic life as well as local birdlife. The Attadale and Alfred Cove foreshore area is home to abundant migratory and local birdlife. I am incredibly pleased to be delivering \$50 000 for a bird-viewing platform and to support the call for the establishment of a bird sanctuary, as well as the ongoing protection of this internationally significant area.

It is fitting that in National Volunteer Week I conclude my comments by thanking and acknowledging the continued efforts of Tom and Jenny from the Melville Bird Sanctuary and Discovery Centre for their unwavering dedication to the protection of local and migratory birdlife.

It has been a pleasure and a privilege to speak to the Appropriation (Recurrent 2022–23) Bill 2022 and Appropriation (Capital 2022–23) Bill 2022 tonight. I commend the bills to the house.

MR M. HUGHES (Kalamunda) [8.51 pm]: I thank the member for Bicton for her speech. I almost feel like saying "ditto" because I think she has covered most of the points that I had in my speech on the Appropriation (Recurrent 2022–23) Bill 2022 and Appropriation (Capital 2022–23) Bill 2022, but I can agree with her that this is a responsible budget that strikes a good balance between spending and debt repayments.

I was interested in the comment made by the member for Roe. I am sorry to the member for Roe; he seems to draw my attention since he is often the only member of the opposition in the house when I am yet to speak. He is a farmer and he would recognise the need to be prudent in the management of his finances, so I am surprised that he was a bit gloomy and despondent about the way that this government has managed to do what every good farmer wants to do—pay down debt in the good times and make sure there is enough in the bank for the future.

Mr P.J. Rundle interjected.

Mr M. HUGHES: That is what you do, is it not? Why can the member not congratulate the McGowan Labor government for doing what every good farmer would do? The government husbands the affairs of the state. Why could the member not do that?

It is interesting that, as I said, we have been able to deliver a budget that strikes a right balance between new spending commitments and debt recovery. I could go through the areas again. We know about the capacity we have had to ease the cost-of-living burden on our households, not just with the \$400 electricity credit for all households, but also the \$150 contribution to the purchase of rapid antigen tests across households. It may be of interest to the member that when we take the combined effect of the \$400 household electricity credit and changes to household fees, charges and tariffs, we will deliver savings worth \$243.59 for a representative household. It is effectively, as the Premier pointed out in question time this afternoon, a 3.8 per cent reduction in costs for households over this coming financial year. Members should be pleased about that. By paying down the debt that members opposite left this government at the beginning of the fortieth Parliament, the government has saved Western Australians more than \$2.5 billion in wasteful interest costs over the four years 2017–18 and 2020–21. That is not insignificant. We are talking about a saving to Western Australian households of \$950 for each man, woman and child in this state in

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the reduction in what would have been the imputed cost of interest payments. The interest costs of the total public sector for WA was expected to be \$1 billion in 2021–22. When we came to government, interest costs were \$1.7 billion and rising to over \$2 billion by 2019–20. Come on! As a good farmer interested in prudent financial management, the member should be congratulating this government.

I will just run over some of the key elements of the budget. I will not go into too great detail, because the member for Bicton has done a great job. There is a 100 per cent stamp duty rebate for residential units below \$500 000 tapering to 50 per cent rebates for units valued at \$600 000 and above; 50 per cent land tax concessions for new build-to-rent residential projects; \$2.5 billion investment in health, mental health and COVID-19 response measures; \$1.3 billion to diversify the WA economy; \$33.9 billion investment towards new infrastructure, including \$12 billion in projects targeted to regional Western Australia, member for Roe; \$652 million on climate action and environmental protection initiatives; and \$350 million for remote Aboriginal communities. That is, in brief, what this budget delivers.

Why are we in this position? In part, it is because the McGowan Labor government has been, and remains, motivated by a clear goal: to keep to an absolute minimum serious illness and deaths arising from the spread of COVID over the last two years. In doing so, we have ensured a robust and thriving economy. Thousands of Western Australians are alive today who, had we had the lived experience of New South Wales or Victoria, would not be alive today. The government has continued to take the advice of chief medical officers and has learnt from the mistakes of the eastern states and the stumbling if not chaotic approach followed by the government in New South Wales in particular, I would say, a state that Scott Morrison described as the gold standard in managing pandemics. How hollow is that description? My community, member for Roe, representative of the opposition this evening, applauds the cautious and considered response of the McGowan government to the emergence of the highly transmissible Omicron variant and the need to maximise our vaccination rates, including booster shots, to better protect us ahead of the easing of our border restrictions. That has now become possible, but, member for Roe, this pandemic is far from over.

Despite the chortling sort of encouragement from the member for Cottesloe to get rid of mask wearing, I notice that he is wearing one today. He needs to because we insist that we protect one another in this place, and the member for Cottesloe should extend that to the broader population. A desire to put the health and lives of members of our community first and a determination to avoid premature deaths of the most vulnerable drives the Labor government's response to a virus that has killed many millions worldwide and many thousands of Australians outside of Western Australia. It would seem to me that other jurisdictions around the world seemingly accept large numbers of deaths as inevitable collateral damage. But we should understand that despite the comparatively good overall performance of Australia—it is good in comparison with other jurisdictions—from January this year alone, well over 5 000 Australians have died from COVID. If we were to annualise this number of COVID deaths, if they continued at this rate, COVID deaths would be the second biggest killer of Australians in 2022. By comparison, it is of interest to note that in 2019, the last normal year for flu and pneumonia deaths, 4 124 deaths were attributed to these causes. That is a fraction of the over 15 000 deaths that we could expect from COVID this year. I pray that this calculation proves to be wrong.

Mr P.J. Rundle: Have they died from COVID or with COVID?

Mr M. HUGHES: Don't cavil! I would expect better from you. I have strongly supported vaccine mandates and have no sympathy for those who choose not to be vaccinated, except for those who have legitimate medical grounds not to be vaccinated. I have met with anti-vaxxers in my electorate, those people who are my constituents, and my mind boggles at their capacity to simply be fooled by the nonsense that comes out of the United Australia Party and its fellow travellers. It is absolutely ridiculous. Vaccination remains our best means of avoiding serious illness and death, and it will be our best means well into the future. But the comment of the member for Roe shows that he needs to do a bit of reading and get on board with what is important to this community overall—that is, maintaining the health and wellbeing of many elder Western Australians.

I want to turn to that subject now. Members present in the fortieth Parliament will know of my advocacy for prioritising the adequate provision of quality residential aged care and support for the aged living in their own homes. I am encouraged that the federal Australian Labor Party has a clear commitment to implementing the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, which is in stark contrast to the federal Liberal–National government demonstrably continuing to drag its feet on the issue.

Mr S.A. Millman: What was the name of the report?

Mr M. HUGHES: It is the royal commission report.

Mr S.A. Millman: Yes, *Neglect*, wasn't it?

Mr M. HUGHES: I am coming to that.

Mr S.A. Millman: Sorry.

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Mr M. HUGHES: The member is right. I do not have his nimble capacity to have a detailed recollection on the spot, but here I go!

Of course, aged care is a commonwealth responsibility, but many in my community, in fact, have been looking for stronger responses from the national government on the royal commission into how we manage both residential aged-care and home care packages. It is a fact that despite the clear recommendations of the royal commission on aged care, the Morrison government continues to fail to respond adequately in this area. The COVID pandemic has further highlighted the structural deficiencies of residential aged care across the commonwealth that existed well before the world and Australia had heard of COVID-19.

Thankfully, though, because of the responsible measures instituted by the McGowan government in combating COVID, Western Australia has been spared the tragedy of thousands of deaths of residents in aged care that was experienced in the eastern states. It is interesting that through a pre-election slip of the tongue, Scott Morrison finally acknowledged there is a crisis in aged care, and it remains a crisis after nine years of a Liberal–National government in Canberra. Has the federal government met the demands of the royal commission? No, it has not. The general approach of the commission is to suggest —

The new Act must enshrine the rights of older people who are seeking or receiving aged care. This will leave no doubt to all involved in the system about the importance placed on these rights. A rights-based approach must guarantee universal access to the supports and services that an older person is assessed as needing.

That suggests a new standard for assessing progress in the administration of aged care—the extent to which these particular human rights are met through universal access to appropriate services at appropriate standards. It is telling, though, that the federal Treasurer in his 2021 budget speech avoided describing quality aged care as a right. Although the Morrison government claimed to have committed record funding to aged care, that funding will not ensure that quality care is universally acceptable. Why? It is because it falls well short of what the royal commission demonstrated is needed to fix the system.

The \$17.7 billion allocated in the 2021–22 budget over five years worked out to be a commitment of an extra \$3.5 billion a year. That sounds great until we realise it falls well short of the \$10 billion a year in extra funding the royal commission recommended for aged care—an amount, dare I say, that could be raised by cancelling the stage 3 tax cuts for high-income earning Australians. Neither side of politics apparently has the appetite to do that. Nevertheless, I question where the Morrison government's priorities lie. The government has missed the mark by a staggering \$6.5 billion a year. There is no indication that there will be any attempt to get to what the royal commission recommended in that area.

That funding shortfall aside, it is questionable whether the Morrison government ever intended to meet the challenge presented to it by the royal commission. One of the touted big-ticket items in the 2021–22 budget was the funding of an extra 80 000 home care packages staged over two years. Treasurer Frydenberg promised that the budget would focus on enabling people to stay at home for longer. However, if that promise is not to be consigned to the bin of political spin, following through on that promise will rely on doing away with the home care package waiting list, which stood at 97 000 elderly people at the end of 2020, and has grown well beyond that figure in the intervening two years.

The Morrison government that talks big on doing something about aged care constantly falls short on delivery. The current federal Leader of the Opposition at the Labor Party campaign launch talked of him as being all tinsel and no tree. Was it him or someone else?

A member interjected.

Mr M. HUGHES: But it was mentioned there.

Even more telling is that the Morrison government did not put into place any accountability measures to stop roting of the system. I ask members to consider how it is responsible that a recipient of a level 4 home care package—that is the highest level of home care support, worth around \$52 000 a year—can receive so little practical care? This \$1 000 a week, on average, would buy only eight hours and 40 minutes of support. It is not good enough.

The funding commitment in last year's budget went to training 33 800 new personal care workers over two years and increasing the number of places in nursing homes, but ignored the big issue of attracting and retaining workers in the notoriously low-paid and overworked aged-care sector. The Morrison government has steadfastly refused to back a real pay rise for aged-care workers and refuses to back calls for better pay by the Fair Work Commission. It is a disgrace.

The Morrison government's budget response to the crisis in aged care confirmed what many of us already knew. At the time of its announcement I suspected the aged-care royal commission was nothing more than a pre-election political stunt. Was there ever a need for it? I know the announcement surprised everyone, not least the hapless

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Hon Ken Wyatt, MRH, member for Hasluck, the then federal aged-care minister, who unceremoniously had to hotfoot it back to Canberra from Perth for the surprise announcement of the establishment of the commission after having declared not many days before that a royal commission was not needed. He had pointed to the numerous inquiries, reviews, consultations and task forces over the previous decade that had provided evidence of inadequate personal care, negligence, neglect, abuse and assault. The royal commission came to the same conclusions as inquiries over the previous decade, which had pointed to the consequences of a lack of well-trained staff in residential aged care. Like inquiries before it, many of the important recommendations of the royal commission have been ignored by the Morrison government.

I will give an example to highlight the Morrison government's lack of commitment. In recommendation 86 of the report, the royal commission recommended that staff ratios should be introduced to ensure sufficient nursing and other care workers are present at all times in residential aged care. What was the response of the Morrison government? It opted to mandate that registered nurses be on duty for only 16 hours a day. Under the Morrison plan, it will not be until 2023 that staff will be required to provide at least 200 minutes of care a day to each resident, including 40 minutes of care delivered by a registered nurse. Nothing has been said about how this time requirement will be measured or enforced.

It is a fact that the Morrison government cherry-picked the recommendations of the royal commission report. Western Australians need to be aware of this. In doing so, the Morrison government revealed its true colours. The Morrison government's response to the royal commission is not the generational change that Scott Morrison and Greg Hunt promised. By ignoring the key generational change recommendations, the Morrison government has again short-changed the elderly in our communities and continues to pour billions of taxpayer dollars into what continues to be a dysfunctional system. It will take, I believe, an ALP Albanese government to fix it, because it has not and will not happen under a Liberal–National government, especially one led by Scott Morrison.

Mr P.J. Rundle interjected.

Mr M. HUGHES: His track record is for all to see. My reply relates to those people in my community who do not have a voice in the government in Canberra, because the Liberals and Nationals have responsibility for aged care. The state government cannot do anything about that, but I will come to that in a moment. I crave an extension. I have more to say on matters in my electorate, but this is of great importance to me. I seek an extension of time.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr M. HUGHES: The community I represent, member for Roe, has an absolute commitment to creating an aged-care system that comprises well-trained and well-paid staff overseen by a truly independent regulator—one that is independent of ministerial direction. My community also expects transparency of and accountability for expenditure, which is calculated to be \$33 billion a year of taxpayers' money that will be provided to the aged-care sector over the next five years. Instead, under the Morrison government, there has been no guarantee of mandatory minimum training of workers, a refusal to commit to lifting wages, a bolstering of an inept regulator and a continuation of a capacity for providers to spend money as they see fit, with little or no accountability of any reasonable measure. As far as I can see, the Morrison government has no intention of holding accountable the multinational providers and the corporatised charities that now receive billions of dollars of taxpayers' money. If this were intended, the evidence would be there and borne out by clear action to tighten accountability. Instead, what do we have? A few hours after the Treasurer announced this massive cash injection to the pockets of the providers, the Morrison government deftly and quietly released its official response to the royal commission, *Australian government response to the final report of the royal commission into aged care quality and safety*; a response that I argue sidesteps the core recommendations of the royal commission. This is a lamentable response by a government that handed responsibility for aged care to two ministers clearly not up to the task—Hon Ken Wyatt, member for Hasluck, who typically sympathised with but achieved nothing in the time he occupied the position, and Hon Richard Colbeck, who remains in denial and who chose to attend a cricket match over his responsibilities in the Parliament to persons in aged care, large numbers of whom were dying in a system in crisis.

Despite its marketing rhetoric, the federal government has not given aged care the priority it must be given. The Albanese quote is right this time. It is “smirk and mirrors”, to borrow an apt description used recently by Anthony Albanese of Scott Morrison and his government. Given that aged care is a federal responsibility, there are few levers available to the state government to influence outcomes in this important area of public policy. Nevertheless, the McGowan government has acted. Within nine months of coming to office, in the fortieth Parliament the McGowan government established an interagency aged-care working group in pursuit of its election commitments in this area, and I was pleased to serve as an ex officio member of that working group. The working group reported in October 2019 and identified five specific responses to the barriers impacting on residential aged-care development.

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The result was the publication by the Western Australian Planning Commission of a position statement for residential aged care gazetted in December 2020, which now provides guidance to local government for the consistent treatment of residential aged care within statutory strategic planning processes across all local government areas, providing developers greater certainty. The position statement seeks to remove planning process barriers and encourage the provision of an adequate supply and diversity of options for residential accommodation by establishing consistent, simplified and streamlined approval pathways within a strategically led planning framework, and it complements existing government policies and services for older Western Australians. It also included the provision of suitable land for residential aged-care development to be incorporated in the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage assessment processes in determining the future use of surplus government land. This systematic consideration will now ensure that government is able to identify and make suitably located land available for residential aged care.

However, I remain strongly of the view that the state government must engage directly with the commonwealth government to develop the means to ensure the better coordination and delivery of aged care in response to Western Australia's changing demographics and in light of the royal commission's recommendations necessary to repair what is clearly a broken system. The report that I just mentioned deals with aged-care availability and details the extent of the problem and why this more focused dialogue within the commonwealth is so necessary. I hope, with the prospect of a change of government in Canberra on 21 May, this dialogue can begin in earnest.

I am pleased my electorate has been the direct beneficiary of the initiatives of the state government, including the allocation in 2018 of crown land adjacent to Sunshine Park in Lesmurdie for the expansion of its existing facility, the expansion of Valencia Nursing Home to provide an additional 80 beds, and the repurposing of Heidelberg Park on Pomeroy Road, Lesmurdie, for aged care. This rezoning process had been fast-tracked within the statutory planning requirements, resulting in the process reaching completion within 12 months. The land has been offered to the market and the preferred proponent, Boston Group–Rosewood, has been selected, and the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage is currently in the process of working with the group to finalise the land transfer.

I am particularly pleased that as part of the COVID-19 recovery plan, \$9.5 million was allocated for the enhancement of palliative care facilities at Kalamunda Hospital. The intention is that the hospital will be developed as a centre of excellence for the delivery of palliative care in the east metropolitan region. Work has already started on the day hospice and the whole project is expected to be completed next year. What is particularly pleasing is that this budget provides \$59.5 million to fund 120 aged-care beds to help transition out-of-hospital patients who are waiting for aged-care places, thus relieving pressure on our hospital system and also providing those people with certainty about where they can live out the remainder of their days.

In conclusion, it has always been the labour movement and the Labor Party that has provided the engine room and agency for progressive change, in stark contrast to what is going on, and has gone on, in Canberra for the last nine years. Labor is the party of compassion and a fair go for all. WA Labor believes that all people have an equal entitlement to dignity and respect and should have an equal chance to reach their potential.

Social justice and equity are at the core of Labor values, and the legislative reforms of the first McGowan Labor government and the legislation introduced in the forty-first Parliament are testament to this drive. I want a better future for all our families and a state government that is responsive to the needs of all Western Australians. I believe more strongly than ever that we cannot expect to achieve that with a federal Liberal–National government that ducks and weaves on important issues, calculates self-interest before the needs of the people and is driven by the politics of division. That characterises the current government in Canberra. The McGowan WA Labor government is delivering on the solid plan it promised when first elected in 2017. It promises a solid future for the people of our state; one that builds on the achievements of its first term in office.

It is a comprehensive plan that focuses on Western Australia being a modern, inclusive society in which each Western Australian is treated equally and afforded the same access to services and opportunities, not the least in health, where patients are put before profit; and, in education, where our teachers and support workers are valued and there is an assurance that we place a focus on literacy and numeracy as well as an investment in science. Importantly, the McGowan government has set itself a clear goal of progressing the diversification of our economy and with that the diversification and creation of sustainable jobs for the future that will respond to climate change and move towards clean renewable energy.

WA Labor has brought a fresh approach to government in dealing with the state's transport needs, including the establishment of a fully funded Metronet and the manufacturing and service jobs that will flow from that well into the future, with benefits accruing to the economy as a whole.

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The McGowan Labor government had much to do in its first term to restore people's faith in the state government, and it was handsomely repaid at the 2021 election. I am humbled to have been given another opportunity to serve my community as a member of the forty-first Parliament. I commend both bills to the house.

MS J.L. HANNS (Collie–Preston) [9.20 pm]: I rise also to make a contribution on the Appropriation (Recurrent 2022–23) Bill 2022 and the Appropriation (Capital 2022–23) Bill 2022. On Friday, last week, after the Premier delivered the budget on Thursday, I was very pleased to attend a budget breakfast in Bunbury, representing my electorate of Collie–Preston, that of Minister Punch, who was unfortunately waylaid with COVID at the time, and Robyn Clarke's electorate of Murray–Wellington. We were joined at the budget breakfast by Minister Whitby. Minister Whitby took the people present at the breakfast through the highlights of the budget. The majority of people attending that particular breakfast were members of or connected to the Bunbury Geographe Chamber of Commerce and Industry so they were largely small, medium and large business owners in the south west.

I have to say that there was only positive feedback from that group of people at the south west business breakfast function we held on Friday. They commented after the breakfast how impressed they were with the McGowan Labor government's track record, with its first budget, which I saw as a member of this government, in 2021 and its even stronger performance in 2022. That was very interesting to hear, given the number of people in attendance, as I said, were from the business community. Members of the community services sector were also present. One of the most well-received aspects of the budget, which I potentially did not expect in a business setting, was this government's contribution of \$350 million to the remote communities fund. That funding was incredibly well received. People can see the social conscience of the McGowan Labor government at the forefront, leading change in communities across Western Australia.

I will take members through some of the points that I would like to make on this particularly strong economy, highlighting that Western Australia has the strongest economy in Australia and one of the strongest in the world.

I realise the member for Moore is the only member of the opposition —

Mr P.J. Rundle: It's Roe.

Ms J.L. HANNS: I am sorry, member for Roe. Thank you. I am geographically challenged today because I have COVID brain fog, so forgive me.

I want to take members through why we are in this unique position here in Western Australia. Firstly, it is about the responsible fiscal management of the Treasurer and Premier of Western Australia, his ministers and certainly members of the McGowan Labor government. Handling the COVID pandemic was a very, very challenging time. The Premier reminded us today how uncertain things were when COVID first hit in 2020. I remember doorknocking at the time and people were incredibly scared about what would happen to their jobs. Certainly the modelling and the predictions around what the economy might look like were terrifying, to be very honest. I remember sitting in my shed in Collie with my husband and my two kids, with the fire roaring, as you do in regional areas in the middle of winter, discussing what the world could look like. My kids were terrified. It was a really challenging time for my family and my community.

I really have to pick up on a point that the member for Roe made today. I am actually a little bit disturbed that the member sat in the chamber today while the member for Kalamunda was making his contribution and split hairs about whether people are dying with COVID or from COVID. I want to pose a question to the member, but I do not need him to respond; I just want him to ponder this, please. I am not sure what the families of the 14 people who were reported as having died as a result of COVID today would think if the member posed the question to them, "Did your family member die with COVID or because of COVID?" The fact is that a person has passed away due to complications with COVID. The member for Kalamunda outlined what the statistics around COVID could look like across the world, and I find it very troubling that we are still splitting hairs about COVID.

I return to the reasons why we have one of the strongest economies in the world. It is about reducing debt, which the Treasurer has absolutely done, and targeting spending where it was needed—health and mental health, creating jobs and diversifying our economy, social housing and cost-of-living pressures. Certainly, people in my electorate were very happy about the \$400 household credit on their electricity bills. If any member opposite is not happy about the \$400 electricity bill credit—I am speaking out of turn because I have not consulted with my husband on this, but we are in the very fortunate position that we do not actually need the \$400 electricity credit—they can join me in donating the \$400 electricity bill credit that they are very unhappy about to a charity of their choice, and I welcome them doing so. We have also invested heavily in education and training, and community safety. This budget delivers for WA and provides a strong and futureproofed economy for all Western Australians.

I would like to pick up on the member for Murray–Wellington's point about the massive number of members of the McGowan Labor government who represent regional Western Australia. The Leader of the Opposition today

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made comments around the McGowan Labor government underinvesting in the regions. I highlight that this government has made an outstanding and record contribution to regional Western Australia. That is not just with the \$12 billion infrastructure spend in regional Western Australia, but also the \$4.2 billion worth of royalties for regions funding and the billions of dollars committed to delivering quality services across Western Australia.

I refer again to the budget breakfast that I attended last week. One point that Minister Whitby highlighted to the people in attendance was that this government is investing \$2 billion over the next four years to make sure that people in regional communities pay the same, or a very similar, amount for utilities as people in the metropolitan area. I would like members to consider what that might potentially look like for community members in the Kimberley, for example, having to pay for a user-pays service tapping into existing infrastructure for water and power compared with somebody in the metropolitan area. This Labor government makes sure that people pay the same amount of money to access those services. That is something I am certainly very proud of.

In this budget we have made the biggest ever investment in the WA health system. Please do not be misled by the opposition or perhaps the media telling us that we underfund health, because that is absolutely not true. This is a new investment of \$5.7 billion in the health system since the last budget.

What does that mean in my electorate of Collie–Preston? That spending on health includes \$200 million worth of upgrades to Bunbury Hospital at South West Health Campus. Bunbury Hospital at South West Health Campus is the main hospital that services the bulk of my electorate. People living in Donnybrook, Capel, Eaton and Australind all access those health services at Bunbury regional hospital. I am very pleased to say that as a result of the infrastructure spend my constituents will have an expanded emergency department, increased operating theatre capacity, and new clinical equipment and additional beds within the hospital. Collie Hospital is a very small hospital in comparison with some of the very large hospitals that we see in the metropolitan area, but we certainly punch above our weight in the care that people receive not only at Collie Hospital, but also generally across regional hospitals. I was born in Yarloop Hospital—my father and my grandfather were also born there—and I know that the care that regional doctors and nurses give to their communities is outstanding. Doctors and nurses will often say that there is nothing like practising in a regional hospital.

It is almost like when we think of old *A Country Practice* episodes and we remember the doctors. I will give members a bit of a snapshot of what that looks like. Before I do that, though, I want to highlight that in this budget Collie Hospital will receive \$14.7 million worth of upgrades, again, for the operating theatre and the whole operating theatre complex, which means that people living within my electorate of Collie–Preston will be able to access outstanding care within the health system. Going back to my point about it being a little like *A Country Practice* for those who work in regional hospitals, I want to mention some of the doctors that live in my town of Collie. Dr Wutchak is not only an outstanding GP, but also a practising anaesthetist. He also contributes outside his practice and in the community, just like the doctors and nurses we used to see on *A Country Practice*. He is part of the ValleyView board. ValleyView is an independently run aged-care facility and ValleyView provides an outstanding service to the ageing community in Collie. Dr Van Vollenstee is a very keen golfer, and I am sure that a lot of the times when he is out on the golf course, or certainly out at the shops at Collie, he would be experiencing a lot of the things that people experienced on *A Country Practice* in that people stop him and ask for medical advice. That is just part and parcel of living and practising medicine in regional communities.

I would also like to mention Ros Rabjones, who is one of the nurses who worked at Collie Hospital when my son was born. I had the pleasure of then going on to work with Ros when she became the school nurse at Collie Senior High School. I remember that she and I, as the deputy principal, used to work together on managing different issues with students and she would often say to a student, “I was there when you were born. I delivered you. I actually helped deliver your mum as well.” The continuity of care in regional communities, which we get from having a strong health system within the regions, helps people to appreciate and understand the importance of local health care.

I want to raise that when I was doorknocking in Collie in 2020, I met a wonderful lady called Julie White. Julie said, “I do not have too many things I’d like you to try to deliver for us, but I think the one thing I want you to deliver is pretty big. I want a new women’s and babies’ hospital, because King Edward Memorial Hospital desperately needs an upgrade.” Careful what you wish for, Julie! Her words were, “Build my son a new hospital.” I asked her what she meant by that. She referred to her son Dr Scott White, who was educated at Valley View Primary School, attended Collie Senior High School and by the time he was nine years of age had already decided he wanted to be a doctor. He now works as a fantastic clinician at King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women and is very involved in the Women and Infants Research Foundation, an outstanding organisation, which for over 40 years has conducted and supported research to help improve the health of women and infants. He is a consultant obstetrician and specialist with the maternal foetal medicine team at King Edward Memorial Hospital. He trained in Western Australia and in the United Kingdom and he specialises in the management of pregnancies, complicated pregnancies and multiple

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pregnancies. The McGowan Labor government delivered on this commitment. I got a phone call from Julie after the announcement was made about the women's and babies' hospital and she was overjoyed.

I also acknowledge that although it may be considered a metropolitan healthcare commitment, by virtue of the Royal Flying Doctor Service, a lot of women from the regions, including from Collie–Preston, end up at King Edward Memorial Hospital. Once the new hospital is built, that will be the case for it too. I would like to recognise the Royal Flying Doctor Service and the outstanding contribution it makes to health care within the regions. I understand that the Royal Flying Doctor Service is funded by WA Country Health, which is fantastic support from the state government. The Royal Flying Doctor Service celebrates its ninety-fourth year of operation today.

I move now to the Just Transition Plan for Collie. There is no stronger support that this government has provided for the electorate of Collie–Preston than ensuring that Collie has a bright future beyond coal and coal-fired power generation. The McGowan Labor government has invested over \$100 million in support for Collie to diversify its local economy away from its reliance on the coal and coal-fired power generation. The projects funded through this program started with tourism. I have talked many times in this chamber previously about the Wellington Dam mural and the Collie town site mural trail. I mention the fact that on Friday this week we are opening our newest addition to the mural trail in Collie with a focus on Indigenous heritage and the Indigenous people who shaped the Collie area, particularly during European settlement. It is an incredible update on the mural trail by Jacob Butler, also known as “Shakey”. I think this one is his fifth contribution to the Collie town site mural trail. Certainly, the investment this government has made has ensured that tourism has become a significance focus on what Collie and the south west's local economy will look like into the future. People are moving to Collie and seeking a tree change in great numbers; we can understand that because we know why we love Collie and why we live there.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms J.L. HANNS: People are choosing to live in my electorate because of the incredible things that the McGowan Labor government has already started to make happen in the electorate. I thank Minister Kelly for the \$10 million that was committed to the Wellington Dam wall bridge to cater for the massive increase in visitor numbers. We have had a significant increase in visitor numbers to Collie and the flow-on effect to that is that they are also visiting the surrounding areas like the town of Donnybrook and Ferguson Valley.

As part of that \$100 million allocation under the Collie Just Transition process, the industry attraction fund has brought major industry players and major opportunities to diversify our economy. Today I would like to highlight the WesTrac Technology Training Centre in Collie. It is the only facility in the Southern Hemisphere delivering training for autonomous operations. That was set up under a grant through the Collie Futures fund. I am really proud of the partnerships and collaborations from a lot of these businesses establishing themselves in Collie. WesTrac has partnered with the Motivation Foundation. I would like to mention the board of the Motivation Foundation, and CEO Tim Hunter and trainer Robyn Graham, who operate the Motivation Foundation training out of the Collie WesTrac site. Using the WesTrac site, Motivation Foundation is targeting training for youth at risk within the local area. The catchment has been students coming from Newton Moore Senior High School, Collie Senior High School, Boddington District High School and others that I cannot remember off the top of my head. Those particular students can attain a certificate II in civil construction and a certificate II in resources and infrastructure work preparation. WesTrac and the Motivation Foundation are training young people who would potentially fall through the cracks of the training and education system. Their outstanding results from last year's graduates were that almost all the graduates ended up getting jobs within the resources and mining sector. They moved into very well paid entry-level roles for a future they may not have had if they were not given those opportunities. I am really proud of the social benefits that are coming out of those particular projects that are funded out of the idea of diversifying the economy for Collie, and the add-on benefits to those contributions are certainly significant for the community.

I would also like to talk about the Just Transition working group. This group of people has been brought together to oversee the work of the just transition process for Collie. On behalf of the community, I would like to thank them for everything they are doing. It was established under the previous McGowan Labor government with Hon Mick Murray, the then member for Collie–Preston, coming up with the idea of a Just Transition working group that steers Collie through the next decade of transitioning. This group brings together government agencies, unions, the local major industries and the local government. Thank you to the Shire of Collie for the work that it does in the just transition process. That group is planning for Collie's future and they are planning for the diversification of our economy. Our community understands things like the impact of rooftop solar, renewables and the idea that coal has a limited future in the energy mix in the medium to longer term. We do not want to be left behind. We do not want an overnight decision, like that proposed by the previous Liberal–National government to close the power stations with very little notice and certainly with no process in place for the community. Our community understands what this McGowan Labor government is doing—how it is working with us to plan for our future. We plan to work

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with this government to plan our transition, and the support from this government, as I have already noted, is significant. We want for our community a just transition, not just a transition—and that is the key difference.

I want to raise the point that there is one person in Western Australia who certainly does not understand the work of the McGowan Labor government around the Collie just transition process. Rick Wilson, MP, wrote to me after I had written to him about telecommunications and some complaints I had received. He wrote back lecturing me about how well he understands Collie, given that it is in his electorate—a very big electorate, I might add. I think what upset me the most is that we have an absent federal politician lecturing me about how much the federal government is committed to supporting Collie. There is one thing that Collie residents do not like; it is being lectured to and told what is best for them by out-of-towners. I found it outrageous to be lectured about what is best for Collie, given that my son was born while we were living in Collie, my family is raised there, I taught at Collie Senior High School for over 10 years and my husband is a transitioning worker affected by the changes. I take it as a very personal affront that this particular person lectured me about what is best for Collie, how much he understands what Collie is going through and how much support the federal government has given. I contrast that and I highlight the support that the McGowan Labor government is giving Collie. If Mr Wilson is still a member of Parliament and if his government is still running the country, I ask him please to also contribute to the tune of what this McGowan Labor government has contributed to Collie. I am sure the residents and constituents of Collie would wholeheartedly agree.

In this budget, I am very proud to say that there has been significant investment in the Collie Just Transition process in this government's decision to establish a Collie jobs and skills centre to the tune of \$4.9 million. This announcement highlights this government's continued efforts to diversify the local economy, support new industries and ensure that there continues to be quality local jobs. The jobs and skill centres were committed by this state government in 2017 as one-stop shops for careers, training, employment advice and assistance. The Collie centre will provide local people with free services, accessible to all members of our community, where staff will provide professional and practical advice on training and employment opportunities, including careers advice and apprenticeship training information. Currently, a jobs and skills team visits Collie one day a week to provide these services, but this commitment will see this service provided permanently in Collie. I thank this government again for its continued support for the Collie community as we achieve a just transition.

I would also like to talk very briefly about the fire and emergency services portfolio and the fact that this government has made significant investments in fire and emergency services infrastructure. I know that I have mentioned that Yarloop is where I was born and raised. In Yarloop, essentially all the infrastructure and certainly every home I have lived in, the hospital I was born in and the very special place that was the Yarloop workshops all perished in the Yarloop fires in 2016. What this government has done to respond to the fire and emergency services and learn from what happened in Yarloop is outstanding. In Collie, through the Collie Futures fund, some money was secured to build the Koolinup Emergency Services Centre, which is a level 3 incident control centre and houses vital fire assets during the high fire season in the south west. I would also like to commend this government for its outstanding foresight to purchase the large air tanker at a cost of \$11 million to make sure that we have the capacity, on a very large scale, to fight fires within the south west region. It will be located in the Busselton–Margaret River area, which is a fantastic and strategic place for those fire resources to be located. Again, this is proof that the McGowan Labor government is investing in our incredible state of Western Australia, particularly the area of Collie–Preston.

I would like to finish my contribution by saying that, recently, the WA Fire and Emergency Services Awards were held for which people could nominate outstanding contributions from fire and emergency services personnel. I had the pleasure of being able to nominate, for the firefighting team awards, both the Gelorup Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade and the Eaton–Australind Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service and, under the youth achievement award, Finn Dau, who is located at the Dardanup Fire and Emergency Services Brigade. I would like to commend the commitment of all these volunteers and personnel within the area of Collie–Preston, but of particular note, the Eaton–Australind Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service celebrated its fiftieth year of operation this year.

I would like to recognise some of its longest-serving members who were recently recognised for their commitment to their community. I am going to start with Murray Halden. Murray was recently recognised with a 45-year national medal. That is how long he has been contributing to voluntary work and fire and emergency services work within the region. A 25-year national medal was awarded to Matt Stoltenberg, who also flew to Canada early last year to assist with the Canadian wildfires. Kane Robinson was awarded a 15-year national medal and Vincent Hinze was awarded a 35-year volunteer fire and rescue medal. In mentioning these groups, I would like to highlight that Gelorup Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade has a female captain in Glenys Malatesta, who does an incredible job for her community and is ably assisted by her partner, Jeff McDougall, and the Eaton–Australind Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service has a female lieutenant, Leticia Craig.

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In concluding my contribution today, I commend the bills to the house and thank the McGowan Labor government for its outstanding commitment to the people of Western Australia.

MR S.A. MILLMAN (Mount Lawley — Parliamentary Secretary) [9.50 pm]: I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Appropriation (Recurrent 2022–23) Bill 2022 and the Appropriation (Capital 2022–23) Bill 2022. I want to start my contribution by reflecting on some of the figures in this year's budget. The 2022–23 budget supports Western Australia and invests in our future. It supports every household with a \$400 electricity credit and provides \$1.6 billion in COVID-19 response measures, a further record \$2.5 billion investment in health and mental health, \$1.3 billion to strengthen and diversify our economy and create jobs, a \$652 million boost to address climate change and protect our environment, a \$450 million boost to support safe and thriving communities, a \$400 million boost to the digital capability fund, a \$350 million remote communities fund and tax reforms and incentives to boost housing and land supply. That is all in addition to a record \$33.9 billion infrastructure investment, including a record \$12 billion in the regions.

This state budget has been delivered in circumstances in which the state economy and finances remain strong because of Western Australia's safe handling of the pandemic, with a soft landing secured. Western Australia has carried the nation through the pandemic. Our government's WA Plan for Jobs is working as we continue to strengthen and diversify our economy, and this budget continues our responsible financial management while helping Western Australians with the cost of living and investing in our future. Net debt is projected to fall for a third year, to below \$30 billion, and we are expecting a strong surplus of \$5.7 billion in 2021–22. The economic performance of the WA economy is outstanding. The WA economy has performed the strongest of all states. WA's domestic economy has grown by 7.2 per cent and WA has contributed almost 40 per cent of growth in national gross domestic product over the past two financial years. In addition to that, household spending and retail trade have remained strong. Spending has remained strong, with annual retail trade 22.5 per cent above 2019 levels. The uninterrupted operation of the mining sector allowed business investment and exports to remain strong, resulting in billions of dollars flowing into our economy and also flowing eastward.

I turn to the national economy. The state of the labour market is an incredible achievement by the McGowan Labor government and reflects our number one priority when we were elected in 2017, which was WA jobs. More Western Australians than ever before now have a job, with a record 1.46 million people employed. We have the lowest unemployment rate in the nation, and a 13-year low, of 3.4 per cent unemployment. That unemployment rate would be even lower, members, if it were not for the fact that we have the highest participation rate in our labour market of more than 70 per cent; that is, 160 000 jobs have been added since March 2017. That is the state of the WA state budget today. Frankly, that is an incredible achievement, but it is even more incredible when it is cast in the context of the global pandemic from which we are now emerging. On 21 March 2022, S&P Global RatingsDirect said this about our financial management —

Despite near-term coronavirus-related obstacles, the state economy is rebounding, boosting revenue collection.

That is responsible financial management at the same time as we stimulate the economy. It continues —

Our ratings are supported by Western Australia's track record of robust financial management, very high-income economy, and exceptional liquidity.

...

The positive outlook reflects a one-in-three chance that we could raise our ratings on Western Australia within the next one to two years.

That is a further improvement in WA's credit rating.

It is interesting that we were criticised by the opposition when we said that our debt reduction had resulted in a significant saving on interest repayments. Before this budget, the McGowan government had already paid down the Liberal and National debt by \$11 billion since 2017. The previous Liberal–National government had debt on a path to \$44 billion in 2019–20. For the first time since 2015, net debt will be lower than \$30 billion and, by comparison, New South Wales' debt will more than triple from \$43.6 billion to \$133.7 billion by 2024–25. The commonwealth's debt, which is pushing towards a trillion dollars, is forecast to increase by around two-thirds. Paying down the Liberal–National government's debt we have saved Western Australians more than \$2.5 billion in wasteful interest costs over four years from 2017–18 to 2020–21. That is a saving of \$950 per Western Australian.

Let me go through the numbers very quickly. The Liberal Party's 2017 *Pre-election financial projections statement* had public sector interest costs in 2017–18 of \$1.8 billion; 2018–19, \$1.9 billion; 2019–20, \$2.1 billion; and 2020–21, \$2.1 billion, for a four-year total of more than \$8 billion in interest. The actual interest paid by the McGowan government over that four-year period was \$5.5 billion, saving the people of Western Australia \$2.5 billion. That

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is not through fancy financial management, cuts to public sector services, reducing programs or curtailing our infrastructure investment, that is just through the financial responsibility of paying down the Liberal and National debt, and we did it without having to sell Western Power.

I want to refer members to a couple of articles from the World Bank, the World Economic Forum and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. These are taken from a little while ago, because I want to remind members of what economists were worried about in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. The World Bank's feature story of 8 June 2020, titled "The Global Economic Outlook During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Changed World" states —

The COVID-19 pandemic has spread with alarming speed, infecting millions and bringing economic activity to a near-standstill as countries imposed tight restrictions on movement to halt the spread of the virus. As the health and human toll grows, the economic damage is already evident and represents the largest economic shock the world has experienced in decades ... The baseline forecast envisions a 5.2 percent contraction in global GDP in 2020 ... the deepest global recession in decades, despite the extraordinary efforts of governments to counter the downturn with fiscal and monetary policy support.

...

The crisis highlights the need for urgent action to cushion the pandemic's health and economic consequences, protect vulnerable populations, and set the stage for a lasting recovery.

That is from the World Bank. The World Economic Forum in March 2022 had this to say —

Major challenges facing the post-pandemic world include rising inequality, climate change, digitalisation, demographic shifts and the weakening of democracy.

The article referred to big societal challenges, the need for new institutions and global cooperation, new risks in a financially integrated world, challenges for financial systems and financial disruption.

The OECD had this to say —

While the COVID-19 pandemic has hit different countries with varying intensity, responding to the crisis has presented an unprecedented challenge to most governments.

It is that challenge that the McGowan government faced, tackled and has successfully overcome. One of the key insights from the OECD's analysis is that interagency cooperation requires commitment from leadership and fit-for-purpose governance structures with clear mandates. The policy context was —

Given that government responses to the crisis have required the mobilisation of resources in virtually all policy domains and involved a wide range of actors in different policy areas, co-operation among government institutions and agencies has been vital to ensure a coherent response.

I have often talked about the unity and purpose of the McGowan government and the ministers in the McGowan cabinet. Nothing highlighted how they work as a unified team quite so much as their response to the COVID-19 pandemic. That is good feedback from the OECD. These were all of the challenges that were presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, yet in spite of them, what we saw in last week's budget was an extraordinary set of figures within that context. Not only is it a great budget in and of itself, but also it is a great budget in the context of the times. In any event, when it comes to the COVID-19 pandemic and financial and economic management, it is fair to say that many members of the opposition have reflected on the outcome of the 2021 state election as a testament to the way in which the McGowan government handled the COVID-19 pandemic, and I thank them for that concession; it is appropriately and correctly made.

As I think about the last state election in 2021 and the importance of good financial management, I cannot help but turn my mind to the federal election coming up on Saturday. This morning I had the privilege to attend Seven West Media's Leadership Matters breakfast and hear the federal Leader of the Opposition, Anthony Albanese, outline his vision. Mr Albanese touched on the reckless fiscal record of the commonwealth Liberal–National government. Members have heard about the fiscal irresponsibility of the state Liberal–National government leading up to the election of the McGowan government in 2017, but let me tell members a little about what Mr Albanese had to say about the reckless fiscal management of the commonwealth government. Before the pandemic, the commonwealth Liberal–National government had already doubled debt, productivity was going backwards and wages were stagnant. Since the coalition came to office, business investment has dropped. It is the so-called party of business but business investment has dropped by 20 per cent. In terms of manufacturing output, Australia now ranks last in the OECD. In the Harvard index of global economic complexity, Australia now ranks eighty-sixth in the world, sandwiched between Paraguay and Uzbekistan.

Ms H.M. Beazley interjected.

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Mr S.A. MILLMAN: It is shameful, member for Victoria Park. All of this was before the recent news of the highest inflation rate in two decades and an interest rate hike that sent jitters throughout Australia. All of this happened before the Morrison government made it clear that it would rather see Australia's lowest-paid workers—those same workers who carried us through the pandemic, being the night fillers, truck drivers, store workers and health workers—go backwards than see their pay increase by just \$1 an hour. As well as all this wreckage, if Labor wins the election on Saturday, it will inherit a trillion dollars of debt and very little to show for it.

Mrs L.A. Munday interjected.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: I hope so. I am still traumatised by 2019, member for Dawesville.

When the Liberals goaded the car industry offshore, Australia lost its most high-tech, complex manufacturing industry. Since then, this federal government has overseen a continued loss of industrial and manufacturing capability. A key part of our national productivity challenge is the need for Australian industry to climb the technological ladder. When I look at what this state Labor government is investing to diversify the economy, I know that we will be able to work hand in hand with a federal Labor government to achieve that. We need to make things here again and we need to make high-value, high-tech products. Australia produces science at a level commensurate with the size of its economy, but under Scott Morrison's government, it has commercialised the sciences as poorly as any country in the OECD. Labor will fund a \$1.5 billion fund to assist medical manufacturing. Australians should be able to access medicines, vaccines and medical supplies when we need them; that has been obvious in the context of the global pandemic that we are coming out of.

Whether it be WA Labor or federal Labor, we have always demonstrated that we are better at managing public finances. But we are also better at allowing individuals to manage their private finances.

I want to talk about what a federal Labor government will do to close the gender pay gap. Under the Liberals, Australia has fallen to seventieth in the world for women's economic participation and opportunity. Women are under-utilised, undervalued, underpaid and, too often, disrespected. Finding avenues to get more Australian women into work is another way that we can alleviate our skilled worker shortage. Labor will make gender pay equity an objective of the Fair Work Act, putting it fairly and squarely in the statutory regime that the Fair Work Commission will take into consideration when determining where wages should be set. A federal Labor government will need to fix persistent structural barriers that prevent so many women from securing decent jobs and careers and financial security over the course of their lives.

I wanted to raise that point because it highlights the negligent, reckless and dangerous superannuation policy—the early super scheme policy—that the Morrison government announced earlier this week. I have a quote from www.nine.com.au—Channel Nine. Peter Costello is the chairman of Channel Nine, so it is hardly *The Red Flag* or the *Green Left Weekly*. The article states —

Early super scheme for property threatens to cause a house price 'explosion', experts warn

Several experts have criticised the Coalition's proposed policy to allow first home buyers to access their superannuation to purchase property, warning that it would cause a "housing price explosion".

The policy, announced yesterday, would allow first home buyers to withdraw up to 40 per cent or \$50,000 of their super early in order to allow them to enter the market sooner.

But several experts, including the McKell Institute's executive director Michael Buckland, say unleashing thousands of new buyers on the market would only supercharge demand and cause prices to drive up again.

"Homes are already unaffordable for millions of Australians and Scott Morrison's proposal would pour fuel on the fire," ...

I want to jump ahead to the reference to the Centre for Housing, Urban and Regional Planning at the University of South Australia. The article continued —

... Mortgaging our Future, found in most scenarios the median house price in Sydney would increase by \$40,000 ...

However much money someone can extract from their super will evaporate in the increased, inflated house prices as a result of this reckless and irresponsible policy. It continues —

"Young Australians need their retirement savings quarantined and compounding.

"Using these savings to fuel yet another house price frenzy would be policy madness."

...

CEO of the Australian Institute of Superannuation Trustees says ...

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“Accessing your super early won’t get you closer to your dream home or fix Australia’s housing crisis ...

“Using super as a deposit will drive up property prices, leaving Australians with higher debt and depleted retirement savings.

Do members know who this policy will hit hardest? It will hit women. It is no surprise that the report from Monash University and AustralianSuper is titled “The future face of poverty is female: Stories behind Australian women’s superannuation poverty in retirement”. If this policy goes through, working women in Australia who take time out from participation in the labour market to have children or for a career break or to take on all those domestic responsibilities that the structures of society still imposes on them, will be left in a situation in which there is no money left in their retirement savings. That effect will be compounded if they are encouraged to withdraw their superannuation savings to pay for their home deposit. I will quote from the report. It is pertinent and important because this federal government is showing nothing but disrespect to women and it is showing nothing but disdain for women’s participation in the workforce. Tony Abbott was a better Prime Minister for women than Scott Morrison is. We have a situation in which this policy just adds fuel to the fire. The report states —

Introduced in 1992, Australia’s Superannuation Guarantee (SG) was designed to help individuals accumulate money for retirement by requiring employers to contribute an amount calculated as a defined percentage of earnings to an employee’s superannuation fund.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: It continues —

Despite women’s increasing participation in the workforce, there is now a well-documented superannuation gender gap. Research from the Association of Superannuation Funds Australia estimate that in 2015–16, men approaching retirement have on average approximately 42% more superannuation than women ...

With significantly less superannuation than men and a greater reliance on a generally inadequate age pension, women are more likely to face financial insecurity and poverty in retirement than men. This is particularly the case for single older women.

This is a disgraceful, outrageous policy and it absolutely needs to be rejected. We need policies that support women in the workplace, like federal Labor’s policy for cheaper childcare, which is a structural institutional economic reform that will create greater participation in the labour market, generate productivity and generate revenue for the commonwealth government.

Ms H.M. Beazley interjected.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: It is an economic reform. That is exactly right, member for Victoria Park. We also need a state government that supports families by tackling cost-of-living pressures. That is precisely what the WA Labor state government is using its responsible financial management to do. Easing cost-of-living pressures for Western Australian households is the highest priority of the McGowan government. That is why in this budget we have used our strong financial position to deliver a \$400 household electricity credit to every household. This will put \$445 million back in the pockets of Western Australians, but, better than that, this \$445 million will flow around our economy, going to the cafes on Albany Highway; going to the shops at Westfield Carousel Shopping Centre, member for Cannington; and going to the Stockland shopping centre, member for Baldivis. As the members for Kingsley and Joondalup both know, it will support coastal communities and the northern suburbs and support the small businesses that make them such wonderful places to live. That is \$445 million going back into the economy, generating new jobs and economic activity.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Can I comment on that?

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: Yes, minister.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Of course, this budget also provides targeted tax relief for build to rent, which is a good use of superannuation.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: Yes, exactly; that is a great use of it.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Because it will create rental properties, and that’s where the great crisis is.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: That is the supply side, yes.

Mr W.J. Johnston: That’s the supply side, and, of course, in Western Australia, there’s the great Labor Keystart, invented by Labor, committed to by Labor, and refreshed in this budget by changing the income and purchase limits. Again, if we want to help people purchase, Keystart is the answer. If we want to help people rent, build to rent is the answer. This budget is doing both, instead of wasting money and supercharging the property prices. The other thing is that the average superannuation balance for a person in their 20s is only \$20 000 or \$30 000.

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Mr S.A. MILLMAN: It is negligible. This is why the policy is so bad.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Only the children of rich people will get to use the deposit and nobody else. It is disgraceful.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: Nobody else—it is a disgraceful policy.

In addition to putting \$445 million back into the economy, electricity, water and public transport prices will rise by less than inflation. The government has spent \$2.1 billion over the last four years to keep household fees and charges low. That is in stark contrast to the reckless, disgraceful record of the previous Liberal–National government. Household fees and charges rose by almost \$2 100 during its eight years in government. That is in nominal terms; in today's dollars, it would be even higher. Not in any year did it manage to contain household fees and charges to inflation. It was in government for eight and a half years and not once did it contain the increase in household fees and charges to inflation, yet despite ripping all this money out of the pockets of the mums and dads of Western Australia and despite increasing land taxes three times in a row, the former government still left us with a budget debt that was projected to exceed \$40 billion. It was taking all the money with one hand and spending it on God knows what with the other, leaving us with this debt and deficit disaster that we inherited and are continuing to fix.

Under the former government, household water prices increased by an average of seven per cent per annum. To top it all off, when the former government was voted out of office in 2017, it left the McGowan government with a budget predicated on seven per cent rises in electricity prices and six per cent rises in water prices in order to pay for all its programs. If we had followed through on those budget assumptions, it would have made the WA economy look even worse. It would have been even worse. We are looking after public finances at a state level, and, hopefully after Saturday, at a federal level, but we are helping people to look after their private finances as well. We are making sure that the public and private finances are in good shape.

I turn next to the health portfolio. Since 2021 it has been my privilege to be the parliamentary secretary for the Minister for Health, originally with Minister Cook and now with Minister Sanderson. This budget is a testament to the advocacy of those ministers. It is a ringing endorsement of their efforts to make sure that our health system is properly funded. Firstly, can I say, more than \$11 billion has been spent by the McGowan Labor government on COVID recovery measures—more than \$11 billion. All the figures that I am about to recite are in addition to that \$11 billion. We have seen the McGowan government commit a record \$2.5 billion in additional funding to health and mental health in the budget. The WA Health annual budget has grown from \$8.8 billion in 2016–17—the financial year in which we were elected—to \$11.6 billion in 2021–22, an increase of 31 per cent. Do not listen to what some people might be suggesting about cuts to the health budget. The numbers are clear. The evidence is there. The facts are plain. This is a 31 per cent increase in WA Health's annual budget. There is \$1.3 billion in additional investment in WA Health services, \$995 million for the COVID-19 health response, \$181 million to boost mental health services, \$252 million to boost and reform WA's hospital and emergency capacity and \$223 million towards new health infrastructure and major hospital redevelopments. That will bring the health infrastructure investment to \$1.6 billion, and that does not include the \$1.8 billion we will spend on the new women's and babies' hospital. Since the 2021–22 state budget in September last year, this budget takes our new investment in WA's health system to \$5.7 billion. Let me go through what some of that entails, because this is a real testament to the advocacy of the health ministers. The government has provided \$55.8 million to embed 24/7 registered nurses across 15 metropolitan and regional emergency departments; \$74 million for more appropriate forms of care for long-stay hospital patients; \$55 million for telehealth services; \$18 million to invest in real-time data capability; \$10.5 million to expand the virtual emergency medicine program; \$10.8 million to continue the active recovery teams pilot program; \$10.1 million to expand the capacity of the complex needs coordination team, and so on and so forth. In the two years to March 2022, the WA health workforce has increased by 15.6 per cent, including an additional 1 456 nursing and 512 medical full-time equivalents.

In addition, the WA state health budget has to address the litany of problems that were created by a negligent commonwealth Liberal–National government. This is what Gareth Parker had to say in an article of 4 May 2022. He said —

Australia's mixed public/private, Commonwealth/State funded hospital system has strengths, but weaknesses too, including overlapping accountabilities and responsibilities and a misalignment of interests.

For instance, GPs (funded by the Commonwealth) provide primary care but can be difficult to access out of hours. Or, they charge gap fees, making a “free” state run hospital emergency department a more attractive (or immediately practical) option for patients.

...

... WA has the lowest per capita number of general practitioners in the country, which is putting more pressure on the state funded EDs as people seek care.

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That is the first problem. Prime Minister Morrison has done nothing to address the shortfall in primary care. He has also done nothing to address, as the member for Kalamunda so eloquently put it—given I have only a little bit of time remaining, I will not traverse it in great detail—the negligence of his government in aged care, and so we have to spend \$60 million for 120 aged-care beds to transition older patients out of hospital, and he has done nothing for disability care. I have a suggestion for every single member of the Liberal and National Parties. Every time they criticise the McGowan government for its handling of the health system, my suggestion is this: let us take the pressure off aged care, disability care, child care and Medicare. Do members know what they can do? They can shut up and vote Labor on Saturday. That is my suggestion to the Liberal and National Parties when it comes to fixing our health system, because so much of what this government has to do in this state budget is fix the negligence of the commonwealth government, member for Roe, in case he did not get the message. The Liberals have a terrible track record on health.

I will run out of time to even touch on the Langoulant inquiry, but I must say this when it comes to the Liberals' terrible track record on health, because time and again they come in here and say what a rolled-gold health system they left to us when they were voted out of office in 2017. Members, nothing could be further from the truth. I refer to an article by Dan Emerson in *The West Australian* of 25 July 2016. I remember well in 2008 when the then Deputy Lord Mayor of Perth, Hon Michael Sutherland, campaigned on Royal Perth Hospital. He made it a key feature of his 2008 election campaign and he made it a key feature again in his 2013 campaign. In 2016, this is what Dan Emerson said—it is so sad —

A pivotal \$600 million Liberal election promise to “redevelop” Royal Perth Hospital with an upgraded emergency department, 400-bed “west wing” and new trauma centre will instead be maintenance works.

The Government has elected for a lavish option in one aspect of the project—two mounted signs trumpeting the works, which at \$15,000 ...

Under a 2008 election promise credited with helping secure seats such as Mt Lawley and Morley, the Barnett Government pledged to reverse Labor's planned closure of RPH and to redevelop it. A fresh commitment was made in 2013.

Plans were scaled down from \$600 million to \$180 million in 2013–14, with most of it languishing in the Budget's forward estimates.

Cash for the project was slashed to \$19 million ...

I will finish on this. This Labor government makes promises before elections. It takes those promises to elections and delivers on those promises. It promised that it would put Western Australian jobs first. It promised it would ease cost-of-living pressures on WA families and it promised it would pay down the former Liberal–National government's debt. It is delivering on those promises. This budget delivers on those commitments and, once again, stands as a testament to the strong and responsible financial and economic management of the McGowan government. That is why I have no hesitation commending this budget both to this house and to the people of my great community of Mount Lawley.

MR P. LILBURNE (Carine) [10.21 pm]: First, I would like to congratulate you, Acting Speaker (Ms C.M. Collins), on your recent elevation to the Acting Speaker position. It is wonderful to see.

It is my pleasure to rise in this house this evening to fully endorse the outstanding financial and economic management of Western Australia by the Premier and Treasurer of our state, Hon Mark McGowan, MLA. As the member for the Carine district, I can ensure the constituents in my electorate that the pledge contained in my inaugural speech is being maintained—that is, to be part of an economically and socially responsible government for all Western Australians.

What a pleasure it is to be here this evening. I had the pleasure of also being in this Parliament recently and witnessing the Treasurer bring down the state's budget for 2022–23. In speaking to the Appropriation (Recurrent 2022–23) Bill 2022 and the Appropriation (Capital 2022–23) Bill 2022, again, I have the honour of fully supporting the WA Labor government on its record of outstanding economic management and leadership in our home of Western Australia. I would like to mention five points in summary. Point one: in the budget of 2022–23, the McGowan government is delivering an operating surplus of \$5.7 billion in this financial year. This surplus is in stark contrast to the federal government's fiscal situation. Point two: that in the budget of 2022–23, the McGowan Labor government has committed \$11.2 billion in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and investing \$33 billion in infrastructure and, still, net debt is almost \$14 billion lower than projected when the WA Labor government came to office. Point three: in the budget of 2022–23, the McGowan Labor government has shown that our domestic economy has grown by 7.2 per cent over the two years of the pandemic—that is, two and a half times the rate of growth of the rest of the nation during a pandemic. Department of Treasury forecasting predicts our domestic economy will continue to grow by at least 5.25 per cent this year, our strongest growth in a decade. Point four: in the budget of 2022–23, the

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McGowan Labor government has delivered an unemployment rate of 3.4 per cent between February 2020 and March 2022. WA Labor has delivered 160 000 job; these have been created since coming to government. Point five: in the budget of 2022–23, the McGowan Labor government has delivered a record additional investment of \$2.5 billion in health and mental health, taking new spending on the health system to a total of \$5.7 billion since the last budget was handed down just eight months ago. I will be keen to see how the electorate responds to the federal Labor Party's commitment to the further enhancement of Medicare. Led by Anthony Albanese, the federal ALP has an election commitment to make it easier for people to see professionals at general practitioner offices.

I remember listening to the Leader of the Opposition speak in this place on the last budget. The Leader of the Opposition criticised a surplus of \$5.8 billion. The Leader of the Opposition demonstrated little understanding of the WA Labor government's excellent handling of the then still evolving COVID pandemic for the people of Western Australia. I sat and listened to the negativity and the scepticism in her budget response and I stated at the time that her economic analysis and contribution was cringe-worthy.

The Carine district's households in the suburbs of Carine, Duncraig, North Beach, Marmion, Watermans Bay, Gwelup, Karrinyup and Sorrento are the big winners in the 2022–23 WA state budget. The budget includes a one-off \$400 credit for all WA households on their residential electricity bill, providing the average household with months of bill relief and helping Carine district families to manage the cost of living.

I would like to repeat that the McGowan Labor government is delivering the biggest ever investment in the WA public health system, with a further record \$2.5 billion investment in health and mental health. The 2022–23 budget includes \$1.6 billion in new COVID-19 response and recovery measures to keep WA safe, including \$635 million to secure rapid antigen tests and run the WA free antigen program.

The Labor government is delivering a \$252 million emergency department reform package to improve access to emergency care and help address systemic causes of ambulance ramping. This investment will enhance capacity and processing speed at Joondalup Health Campus. The budget is delivering \$181 million in additional investments in mental health facilities throughout the state of Western Australia. The budget will deliver 342 new beds, with a total of 530 beds by the end of the year. Further initiatives to boost our healthcare workforce build on an increase of 15.6 per cent in the WA health workforce over the two years to March 2022, which included an additional 1 456 nursing staff and 512 medical FTEs, most of whom were general practitioners and doctors. Finally, the budget provides \$2.5 million towards the development of a business case to inform options for the proposed WA comprehensive cancer centre.

The WA Labor team is using its strong budget position to invest in local initiatives that support safe, strong and fair communities, no matter where Western Australians live. The budget includes an additional \$16.4 million to support the extra 950 new police officers who will be employed over the next four years as part of our work to boost overall officer numbers by 15 per cent; \$408 million of additional funding towards housing and homelessness measures; a \$67 million increase for emergency services to keep Western Australians safe; \$34.4 million for a range of family and domestic violence prevention and support measures; \$114 million to boost child protection and support services to help keep WA children and families safe; and \$118 million for road safety initiatives and programs.

The McGowan Labor government continues to invest in local schools to ensure that all WA students have the best possible opportunities to gain experience. The WA Labor team increased education funding in the 2022–23 state budget, delivering a total of almost \$6 billion for Western Australian schools. In this year's state budget, WA students will benefit from \$595 million in new and upgraded school facilities throughout WA, including \$32.3 million in upgrades at Duncraig Senior High School to build additional permanent capacity for 550 students, and specialist facilities, including new science, technology, engineering and mathematics classrooms. I was at the turning of the sod at Carine Senior High School when construction commenced on the \$32 million school investment. The three-storey classroom block will increase student accommodation, and the new sports hall will improve the education experience and outcomes for students and their families. We are also delivering \$54.6 million in increased support for students with disabilities and additional learning needs across WA and \$42.5 million across WA for COVID-19 measures supporting the continuation of enhanced cleaning programs in public schools and maintaining masks and personal equipment supplies and rapid antigen testing distribution for all schools. Lastly, in this area, is an investment of \$2.5 million to support phonics skill development for year 1 students across WA—a marvellous project. I am very pleased to endorse an additional \$33.8 million in funding towards maintenance upgrades to improve our public schools.

The McGowan Labor government is providing more targeted training opportunities for Western Australians to start quality jobs. It continues to deliver its Lower Fees, Local Skills program initiative to keep TAFE fees low and annual fee caps across 210 high priority courses. The \$76.5 million in training initiatives in the 2022–23 includes \$38.4 million in additional funding for the Lower Fees, Local Skills program initiative with \$14.3 million

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to support training in WA's in-demand construction industry. There is an \$11 million boost for our defence industries workforce; \$5.5 million to help mature age job seekers and ex-offenders into jobs; \$2.4 million to attract international students to the regions to help address skills shortages; and, of course, many of those international students may choose to make Western Australia their home, which would be wonderful.

The Treasurer is delivering Metronet with a record \$6 billion allocated over the next four years across a further 13 projects. In 2022–23, Metronet milestones will include the commencement of major construction on the Greenwood station multistorey car park. This investment in infrastructure, which backs on to the Carine electorate, will enhance accessibility and utility of the Metronet rail system. Due to high demand for parking at Greenwood station, the state government has committed \$38 million to add up to 700 bays through the construction of the multistorey car park, taking the total number available to around 1 600 cars. The proposed location of the multistorey car park structure within the existing Greenwood station car park will be finalised during the planning stage. The project will also increase the provision of drop-off facilities within the current car park by approximately 10 bays to cater for demand and expand the ACROD parking provision in line within requirements associated with the total number of bays. Work on the new car park is set to begin in 2022 and it is expected to open in 2024.

The 2022–23 budget also includes funding to continue delivering projects currently underway, including the Mitchell Freeway widening southbound from Hodges Drive to Hepburn Avenue and transforming the smart freeways along the Mitchell Freeway corridor. The McGowan Labor government has delivered more than 150 kilometres of high-quality shared pathways for walking and cycling across WA, with further investment in the 2022–23 state budget including \$448 million to further expand local bicycle infrastructure through the Western Australian bicycle network grants program.

In other projects, there is \$62 million to continue the principal shared path expansion program and \$46 million to deliver riding and walking facilities as part of major infrastructure projects, including the Mitchell Freeway projects. This investment will enable people who wish to access the Carine district's numerous beaches along the west coast to do so by bike or on foot.

The McGowan Labor government is setting up WA for a prosperous low-carbon future. The government is delivering more funding for initiatives that protect our environment and respond to climate change, including \$500 million to the climate action fund, taking the total to \$1.25 billion; \$22.6 million for new charging infrastructure to expand Western Australia's electric vehicle charging network; and \$36.5 million to provide 10 000 rebates of \$3 500 to Western Australians who buy new electric or hydrogen fuel cell vehicles up to a value of \$70 000.

I also highlight for constituents in my electorate that the McGowan government is spending \$1.64 billion on law and order in the state of Western Australia and \$158 million on fire and emergency services. I state on the public record that the Treasurer is delivering \$31.3 million for the important work done by the Corruption and Crime Commission in Western Australia. I have noted to families in my electorate that within the community services sector, the Art Gallery of Western Australia has been funded with \$8.6 million and the Western Australian Museum Boola Bardip with \$37 million for this year.

Environmentally, the electorate of Carine has numerous beautiful reserves and habitats, such as the Star Swamp bushland, the Carine Regional Open Space, the areas around the Mount Flora Regional Museum and Marmion Marine Park. The Friends of Star Swamp community group, for example, promotes and celebrates the biodiversity of that natural area for both visitors and locals. Star Swamp bushland reserve is a reserve that occupies about half the land area of the suburbs of Watermans Bay and North Beach in my electorate in the northern suburbs of Perth. The precise origin of the name is unknown, but the earliest known use of the name was on a lease application by J.H. Oakley of Wanneroo in 1868. In 1987, the state government set aside 96 hectares as an A-class reserve.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr P. LILBURN: Assistance from local organisations facilitated the establishment of the Star Swamp Heritage Trail within the reserve. It contains a history trail that spans a 1.4-kilometre walk. The trail contains 10 points of interest, each marked with a plaque and a sign.

Over the last 14 months, I have assisted the formation of the Friends of Mount Flora Regional Museum. This beautifully curated museum is located in an old converted water tank on top of Mt Flora in my electorate. The tank was built in the 1940s to supply water for domestic use in the surrounding area. The views from the top level over the surrounding suburbs, bushland and Indian Ocean are truly breathtaking. Built over two levels, the museum records the history of the northern suburbs of Perth from early settlement. The pictures of roadmaking in areas now closely developed are fascinating, and so are the photos of fishermen's shacks along a strip of one of my favourite beaches. A collection of rooms on the mezzanine floor have been lovingly recreated, using items commonly in use in Australian homes. There is a children's playground outside, and a grassy picnic area with a shelter. Mount Flora

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Museum is highly recommended for tourists who want to find out more about early Western Australian history or take a trip down memory lane during school holidays.

The McGowan Labor government has delivered \$140 million for Water and Environment Regulation. The government has allocated \$385 million for Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions. I know that families in the Carine district are going to be so happy with these announcements. The Gnangara groundwater allocation plan, which impacts on the Carine Regional Open Space, has been financed with at least \$754 000. Gnangara groundwater—Perth's largest, most accessible and lowest cost source of fresh water—has become out of balance through less rainfall because of climate change and continued groundwater use. The Gnangara groundwater system is a shared resource. Gnangara groundwater supplies almost half of all the water used across Perth. This includes water for Perth's integrated water supply scheme and water taken by farmers, local governments, schools, industry and households from their own bores. It also supports nationally significant groundwater-dependent ecosystems, such as wetlands and banksia woodlands. These groundwater-dependent ecosystems support biodiversity, help create our sense of place and make our city and our local areas an attractive place to live.

The 2009 *Gnangara groundwater areas allocation plan* provided initial strategies to manage sustainable groundwater extraction and the first steps to returning the over-allocated system to balance after 40 years of declining rainfall and recharge to groundwater. It was a strong first step in adjusting our groundwater management in the context of a drier climate.

Finally, the constituents in the Carine electorate will be pleased to be assured that Marmion Marine Park remains a high priority for the McGowan Labor government moving forward to the next state election. I wish to congratulate the Treasurer and Premier for an outstanding budget for 2022–23.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr W.J. Johnston (Minister for Mines and Petroleum)**.

House adjourned at 10.43 pm
