

Dr Katrina Stratton; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Acting Speaker; Mr Kevin Michel; Mrs Robyn Clarke;
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PREMIER'S STATEMENT

Consideration

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

DR K. STRATTON (Nedlands) [2.57 pm]: I rise today—or rather, I sit and telecast—to add my contribution to the Premier's Statement. Health is at the very heart of my community. The seat of Nedlands is home to three public tertiary hospitals, two major private hospitals and various private inpatient mental health facilities. We are also home to a number of peak bodies such as the Heart Foundation, the Stroke Foundation, and nearly 20 medical research institutes, including the world-recognised Telethon Kids Institute and the Harry Perkins Institute of Medical Research.

Of course, we will soon see the construction of the new women's and babies' hospital, with the new site announced just recently, and design work commencing this year. The new hospital will provide state-of-the-art tertiary health care, as well as improved access to services for women at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital and for babies at Perth Children's Hospital. This means not just access to world-class medical care, but also that families can be together on the same campus if the need arises.

The McGowan government has recognised and responded to the need for modernisation and integration of health services for women, locking in \$1.8 billion to construct this brand new hospital. I look forward to not only what this new development means for women, babies and families across the state, but also what it will mean for our local businesses as construction workers, and then hospital staff, hit our local cafe strips. Seven per cent of the population of the seat of Nedlands work in a hospital setting. This does not include the multitude of other healthcare providers in our community who work in allied health settings and in GP clinics and private clinics. The McGowan government has seen an additional 3 900 FTE commence in health since 2020 and our \$2 million Belong campaign showcasing the benefits and opportunities throughout the WA health system has seen thousands of doctors and nurses start in the WA health system in the last year as well. As the local member, but also as a mother, daughter, daughter-in-law and community member, I want to say thank you to all those healthcare workers for the work they do every single day in our community, contributing to the health of all Western Australians, particularly in these most challenging of times.

As a social worker, one of the key issues for me is accessibility and inclusion by ensuring people from all backgrounds and across Western Australia have access to the health and community services they need. It has been very heartening, therefore, to see the significant and very powerful development in health care in progress towards Western Australia's first ever children's hospice. I want to acknowledge the very important work of Perth Children's Hospital Foundation in responding to this huge gap in our healthcare system and continuing to raise funds to deliver a hospice and engage people to come along on this journey. The McGowan government has committed \$3.2 million in the 2021–22 budget towards the planning and design of the hospice, which will provide care for children with a life-limiting diagnosis, including end-of-life care, support and respite for their families, and a statewide bereavement service for families following the loss of a child. Having been a social worker at Princess Margaret Hospital for Children, I have a deep appreciation for what these services will mean for families as the very worst thing that could possibly happen to a family happens to them, for the parents who will be balancing their own grief while also caring for the grief of their other children, and for the complex grief that follows the death of a child and the need for highly specialised and holistic, compassionate care. The design of the hospice has been extensively researched and will be modelled on what is known as “best practice” from other Australian and international hospices, a welcoming and home-like atmosphere with all the benefits that hospital care has to offer. The location of the hospice will provide access and connection to nature and outdoor spaces, located as it is by the ocean. This ability to be engaged with nature and the natural environment can support the psychological, physical and emotional health of both the children and their families. Final plans for the project include seven children's bedrooms; three family suites; a hydrotherapy pool; health therapy rooms; playrooms for activities such as art, music and play therapy; and communal dining and lounge areas. It will indeed be an honour to watch the hospice progress, as it will provide much needed relief, care and compassion for children and their families.

For me, one of the many highlights of 2021 was taking the first walk across the Koolangka Bridge, which joins Perth Children's Hospital to Kings Park. This was another partnership between the McGowan government and Perth Children's Hospital Foundation. It gives children, families and staff at the hospital an easy connection to Kings Park and all the benefits that connection to nature can offer. As a community member who regularly includes the bridge on my morning walk, I can also attest to the fact that it is a great community asset that is well used by community members and their dogs.

It was also my pleasure in 2021 to meet with the board and volunteers from TransFolk of WA and present them with a Lotterywest grant. TransFolk of WA is a peer-led volunteer organisation providing a range of services and advocacy for trans and gender diverse people. Its services include social and support groups for trans and gender diverse people as well as for their parents and carers; online safe and private Facebook groups for discussion and

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sharing of experiences; and training, including a trans 101 workshop providing practical ways to be more inclusive of trans and gender diverse people. The organisation also administers a binder program, removing barriers of cost and accessibility for people who wish to use a binder. The group advocates for trans and gender diverse people contributing to legal and policy development, even when the conversations are tough and confronting, as they have been recently. The Lotterywest grant will provide TransFolk of WA the opportunity to build capacity within the organisation to develop policy and procedures, governance systems and building the capacity of volunteers, which obviously is essential in a volunteer-run organisation. This in turn will allow the organisation to recruit more volunteers and to sustain existing volunteers to provide the organisation's essential services and ensure the ongoing sustainability of the organisation. This is the first time in its history that TransFolk of WA has been able to employ someone. There is a need for ongoing funding as the current health care demand outstrips what the organisation can offer. A major source of referral and connection for TransFolk of WA is a gender diversity clinic at Perth Children's Hospital, which is the only dedicated public service for trans and gender diverse people. Trans and gender diverse people face discrimination in our schools, workplaces, community and, sadly for many, in their own families. Such discrimination is clearly damaging on a day-to-day basis, causing pain, alienation, isolation and hurt in the here and now. But such discrimination also leads to unemployment and poverty—therefore, impacting people's ability to access the medical, social and community services they need. On a structural level, it can mean organisations dedicated to serving the trans community are excluded from funding as well as excluded from discussions on policy, health and law. Lived experience, backed up by research, tells us that trans and gender diverse people experience significant health and mental health disparities. Experiences of depression and anxiety are experienced by the majority of trans and gender diverse people, according to a 2021 Australian study, which also found that more than half reported previous self-harm and that 49 per cent had made a recent suicide attempt. I am, of course, talking about the kinds of discrimination that the federal government attempted to enshrine in legislation earlier this month. It seems a euphemism to say that it has been a distressing and exhausting time for the LGBTQIA+ community as a result of the public and political discourse surrounding that bill. TransFolk of WA, like many other services connected to the LGBTQIA+ community, has been called on to provide support to community members as well as expertise to media and others, all while managing its own responses to the discriminatory dialogues, perpetuation of stigma and exclusion that we all stood as witnesses to. I want to take this opportunity to thank TransFolk of WA and other organisations for their ongoing service and willingness to both educate and empower.

Another different but often unrecognised group are grandparents raising their grandchildren on a full-time basis. Walking alongside grandparent carers as they advocated for a fairer future for their grandchildren in the last federal election is one of the key reasons that I sit where I am today. I am proud to be part of the McGowan government that recognises the contribution grandparent carers make to the lives of their grandchildren and community and that tripled the amount of the grandparent support scheme payment that came into practice last year. With half of grandparent carers living below the poverty line, this increased payment will assist them in meeting the daily needs of their grandchildren. One of the key reasons that grandchildren come into the care of their grandparents is domestic violence as well as mental health and substance abuse. I would like to acknowledge the brave and innovative work of Hon Simone McGurk, Minister for Child Protection; Women's Interests; Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence; Community Services, in responding to family and domestic violence in holistic ways, including the family and domestic violence hubs in Mirrabooka and Kalgoorlie. Again, as a social worker in whatever settings I have been in, I have seen the scourge of domestic violence and the intergenerational impact and trauma that it creates.

With my colleagues Hon Peter Foster, MLC, and Hon Dr Brad Pettitt, MLC, I was delighted last year to launch the Parliamentary Friends of Grandparents Raising their Grandchildren. This group will work to promote, support and encourage the role of grandparent carers, recognising, as we do, the improved outcomes of the children they are raising. Research tells us that grandparent carers make great sacrifices in order to look after their grandchildren, with negative impacts on their physical, emotional, financial and mental health, yet the rewards of providing their grandchildren with safety and security and the loving relationships they form mean they would not have it any other way. Jan Standen, the president of Grandparents Rearing Grandchildren WA Inc was the worthy winner of the WA Senior of the Year award in 2021. Jan won that award in recognition of how she has grown GRG, securing fit-for-purpose premises, providing a weekly pro bono legal service, access to food relief through a relationship with Foodbank of Western Australia, regular social outings, and ongoing passionate advocacy to create a fairer future for grandchildren. Congratulations to you, Jan.

I think it is fair to say, though, that the key highlight for me of 2021, following the election of course, was community cabinet. We held our town hall meeting with the Premier and cabinet at Bob Hawke College. The audience were all high school students from the two electorates of Nedlands and Churchlands. Their questions covered a broad range from climate change to respectful relationships, cultural education, youth mental health and of course health care. The students were all well prepared, respectful and asked thoughtful and thought provoking questions. Their schools should rightly be very proud of them. Our host for the event was Bob Hawke College, and this was an

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opportunity for this brand new school to showcase its facilities and how it is integrated with its existing environment—sitting as it does on the boundary of Subiaco Oval.

The McGowan government recognised the need for an additional public school in the western suburbs, with growing demands for both Shenton College and Churchlands Senior High School. The college welcomed its first students in 2020, with 250 year 7 students commencing their secondary education there. Last year, I had the honour of joining Premier Mark McGowan; the Minister for Education and Training, Hon Sue Ellery; and the member for Mount Lawley in turning the sod on the second stage of the build for the college. It has been my pleasure to visit the college on a number of occasions, each visit highlighting to me the leadership of not only the college staff but also its students. I was a judge for a shark-in-a-shark-tank pitch event whereby students pitched their ideas for a local enterprise, an art exhibition featuring musicians accompanying us as we viewed the work of students, and a meet-and-greet with the student-formed social justice club—a group of students who organised themselves to confront local and global social justice issues. The social justice club focuses on how its members can act and impact their local school community. I congratulate this group on how its members have articulated, advocated for and acted on the issues impacting their daily lived experience.

My son last year finished year 12 at Shenton College. I want to make a personal shout-out and say thank you to the teachers and staff who guided him and his peers through to the end of ATAR in what, it is fair to say, was both an unusual and a disrupted experience of their senior years. At all times the school put students at the centre of its decision-making in how it responded to changes and its engagement of students in their ongoing learning. I also congratulate Shenton's principal, Michael Morgan, and deputy principal, Christopher Hill, on being finalists in the 2021 WA Education Awards. I have borne witness to their leadership at the school, taking a holistic approach to learning under the school's motto "More than Marks", creating a positive, engaged and inclusive culture at the school, and ensuring connections within and across the school and the community. They are fierce advocates for the future sustainability of the college. My connection, however, to Shenton College far predates being the local member of Parliament or even being a parent. I am proudly the product of a public school education from Hollywood Senior High School, one of the schools that was a predecessor to Shenton College. Mr Hill was in fact my year 12 politics teacher at Hollywood Senior High. He was, likewise, the year 12 politics teacher of Hon Stephen Dawson, MLC. We now come to this place as the first ever Labor member for the seat of Nedlands and the Minister for Emergency Services; Innovation and ICT; Medical Research; Volunteering. I already knew that Mr Hill had an impact not only beyond the classroom as far as Parliament House, as it turns out, but also in encouraging this student to use her voice and brain more courageously. That is what an education should be about and that is what Shenton College continues to develop. I look forward to continuing to work with the leadership at Shenton College, including the school P&C and the school board to ensure the sustainability of the college in the face of ongoing demand for this high-quality public high school.

This year will also see the fast-tracking of the implementation of the McGowan government's Plan for Plastics, a plan providing a road map towards a more sustainable, plastic-free WA. A local social enterprise in Subiaco, Our Kinds, has set itself a goal of making the single-use takeaway coffee cup redundant. Founders Hamish Cockburn and Karen Monaghan are looking to shift consumption culture through design, identifying some of the push points and barriers to reducing and ultimately eliminating single-use coffee cups. I am a perfect example of one of those push points. I have at least three keep cups that I am willing to own up to possessing. I have a coffee daily. These two things very rarely align. More honestly, my keep cup is very often in my car, unused and unwashed. Working across the latte supply chain, Our Kinds are asking customers to choose to have their takeaway coffee in a re-usable cup and simply return it to participating cafes. There are now three trial cafes on Rokeby Road in Subiaco—the Corner Store, Sorganic Sourdough Bakers and Little Rokeby Cafe. Customers get their takeaway coffee in a melamine cup, take their coffee on the road with them, simply rinse the cup then return it to the cafe. The cup is then washed and returned to the pile ready for the next coffee addict to take it on their way.

The SPEAKER: Member for Nedlands, I wonder whether you would like to seek an extension of time.

Dr K. STRATTON: Madam Speaker, I would like to seek a short extension. Thank you.

[Member's time extended.]

Dr K. STRATTON: With the Corner Store's five-week pilot, 6 000 coffee cups were stopped from going into landfill, and just a few weeks on and with three sites, it is now 12 000 cups and counting. That is 12 000 coffee cups saved from landfill from just three cafes in one suburb. I congratulate Our Kinds for not just this fantastic outcome, but also for the collaborative community focus and inclusive way in which it works. I cannot wait to see how its reach expands as we rollout our plastic-free WA plan.

I think one of the great privileges for me being a member of Parliament has been getting to know the many volunteers in our community. Coming from human services, I am well aware of the contribution that volunteers

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make to not only our wellbeing, but also our economy. We find them in our schools, health systems, sporting clubs, seniors groups and in our environmental protection groups. In fact, many of these organisations just would not operate or be sustainable without the dedication and expertise of volunteers.

I wish today to single out just one group in my community, the Friends of Hollywood Reserve. They have worked that bushland near Karrakatta Cemetery for generations building relationships with the neighbouring school and the local council. Sadly, a devastating fire ripped through the bushland a few weeks ago that damaged the bushland and also melted the shed of the Friends of Hollywood Reserve. They took me on a tour last week to show me not just the damage to the bushland, but indeed their ongoing optimism, their work ethic and their love of the environment. I thank them very much for their ongoing care of that important piece of bushland.

There is much to be done and much to look forward to in 2022. I pay a particular thankyou to the people of Nedlands for making us so welcome, for coming to our office and making it your community space and for your positive engagement. I look forward to continuing to work in service with you all.

Finally, thank you to everyone who has made today's remote delivery possible. It is all about helping us to work safely and to continue to serve our community. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: Thanks, members, for your forbearance with that. I think the interim response has been that the picture quality is good and the sound quality is excellent. There is a bit of sync issue here, but I am told that those watching remotely did not experience that and the quality of the audiovisual that people got elsewhere was of a higher quality in terms of the coordination of audio and visual than we perhaps witnessed in the chamber here, which was very good, but not perfect.

MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) [3.18 pm]: I rise to also respond to the Premier's Statement. Listening to the Premier's speech in Parliament, we could be forgiven for thinking it was the start of 2020, not 2022. The Premier said —

This year, Western Australians will be experiencing many of the realities of daily life with COVID in the community, and the difficulties and uncertainties that come with it.

...

For many, 2022 will be a year of inconvenience and disruption. For others, there will be relief and progress, and tragically for some, there will be heartbreak

The hard border is not permanent, he told us, but apparently it is still indefinite. Regardless of what the year ahead holds, the reality is that the Premier's backflip on the border means he has lost the confidence of the people and it is hard to believe anything he says. There has been a betrayal of trust that will be very difficult to restore.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Could the member please pop over to the chair with the yellow dot? Thank you.

A government member interjected.

Point of Order

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: This is the member's response to the Premier's Statement. I do not think the member is looking for interjections, but the minister is more than welcome to respond later.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs L.A. Munday): Thank you. Minister, the member for Vasse is not taking interjections.

Debate Resumed

Ms L. METTAM: There has been a betrayal of trust that will be very difficult to restore. The McGowan government has let down the people who have overwhelmingly stepped up over the last two years to support the COVID measures. When the government implemented a temporary hard border in April 2020 to allow time to prepare the health system, Western Australians complied. They supported the move in the interests of the overall health of WA and trusted that the McGowan government was doing what it said it would do—that is, preparing the health system for the inevitable arrival of COVID. When the McGowan government extended the hard border and asked everyone to get double vaccinated, again, Western Australians stepped up. They believed that when there was an overwhelmingly majority of residents vaccinated, to ensure that those most vulnerable would be as protected as possible, the hard border would be lifted.

When the McGowan government told the people of Western Australia that the border reopening date was locked in for 5 February and they could have confidence they would be able to travel and conduct business and see loved ones as the vaccination rate would be 90 per cent, Western Australians believed him. They trusted he was doing what he said that he would do at the beginning of the pandemic, which, for the Premier's benefit, I will read out. As a lot of press conferences, polls and popular spin have been wheeled out since then, he may have forgotten what he originally promised. I quote —

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... we are in lockstep with the commonwealth government. Our actions will be reasonable, equitable, proportionate to the risk, based on health advice and, as far as possible, consistent with other states.

With a population that is now more than 90 per cent vaccinated and a large proportion of vulnerable people having already received their boosters, how is keeping Western Australians locked in an island within an island reasonable and proportionate to the risk? Is it any wonder that on 20 January, when the Premier reneged on his word and instead committed Western Australians to an indefinite border, the public felt betrayed? The population—which has overwhelmingly done what has been asked of it time and again over the last two years, despite the enormous mental, emotional and economic toll on some families and businesses—has lost trust. The question now is: What is the modelling this decision was based on? Why will Western Australians be left in limbo while the McGowan government scrambles to prepare for an outbreak of a virus it has known about for two years?

The Premier says that the Omicron modelling is preliminary and it is not useful to release it publicly, which begs the question: If it is so preliminary, what is the government basing its decisions on? What is in the preliminary modelling that serves no purpose for it to be released? We were told that the government had six months of data on the Delta strain to inform its decisions that became irrelevant when the Omicron strain hit Australia. It needs more time. It could not say how much time. We received no clarity to questions on that very matter yesterday, nor today.

We know from the Chief Health Officer's own advice that the immunity of those most vulnerable who received their boosters early will begin to wane by March. The very people we are supposed to be protecting will become more vulnerable. The Chief Health Officer has also flagged the early onset of the influenza season and the potential for it to be more serious than previous years, and the risk that WA's COVID peak could coincide with the flu season —

A government member interjected.

Ms L. METTAM: I do not want to hear from the minister's interjections. They are just a distraction. This week alone, we have heard three different epidemiologists state that the hard border may be redundant and pointless given there is already spread of Omicron in the community. We have heard from Professor Adrian Esterman from the University of South Australia that the horse has bolted; we already have it. He said —

“(Opening the border) will add to the caseload but ... this is starting to rise so quickly now that really and truly it's not going to make a massive difference,” ...

Melbourne University epidemiologist Tony Blakely told *The West Australian* yesterday that it is groundhog day and in the same position as we were at the start of the pandemic two years ago. Leading epidemiologist Catherine Bennett, according to ABC online, also stated that she was puzzled. I quote —

“We have had millions of Omicron cases globally, and we can see how it has trended over time,” ...

“Once a wave turns, as it has done seven times [across other Australian states and territories], you are not going to get any more data because that is seven relevant examples ...

Professor George Milne, who this government dismissed as a mere mathematician, who specialises in vaccinations and pandemic research, including work he has done for the World Health Organization, stated —

“People getting booster doses are increasing their immunity, which is balanced out by the immunity of those already fully vaccinated waning.

This was backed up by the Australian Medical Association of Western Australia president, Omar Khorshid, who called for a strategy managing Omicron based on science not fear, stating the benefit from extra boosters would be offset by the waning immunity.

The McGowan government will not share with the people of Western Australia the modelling around this decision. The Minister for Health's comment in a recent *Sunday Times* article states that it is not helpful for the community, which illustrates the arrogance that we have seen of this government that continues to treat the Western Australian public with contempt. It is deliberately withholding information, which highlights how this government has failed in its promise of gold-standard transparency. What is not helpful to the community is that after two years the McGowan government has no plan to live with COVID and no plan for the way forward, while every other state is getting on with it.

In a week, the rest of the country will open to international travellers—not WA. The McGowan government is stuck in a time warp, unable and unwilling to start the process of reconnecting with the country and the world. It is a campaign that the government has based on fear. Yesterday in this place, we heard the Premier reiterate that he reserved the right to keep the border closed if there were a catastrophe. During the summer, to justify his decision he would regularly make comparisons with New South Wales and Victoria—that we are experiencing thousands of

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cases a day—but he failed to articulate that the case loads were commensurate with those states’ much greater populations and not equivalent at all as a fair comparison. The levels of transmissibility are not fair comparisons either.

He has used and overstated inaccurate figures. As highlighted by AAP FactCheck, the Premier stated that there has been a surge of hospitalisations around Australia with an average of almost 5 000 Australians with COVID hospitalised since the start of the year, and he made the same claim in a Facebook post. According to FactCheck, that figure is extraordinarily exaggerated. The average is 3 606 people with COVID from 1 January to 20 January, which is well short of the figures that the Premier had used. It fit the fear campaign, but what we really saw were comparisons with those states that have similar populations and levels of transmissibility, such as South Australia. Yesterday, the Premier said in this place that he did not want the state to be swamped. He said that lots of people would have died. Based on what modelling? How many people did the government expect to die? Why have Western Australians not been given the modelling and information on which such strong statements have been based? Instead, we are being kept in the dark. The latest figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics show that since the beginning of the pandemic to the end of January 2022, there have been 2 556 deaths from COVID, of which 69 per cent had pre-existing conditions. The median age of those who died was 83 years—81.2 years for males and 86 years for females. In comparison, between January 2020 and October 2021, influenza and pneumonia resulted in 1 816 deaths nationwide.

It is important that we also reflect on the number of people who have died from suicide since the beginning of the pandemic. Up to October 2021, 3 139 people have died by suicide. Many more people continue to deal with ongoing issues, which are often exacerbated by isolation. One of those was a young Western Australian woman living in New South Wales who was suffering mental health issues. Her family is here in WA. After attempting suicide, she applied twice to return to her family because she was not coping. Tragically, she was denied a pass to access the support of her parents on both occasions. She died by suicide. Her grieving parents went to New South Wales to collect her ashes and then, to add to their grief, they were denied passes to return to their home in WA. I cannot put into words the treatment that this family received at the hands of this government. No-one has ever suggested that we fling open the doors of the state without appropriate public health measures. But this state of limbo is unacceptable and unsustainable and has consistently shown a complete lack of compassion, particularly when there appears to be different rules for different people. The recent decision to let football players into the state without quarantining was a slap in the face for those families who have continued to be denied entry into this state, many of whom applied on compassionate grounds.

One of the hardest things to fathom during this pandemic is the complete lack of compassion shown by the McGowan government time and again as families desperately tried to share last moments with dying loved ones. My office has been inundated with families trying to urgently navigate the G2G process, but despite the so-called compassionate grounds clause, their attempts were often futile. People such as Katie and Steve Grace have every right to feel sickened by the McGowan government’s double standards. Their story is particularly sad and reflects heartlessness. Katie and Steve Grace begged for an exemption to repatriate their son Jordan after he took his own life in December, but they were rejected. They said that all they wanted to do was get to him. But when they applied for an exemption, they were told that the only way they could see their son was to quarantine in a hotel for two weeks. Katie told Channel Nine news —

“So (WA authorities) then said well if you don’t want to hotel quarantine we will just deny you entry,” ...

“We weren’t going there for a holiday.

“We just wanted to go see our boy pack up his things and come home and bring him home with us.”

Premier McGowan said that rules are rules and measures were in place to avoid WA ending up in the situation in which New South Wales and Victoria ended up—except that rules are not rules if you play footy. It is extraordinary that in the third year of the pandemic, there is a rule for sportspeople and a rule for the rest of us. Consistently, we have seen policy on the fly and at times ridiculous and inconsistent interpretations of the rules. The recent case of a truckie who tested positive to COVID and was told to isolate in his cabin for 14 days is just one example of the government’s nonsensical interpretation of the rules.

How are we still here two years on, stuck on a mouse wheel and talking and living with the same fear and uncertainty that we faced in 2020? Why is there no firm and decisive plan to move WA forward?

[Member’s time extended.]

Ms L. METTAM: The answer is a blatant and obvious lack of preparedness. Despite two years to prepare, this government is still scrambling to put the basic protocols in place. We saw that in its response to a single case of COVID at Winterfold Primary School. The government’s response was to lock away 55 fully vaccinated teachers and 27 students at home for two weeks. The result was unnecessary chaos across the school system. The government

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showed a complete lack of proportionality. The rules keep changing, the goalposts keep moving and the Western Australian population is confused and fed up.

In the McGowan government's first term, there was much self-congratulation about cuts to health funding without the necessary reforms that were required. Those cuts have already defined the legacy of this government's second term as we watch an ailing health system urgently try to recruit and ramp up its bed capacity. The health system has been struggling without any COVID in the community with the record number of 52 000 hours of ramping in 2021, which was double that of the year before. The health system has seen health services cut, particularly in regional areas such as Wyndham, and is increasingly reliant on paramedics to fill the gaps. Staff disillusionment and low morale before we deal with COVID outbreaks is particularly concerning. We know that many are fatigued and burnt out after years of being asked to do double shifts and overtime and there is a serious concern about how this workforce will continue in the months ahead.

There are also serious concerns about the workplace culture in many health service providers, with WorkSafe investigating Bunbury Hospital at South West Health Campus last year and similar reports being raised in Albany. Indeed, last year's Your Voice in Health survey showed that most of the health workers surveyed felt unsupported, undervalued and unsafe. Fewer than half believed that their organisation was making improvements to meet future challenges. The survey is used to inform guidelines and improve culture where possible. What a worthy goal that is. One would have thought that it would be very valuable to see how our health workers are faring this year and whether any changes have been implemented to improve the workplace. Instead, rather incredulously, this government has decided to cancel this year's survey; it is simply not happening. The government is taking a head-in-the-sand approach and simply not giving those tasked with ensuring that our health system is world-class a voice or forum to raise concerns or provide feedback. Seemingly, no news is good news. If the government does not know about the problems, it cannot be held to account for not trying to fix them. That is absolutely extraordinary; it is yet another example of how Labor treats its workers and what it considers gold-standard transparency.

We have seen a similar approach to elective surgery, with a waitlist that has blown out by 50 per cent since the McGowan government was elected. The decision to cancel elective surgery should not be taken lightly; rather, it should be seen as an act of last resort to ease pressure. Unfortunately, increasingly under this government, this is used as a quick fix to ease pressure on a system that is struggling without any COVID cases in hospital, a system that has had rolling cancellations of elective surgeries already, with another six-week to eight-week period of disruption already pencilled in from March. That is an extraordinary measure to implement when we currently have no COVID cases in hospital. The Minister for Health was dismissive on this subject when she was asked yesterday, saying they were not cancellations. She said —

There will be a period of scaling down during which bookings will not be put in place for category 3 and 2 surgeries only, and some category 2s will continue. It is a planned scaling down of non-urgent elective surgery.

If elective surgeries are not booked in the first place, they cannot be cancelled. The problem does not simply go away because these cases have not been registered in the system. These are not just problems; these are patients requiring essential surgery. No-one knows this more than Michelle from Busselton, who has been waiting three years for surgery, or three times longer than the acceptable waiting time, and is now anxiously waiting a biopsy to find out whether her breast cancer has returned.

In relation to beds, the second half of last year was full of last-minute cash splashes on beds and recruitment blitzes. We know beds are being rolled out in public and private hospitals, and in many cases are modular, but they will not be online until October—not in completion anyway—all going to plan. Two and a half years after the pandemic commenced, the beds will be implemented, right after winter and the expected surge in flu cases. How extraordinary that no planning for extra bed capacity has taken place before this point. This may account for how, during a pandemic, WA's number of intensive care beds went backward in 2021. Not only did WA have the lowest number of available public health beds, but we also had the lowest number of ICU beds in the country per capita—six beds per 100 000 people—down on 2020's figure. The WA government has not put our patients first and despite two years to prepare and a budget with a \$5.6 billion surplus, the commitment for additional beds came only in September 2021, 18 months into the pandemic.

Rapid antigen tests have been a complete embarrassment, and perhaps the most bewildering example of the government's complete lack of preparedness is its handling of this crucial supply. While the rest of world had been using rapid antigen tests for months as a valuable tool in the quick and early detection of COVID, this government made buying them illegal. The government finally lifted the ban on 10 January, only after it saw the chaos and long lines at testing clinics on the east coast. Sometime in December—we do not know when—the government started ordering them. At the same time, millions of RATs from WA were being shipped over east because this government failed to follow up with the local supplier, and then because we were so slow on the uptake, we had concerns about

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the supply levels and we had to spend \$1.4 million or \$700 000 per flight to charter RAT supplies in to WA. The government spent \$1.4 million to pay for charter flights due to its incompetence and inability to plan ahead and prepare. How astonishing.

Not only are patients the losers here, but also the small businesses of WA. I will touch on tourism operators who are a big part of my electorate. While the Premier has been on holiday and claims the sector is going gangbusters because we have all been forced to stay and holiday here, some sectors of the tourism industry have been punished badly. Overall tourism revenue is down 28 per cent. That figure accounts for some accommodation providers doing very well, but some have really struggled. It is distressing to hear that after running a successful business for 35 years, south west tour operator Neil McLeod is considering closing his business. I quote from Neil's letter to the Premier —

Your latest announcement to keep the borders closed has put our business under huge financial stress. Overnight we have had thousands of dollars in confirmed booking cancellations for our dedicated Margaret River tour by our Indian Pacific customers arriving into Perth over the next three months.

It continues —

We have accepted the huge challenges that COVID has brought to our business over the past two years. Those challenges have been very difficult to face.. ie putting off staff and downsizing our business has been very stressful. We have managed to stay afloat. However, we are deeply worried we may not survive this latest announcement.

McLeod Tours represents many businesses and individuals across the state that have supported the lockdowns and restrictions and have been completely let down by the McGowan government's own lack of preparedness for COVID. There are other priorities as well. Although the McGowan government has invested \$9 billion in the COVID response, other areas of government policy have been ignored. I have already touched on those issues that impact the patients of Western Australia and that the government is largely ignoring the concerns from frontline health workers.

We are looking forward to the much anticipated report from the Ministerial Taskforce into Public Mental Health Services for Infants, Children and Adolescents. Although the population of zero to 17-year-olds has increased by 2.8 per cent, we have seen between 2017 and 2020, during that same period, that the number of zero to 17-year-olds who have attended an emergency department for a mental health reason has grown by 25.7 per cent. The number admitted to hospital for a mental health bed increased by 31 per cent. The number transferred to community mental health treatment increased by 36.6 per cent. Astoundingly, the funding for community treatment has increased by just 8.9 per cent. It seems the government has spent the past two years talking about COVID, but has clearly not planned for it. It has simply failed to stay on top of its other portfolio areas as well.

Madam Acting Speaker, it is hard not to be despondent about the year ahead, given the continuing state of limbo we are living in due to an obvious lack of planning and confidence in our health system to cope with the inevitable surge in COVID cases. It should not be surprising that many Western Australians feel the same and are responding with indifference at the request to get tested and comply with the ever-changing rules. It is clear there has been a betrayal of trust, and despite two years to prepare, this government is still scrambling to agree to and implement a way forward.

MR K.J.J. MICHEL (Pilbara) [3.47 pm]: I rise today to give my contribution to the Premier's Statement. I acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet today, the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation, and pay my respects to their elders past, present and emerging.

As the 2022 parliamentary year begins, I start by saying I am proud to represent the people of the Pilbara as part of the McGowan Labor government. Our government has done a fantastic job for the past two years to keep WA strong and safe from COVID. I have full confidence that our government will safely transition our state into the next phase.

I want to take this opportunity to update the house on some of the exciting developments for the Pilbara since my contribution to the budget debate last year. One of the major developments has been the official sod turning on stage 1 of the Port Hedland sports and community hub. I thank the Minister for Sport and Recreation for visiting the Pilbara last week to turn the sod with me on this fantastic \$37 million project for Port Hedland. The project will significantly revitalise Port Hedland's regional sporting and recreation precinct and cater for a number of exciting and new recreational clubs, as well as the wider community. Stage 1 will provide new facilities for the historically significant Turf Club combined with a community centre and function amenities. This building will also cater for dance, martial arts and a local library, as well as serve as an emergency welfare centre. A combined space will be developed for tennis, hockey, dog training facilities, a 50-place childcare centre, a new athletics track and a BMX pump track. I made a \$10 million commitment to start stage 1 of this project for the Hedland community. It is fantastic to see this commitment met with the commencement of this project.

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Sports are a vital part of the community, especially in regional areas like the Pilbara. This is why I welcomed the announcement of a new out-of-school hours program in Newman earlier this month. The McGowan government is providing \$150 000 over three years to YMCA through the community place-based grants program to address the gaps in services provided for Newman youth, with the introduction of planned activities and programs during out-of-school hours, weekend and school holiday periods. Last week in Newman, I was fortunate to catch up with local legend Leanne and her team from YMCA. They will help to deliver this program for the local community alongside a range of government and non-government partners.

I also want to thank and give a shout-out to Marteq Energy and Bend-Tech Group, companies that operate in Newman and are helping to sponsor the youth basketball program in Newman. It is fantastic when local businesses support youth initiatives in our communities.

Another major announcement was the \$100 242 grant for the Karratha Kart Club as part of the community sporting and recreation facilities fund grants program. The funding will go towards the upgrade of the club track and the lighting and resurfacing. I am proud to have provided support for this local sports initiative.

The first recipients of the driving access and equity pilot program were also announced earlier this month, with more than \$711 000 allocated to help three Pilbara organisations improve access to local residents gaining their driver's licence. This is a very important step to enter the employment market and a barrier that was identified at the regional skills summits held by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education and Training late last year in Port Hedland and Karratha. It will be great to see organisations such as the Bloodwood Tree Association, the Nagarali Bindirri Aboriginal Corporation and the Robe River Kuruma Aboriginal Corporation expand their driver's licence programs to help learner drivers gain their licence. I want to thank the Minister for Transport for delivering this program as well as increasing the number of Department of Transport officers employed to deliver driver and vehicle licensing services to our Pilbara communities.

I welcomed the decision by the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility earlier this month to invest \$255 million in upgrades to state government assets to facilitate the long-awaited Perdaman project. The Perdaman project is an extremely important project for the Pilbara and the state that will convert Western Australian liquefied natural gas into about two million tonnes of urea per year. Members will recognise that recent international supply chain issues have highlighted just how important urea is to industry sectors such as agriculture and transport. The Pilbara has the potential to supply these sectors with the urea they need. It is estimated that the Perdaman project will create around 2 500 jobs during construction and 200 operational jobs. These are 200 locally based, quality jobs that will diversify our local economy. The NAIF funding includes \$160 million to the Pilbara Ports Authority for a new multi-user wharf and facilities at the port of Dampier and \$95 million to the Water Corporation for the expansion of the Burrup seawater supply and brine disposal scheme that will connect to the Perdaman urea plant once built. I want to acknowledge that this NAIF funding builds upon the Western Australian government's support for the project and it has provided \$47.6 million for road relocation costs, the detailed design of a new Dampier cargo wharf and upgrades to seawater supply infrastructure. I want to acknowledge the Minister for Regional Development for her work on and tireless advocacy for this important project.

I would also like to acknowledge the work of the Minister for Small Business who visited the Pilbara earlier this month to meet with small businesses. As the previous owner of a small business, I welcome the \$77 million safe transition industry support package that he and the Premier announced. I know that many Pilbara tourism operators welcome that announcement, too.

Over the break, the Minister for Housing announced a boost to local housing supply in the Pilbara with 16 long-term vacant Government Regional Officers' Housing properties provided to Pilbara-based community support services in Hedland and Newman and individuals and families on the public housing waiting list. This is on top of the five modular homes being delivered to South Hedland as part of the 200-home modular build program throughout the state. It is also important to note that building approvals in the private market are rising in the Pilbara. I thank the Minister for Housing for his delivery of a housing reform agenda. It is great to see that this review will boost housing availability in our regional communities.

Late last year, the Pilbara also had a large release of industrial land to meet growing demand. This strategic land release is an opportunity to attract new businesses to Port Hedland and Karratha. Helping to diversify our local economy is one of the most important things that I will look into. Stage 3 of Hedland Junction, as part of the Wedgefield Industrial Estate, was released and comprises five lots. Eight lots have been released in stage 5 at Gap Ridge Industrial, three of which have been designated light industrial and five of which have been designated general industrial.

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It was great to see the completion last month of more than \$10.5 million of upgrades to the entrance road of the Boodarie Strategic Industrial Area in Hedland. This upgrade has been a critical project in the Pilbara region and means that the access road in and out of the Boodarie Strategic Industrial Area can now cater for the heavy industrial work that will occur on the land. It will promote further diversification of the Pilbara economy by supporting investment in downstream processing projects, which will drive local job creation.

The Hedland community is also thrilled to see construction well underway on the beginning stages of the Spoilbank Marina project. The \$10.6 million contract to design and build the boat ramp, boat pens, public jetty and navigation aids at Spoilbank Marina has been awarded to SMC Marine. Work is progressing on the landlocked portion of the breakwaters and the excavation of the marina basin and internal revetments.

Construction is also underway on the upgrades to North Regional TAFE's Roebourne campus. The \$7.9 million project will deliver four new classrooms to replace the ageing transportable buildings, including an information technology laboratory, an art classroom, a new industrial workshop for the training of construction trades and an upgrade of the existing light automotive workshop. This project will employ more than 200 workers throughout the construction phase, as well as 16 apprentices and trainees.

As part of the *Government mid-year financial projections statement*, the McGowan government also announced \$3.5 million for the replacement of staff accommodation at Puntukurnu Aboriginal Medical Service in Jigalong. I have been advocating for this along with PAMS since 2019, and again in 2021, as the service does a wonderful job in Jigalong, the western desert communities and Newman. I am proud that our government is supporting PAMS to continue this work in these communities. I look forward to PAMS opening its dialysis clinic in Newman, hopefully by the end of this year. This important project has received support and funding from the McGowan government and BHP and will allow Newman residents to receive dialysis closer to home rather than making the trip up to Hedland.

Another important commitment for Newman that was announced is \$4 million for a residential facility in Newman to support Martu students from remote communities.

The Minister for Regional Development and I are working closely with the Martu Schools Alliance to deliver this project, and I am looking forward to seeing progress on it.

There is also progress on the Assisted Living Village in Newman, with construction on schedule to have the refurbishment of the apartments completed by May 2022. East Pilbara Independence Support has successfully applied for Lotterywest funding, and I am working with the CEO, Vicki Kershaw, on securing this residential aged-care facility for Newman. It is great to see that EPIS is holding monthly BBQs onsite at the village for the elders who will be living there so they will be able to view the progress on their apartments and speak one-on-one with the builders themselves and give them some suggestions on the renovations.

I would also like to report that the Stars Foundation program is working well at Newman Senior High School, one of the first schools in Western Australia to have this program. The Clontarf Foundation program is also running well at Newman Senior High.

I am proud that the McGowan government has committed to keeping the Pilbara economy diversified and creating local jobs through this tough economic period. I am looking forward to serving our Pilbara communities in 2022 and continuing to deliver on the policies we committed to at the last election. Since 2017, the hard work our government has done to reduce airfare costs has resulted in great outcomes for our Pilbara communities, including affordable residential community air fares for Port Hedland and Newman. However, the \$19.8 million regional airfares zone cap, which was announced as part of this budget to begin this year, will be a game changer for Pilbara residents. Under this policy, airfares will be capped at \$199 one way for locations within 1 000 kilometres of Perth and a cap of \$299 one way for locations outside that range. It is fantastic that we have a Premier and a Minister for Transport who are working with regional communities to deliver this policy that so many Pilbara residents have wanted for so many years. It is an issue that I have worked with the Minister for Transport on since I was elected and I am looking forward to delivering on the regional airfares zone cap.

The Pilbara has a number of upgrades to schools that were committed to at the election and are now either in planning or underway, including new classroom blocks at Cassia Primary School and Baynton West Primary School, expansions and upgrades at Baler Primary School, Tambrey Primary School, Newman Senior High School and Dampier Primary School, as well as the installation of solar panels on 10 schools across the Pilbara. These are commitments that come with our near \$17 million investment in Hedland Senior High School, \$42 million to redevelop Roebourne District High School and \$27 million into building new workshops and classrooms at South Hedland and Roebourne TAFEs.

I am also looking forward to work progressing this year on the new Newman Hospital, and stage 4 of the Manuwarra Red Dog Highway connecting Karratha to Tom Price. On a recent visit to Newman, I drove past the new health campus that is under construction there, and it seems that construction is progressing very well. The

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Newman community has wanted a new hospital for decades and the project looks to be on track to open next year. To conclude, I look forward to working with my colleagues this parliamentary year on the issues that Pilbara residents face.

MRS R.M.J. CLARKE (Murray–Wellington) [4.04 pm]: Today I rise to speak in reply to the Premier and welcome everyone to the start of the parliamentary year of 2022. Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the lands on which we meet and pay my respects to the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation, to elders past, present and emerging.

Since the last sitting date in 2021, Western Australia has seen its fair share of challenges in the short time we have already endured in 2022. From bushfires to state-wide power outages, unprecedented heat waves due to global warming and, of course, the ongoing challenges COVID-19 presents us with the new Omicron variant as we enter year 3 of this deadly, worldwide pandemic. How the McGowan state government has responded to each challenge has been exemplary and I know the constituents of Murray–Wellington share my views on the excellent job done by each and every minister. From the Premier and his team; to the previous Minister for Health, Hon Roger Cook; the new health minister, Hon Amber-Jade Sanderson; the Minister for Emergency Services, Hon Stephen Dawson; Minister Whitby; and the Minister for Energy, Hon Bill Johnston, I thank you on behalf of Murray–Wellington for showing leadership and making the right decisions in times of hardship.

The work ministers do each day would not be possible without all the hardworking ministerial staff and departmental staff supporting them and all of us here in this place, so thank you. My heartfelt thanks to all the amazing volunteers across the state who put their lives on the line at a time when they should have been kicking their feet up and enjoying the festive season with their families. The fires that have ravaged the state from Carnarvon to Denmark have shown just how important our volunteers and paid emergency service crews are in our state. I would like to thank all those volunteers in the Murray–Wellington electorate—the hundreds of volunteers and paid workers who make up the 23 different volunteer and paid brigades in the electorate. My husband, Charlie, is a volunteer for the Preston Beach Volunteer Fire Brigade and he was called out to the recent Nambelup fires along with many of the brigades in Murray–Wellington. It is not just the hours volunteers spend on the fire ground. They put their lives on hold to be on standby for the next shift change to give other volleys a much needed break. He is just one example of the thousands across the state who put their lives on hold to help others in danger from devastating fires.

Back in November, just before the fire season started, Minister Reece Whitby attended a family open day at the Bushfire Centre of Excellence, Karla Katitjin. The \$33 million, first-of-its-kind build has been welcomed with open arms by volunteers across the Murray–Wellington electorate and the state. Unfortunately, the lessons learnt from the centre have been put to good use as there was a major fire less than a kilometre from the centre over the last few weeks. Since my budget reply speech in September, there have been numerous announcements regarding upgrades to bushfire centres in the electorate. There have been upgrades at the Pinjarra Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service, Brunswick Junction Volunteer Fire Service and a massive \$530 000 upgrade to the Harvey Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service. These upgrades have been well received by not just by the volunteers, but also the wider community. Volunteers are rarely recognised or acknowledged for their commitment throughout the community, yet without them, many services in the region would collapse. During December, I was honoured to be a guest at numerous volunteer award ceremonies. The Waroona Fire and Emergency Services and the Mandurah State Emergency Services both held awards nights to celebrate and honour their past and present volunteers, and to give back to these selfless individuals. Minister Reece Whitby, as Minister for Volunteering, joined the member for Mandurah, David Templeman, and I at the Alcoa Peel Volunteer Awards. I would like to congratulate the winners: Peel Volunteer of the Year, Mr Keith Stockings, FinUCAre, Uniting Outreach Mandurah and Peel Community Legal Service; Peel Youth Volunteer of the Year, Amy Calleja, Mandurah SES; and Peel Community Group of the Year, Play2Talk.

I would also like to send my sincere congratulations to the Pinjarra branch of the Bendigo Community Bank, which celebrated its 20-year anniversary in December. The bank is a massive part of the community and the volunteers and staff who run the bank go above and beyond to make sure local groups and charities are looked after every time an opportunity arises. Another group of volunteers from the Riding for the Disabled Association Murray Mandurah Group organised the RDA Thunder Cup fundraiser. The fundraiser raised an astonishing \$21 000 along with other donations from several sources including \$150 00 from the Pinjarra Junction Shopping Centre. The money was put towards the purchase of a new bus so the group can pick up and drop off school groups and other groups. I would like to acknowledge Wayne and Dianne Beardmore and Belinda Brown for the work they do there. Sadly, a dedicated and loved member of the RDA team passed recently. I would like to acknowledge Kaya Hetherington for all the work and love that she put into RDA and the community—RIP Kaya.

The Peel Multicultural Society also had a 30-year celebration in December. The society does an amazing job helping individuals and families who have newly settled into the Peel region, and it makes the move to Australia a smooth and comfortable one.

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The McGowan government recognised the importance of volunteers and awarded grants across the state for groups that hosted events on Thank a Volunteer Day on 5 December. Both the Brunswick Junction Community Resource Centre and the Harvey Community Radio were awarded small grants to assist them in their events on the day.

School has just resumed. Although the pandemic is challenging for students and staff across the state, we have seen the resilience in everyone to keep pushing through each day. I would like to welcome everyone back and wish them a successful and prosperous year. At end of the year last year, there were many celebrations throughout schools in Murray–Wellington. I am proud the McGowan state government has put education as a top priority. Minister Ellery joined me at the sod turning of the \$10.3 million sports hall and performing arts centre that will be built at Pinjarra Senior High School. The school celebrated its 100-year anniversary in 2021, and what a way to celebrate by getting this amazing new building. Carcoola Primary School in North Pinjarra also celebrated 50 years since the first student walked through its doors. The school hosted a fair, which was attended by past and present students and staff. It was great seeing so many generations attend on the day and celebrate a piece of the community. Pinjarra Senior High School also received \$1.5 million to put towards a new science, technology, engineering and mathematics classroom. The students are extremely excited to get this new build. Harvey Senior High School also received \$500 000 towards an upgrade of a STEM classroom.

Yarloop Primary School built a new sensory room for the students. The room was named the Kandy Camisa after long-time teacher Kandy who worked at the school for over 30 years. In November, I represented Minister Ellery at Kingston Primary School to open the new \$2 million student block. The block is a welcome addition to the school, which has exploded in population over the last few years. Lastly about education, I would like to congratulate both the Waroona District High School and Harvey Primary School for being recognised for academic excellence in 2021.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Minister Rita Saffioti and the McGowan government for the work in stopping the Point Grey marina development. On 2 December 2021, the minister approved an amendment to the local planning scheme to stop the controversial marina development at Point Grey, in the estuary, from proceeding. The amendment removes potential for the development of a marina at Point Grey, responding to concerns about the suitability of the site in the context of potential long-term environmental impacts and uncertainty about ongoing maintenance and upkeep. Along with my Peel colleagues David Templeman, MLA, and Lisa Munday, MLA, I have been strongly advocating for this change to happen for many years now. I am so pleased to see that this beautiful part of the Shire of Murray and my electorate of Murray–Wellington will remain untouched for future generations to come. It was bewildering to hear the federal member for Canning take full credit for this decision and use it as part of his re-election campaign, when it was the McGowan government that saw the potential environmental damage a marina would cause to this pristine area of the estuary. Thank you Minister Saffioti for listening to our communities.

In September, the McGowan government handed down its budget, which was welcomed by the constituents of Murray–Wellington. I spoke about many amazing projects in the electorate in this chamber in September. I would just like to give a quick update on some of the projects and some new funding that has come through for other projects via state government grants. The planning process has begun on the \$55 million estuary bridge duplication. There is \$3 million for the Leschenault Leisure Centre upgrades. There is the \$2.5 million Munday Avenue extension in the Pinjarra industrial area and \$5 million worth of upgrades to the slip lanes and acceleration lanes on Forrest Highway to service the towns of Preston Beach, Binningup, Myalup and Harvey.

I know that the constituents in Murray–Wellington and across the broader south west and Peel regions are looking forward to these projects being finished, so it is amazing to see all the hard work behind the scenes already happening in delivering these promises. There have been 72 different small commitments rolled out across Murray–Wellington to different sporting, community and leisure groups. Grants ranging from \$2 000 to \$100 000 have helped many of the clubs purchase new sporting equipment, uniforms, new flag poles, and plan jetty maintenance and even a new kitchen for the Pinjarra community garden. These small grants may not sound like much compared to the \$55 million bridge project, but they mean so much to small groups that may only fundraise a couple of thousand dollars a year.

Since the budget, many groups across the electorate have received grant money for different causes. There was \$120 000 for the Peel–Harvey Catchment Council to fund a science adviser to manage rehabilitation and water quality projects to improve the ecological health of the Peel–Harvey waterways. There was \$32 174 to Birdlife Australia. There was \$16 390 to the Lake Clifton Herron Landcare Group. There was \$247 992 to the Harvey River Restoration Taskforce and \$191 400 to the Shire of Murray with the natural management resource grants to help with conservation in the electorate. There was a \$14 900 Lotterywest grant to Greener Pastures Sanctuary in Waroona to put towards a new vehicle to help with animal welfare and safety of the volunteers. There was \$100 000 to the Shire of Murray to put towards our multi-use outdoor community space in South Yunderup that will provide opportunities for the community to come together for various recreational activities and enable improved activation and wellbeing. It will include play equipment, barbecues, seating, shelter, landscaping and improve disability access to the beach area. There was \$100 000 to C-Wise as a part of the \$1.4 million WasteSorted grants program. Its local project,

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Cocoon Composting System, is one of 21 education and infrastructure initiatives that are minimising waste and improving recycling in our community. There was \$1 000 to both the Harvey Community Resource Centre and Grow.Cook.Eat, to host events on International Day of People with a Disability. Through the community sporting and recreation and facilities fund there was \$70 500 to the Pinjarra Bowling and Recreation Club to build a new bowling green. There was \$11 200 to the City of Mandurah to put towards planning of a new netball centre. There was \$750 000 to the Shire of Murray for the construction of a pavilion and upgrade of oval 4 at Sir Ross McLarty Sports Precinct. There was \$248 570 to the Shire of Waroona for the construction of a skate park and pump track at the Waroona Community Precinct.

The community gardens grant program awarded the Preston Beach community garden with \$7 017 for raised garden beds, wicking materials, garden consumables such as seedlings, soil, fertilisers, composts, mulches, bird netting, garden tools and a wall-mounted first-aid kit. There was \$20 000 to the Yarloop Steam Workshops stage 1 via the community heritage grants. The Shire of Murray secured \$456 786 in the latest rounds of the recreational boating facilities scheme towards the extension of the boat ramp and replacement of one of the timber platforms with a floating jetty at the Batavia Quays boat ramp.

Six Peel region businesses will receive almost \$800 000 towards projects that create local jobs and support the local economy under round 4 of the McGowan government's regional economic development grants. Round 4 of the Peel RED grants will deliver \$780 000 to six projects building on the region's strengths in agrifood, beverage development and manufacturing. Caravan King will use a \$160 000 grant to expand its workshop, allowing the business to meet supercharged demand for caravan maintenance and repairs in the Peel. Spinifex Brewing will receive \$150 000 to increase its packaged beer sales in the Australian domestic market and export the "Taste of Australia" range by installing canning line in the Spinifex production brewery within the WA food innovation precinct. A \$170 000 grant will support Eden Towers to establish an Australian-first solar powered vertical farm in the Peel Business Park as part of its Growing Bush Foods program, which aims to establish new product segments in a growing bush food market. SmartStream Technology's \$120 000 grant will help fund the procurement, installation and commissioning of a rotomoulding machine, allowing the company to expand and meet demand for its waste and stormwater products used by the civil and industrial industries. Chaff City's expansion will be backed by a \$90 000 grant for equipment to semi-automate the mixing and packaging processes for their muesli and grain mix production. Hunsia Smallgoods will receive \$90 000 towards new equipment, including a vacuum fill and portion system, to increase its capacity to service its increasing export contracts.

I have listened over the last two days to the opposition, those on the other side, complaining that we do not spend enough in the regions. The McGowan government supports all of WA and has invested heavily in the regions. We have respect for the regions and we are the government for the regions.

Lastly, I want to make use of my last few minutes by giving a shout-out to some of the amazing individuals in Murray–Wellington who deserve recognition. Firstly, I want to congratulate my good friend and mentor and WA Labor Party life member Trish Briggs for receiving the Community Citizen of the Year award at the Shire of Murray citizenship awards on Australia Day. Trish is the mother and grandmother of our office and ran for the seat of Murray–Wellington in 2001. She was a Shire of Murray councillor and a nurse for her working career, and at the ripe young age of 83 she is still a radio controller at the South Yunderup Ravenswood Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade.

Other recipients of Shire of Murray citizenship awards include Citizen of the Year, Margaret McBride; Youth Citizen of the Year, Shenae Allen; and the Murray Active Citizenship award was won by the North Dandalup Community Group, which Sheree Chapman and her committee run amazingly.

In the Shire of Waroona citizenship Australia Day awards, the Shire of Waroona Under 25 Years Meritorious Community Services award recipient was Zachary Audino.

[Member's time extended.]

Mrs R.M.J. CLARKE: The recipients of the awards for 25 years and over were Sarah Robertson, Rod Davis, Grace Pisceroni and Donna Walmsley. The Australia Day WA Award for Active Citizenship, community group or event, was awarded to the Waroona Agricultural Society, and the Australia Day WA Citizen of the Year award was awarded to Noel Dew. Noel Dew was also awarded the Eminent Service Award at the Western Australian Local Government Association awards in September. This award recognises personal commitment, eminent service and notable contribution to Western Australian local government. I am so very proud of all that you have achieved as a councillor and advocate for Preston Beach over the past 22 years. I know that you are a stalwart champion for our beautiful town and the greater Waroona community. Well done, Noel.

The Shire of Harvey Community Citizen of the Year award was awarded to Emma Jamieson in Australind, Julianne Hill in Brunswick and my good friend and community champion Sue Della in Binningup. The Youth Community Citizen of the Year award was awarded to Thomas Cross in Brunswick, and the Senior Community

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Citizen of the Year award winners were Trish Rumball in Harvey and Kaye Ayre in Australind. The Active Citizenship Award for Groups or Events was awarded to the Brunswick Agricultural Society. Congratulations to all these worthy recipients and thank you for your dedication and commitment to all our communities.

In September at the WA Disabled Sports Association annual awards ceremony, the captain of the Harvey Bowls Club, Calvin Rodgers, who belongs to the Vision Impaired and Blind Bowlers of Western Australia, was awarded Sports Star of the Year. Calvin also won the male lawn bowls championship and the Vision Impaired and Blind Bowlers of WA was awarded team of the year. Greg Watts, the general manager of C-Wise in Nambeelup, raised \$4 600 for Movember and has raised \$37 596 in the years gone by. That is an amazing accomplishment that will help combat issues of mental health and suicide.

I would like to welcome the new CEO of the Shire of Waroona, Mark Goodlet, and thank the outgoing CEO, Dean Unsworth, who will continue as the CEO of the Shire of Murray. Waroona is a special place and I cannot wait to work alongside you in achieving results for the area.

I would like to congratulate the town of Dwellingup and the Shire of Murray for winning WA's Top Small Tourist Town award and making it to the finals of Australia. Unfortunately, the town did not win, but it does not take away the magic of the town, which our government has invested heavily in, from trails and tracks to events in the region.

Lastly, I pay my respects to Jim Hersey. Jim was the owner of WA Timber Products. He sadly passed away in December after a long illness. Jim was a member of the Labor Party and once ran for the seat of Murray in the 1980s. Over the years, I formed a bond with Jim. He proudly told me that he turned the once Liberal town of Pinjarra into a safe place for Labor supporters to rear their heads. WA Timber Products is a family-owned and run business with more than 30 years' experience sourcing, harvesting, processing and supplying timber and timber products to satisfied customers across Western Australia. It was established by husband-and-wife team Jim and Anne Hersey and continues to run successfully under the management of their three sons, Sean, Adam and Todd, with 100 per cent of every log utilised. You will be sorely missed in the community, Jim. Rest in peace.

I will finish off there, but I would like to wish everyone the best for 2022. I cannot wait to keep delivering for the people of Murray–Wellington.

MR V.A. CATANIA (North West Central) [4.24 pm]: I rise today to talk about the seriousness of the crime that is happening in regional Western Australia. A crime crisis is gripping regional towns right across Western Australia. I want to start by reading out a letter that I wrote to the Premier only a couple of days ago. This is off the back of many letters to ministers and the government, and to the Premier himself, about the crime situation that is occurring in the Gascoyne and Carnarvon, and other places like Meekatharra, Newman and the Kimberley. I and the member for Mining and Pastoral Region Hon Neil Thomson held community forums on crime right throughout the Kimberley. I will get to the Kimberley forums later on.

I want to read the letter I wrote to the Premier. I wrote —

Dear Premier,

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH—URGENT HELP NEEDED NOW WITH CRIME & ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Premier, despite raising the issue of escalating levels of crime and anti-social behaviour in Parliament, with multiple letters to you and Ministers over many months, pleading for community meetings and change, these desperate cries for help have fallen on deaf ears, with your Government refusing to listen and batting the situation away—seemingly 'out of sight, out of mind'.

I write to you yet again in absolute desperation, pleading for you and your Government to urgently intervene and to bring about 'real & significant' change to what is now a disastrous and systemic situation, not only in Carnarvon but across northern WA as confirmed by my recent trip through the Kimberley.

Both you and your Ministers have continued to dismiss the enormity of this 'tinder box' which is now at a point of explosion with grave fears there will be serious injuries, or someone will be killed—clearly Ministers are either not informed or choosing not to hear or see the magnitude of what is happening on the ground in communities.

Police across the north do their best while under extreme pressure, in desperate need of more assistance from other agencies such as Child Protection and Housing, and stronger support from within the Judicial system and extended services.

Our committed community are engaged and driven to find solutions, but without strong Government engagement from Ministers across agencies and investment in solutions, the implementation of many

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proposed changes will not be possible without help from the Government with resources, processes, and funds to enable urgent changes.

This crisis goes well beyond the impacts of ‘social media’ as noted by your Minister for Police. With changes in society creating new sets of ‘social’ issues, agencies and services need to ‘take a fresh look’ at how things are done and the need to reinstate resources removed over the past five years. A Government Task Force to review and remediate processes, policies and resourcing is needed to provide a new workable State Plan.

Premier, we all appreciate that COVID has been a major focus but other very important issues affecting peoples’ lives and livelihoods are also in urgent need of addressing. These issues are threatening our ability to be COVID ready, such as the hospitals in regional WA not being able to attract and retain staff due to this very issue where people are afraid to be in the regions.

The safety of people is paramount, so it’s extremely distressing for those left to live in fear, suffering mental, physical and financial impacts, with many seeing no option but to leave town in desperation, not to mention the adverse impact on businesses.

It seems a reluctance to take cries for help seriously or work together to find long-term solutions, will very soon result in the prospect of tragic events being front-page news—**we need immediate and urgent action.**

That was a letter sent to the Premier a few days ago. There have been countless cries by the community and me on what is happening in places like Carnarvon. As I have said, I have written many letters to the Minister for Housing. I am glad the Minister for Housing is here. I have also written to the previous Minister for Housing. These letters have fallen on deaf ears. They are about the antisocial behaviour that is plaguing social housing in Carnarvon and across this state, and the overcrowding that is occurring in regional Western Australia because of the lack of housing that is being built.

I will explain what that means, members. The lack of new social housing in regional areas is creating overcrowding. When overcrowding occurs in social housing, often bad things occur. We like to shy away from what is happening and the antisocial activity that occurs. That is often a reason that children roam the streets; they constantly tell people that it is safer to wander the streets than to be at home. It is absolutely disgraceful to see what is going on in the Kimberley, from Broome right through to Fitzroy Crossing, Halls Creek, Kununurra and Derby with youth crime and crime in general. Cars are being stolen and burnt, covered in graffiti, and smashed. We have a problem when the partners of police officers, and when nurses, who are vital in tackling COVID, are too afraid to stay home alone at night because of the lawlessness that is occurring in regional communities. Those are the words of the community about the lack of respect by youth and other members of the community for law and order, and for police officers, elders, leaders and property—you name it.

It is good to hear, finally, the announcement that was made by, I say, the incompetent Minister for Police, given the fact that for the last 12 months when we have been bringing up these issues, he has dismissed and, in fact, attacked me and others in the community who have brought these serious issues to the forefront of Parliament and to the media.

We have been holding crime forums. The member for Mining and Pastoral Hon Neil Thomson and I have had over 400 members of the community turn up to our crime forums right across the Kimberley region. People have said that the police need further resources. There needs to be a long-term strategy to deal with the problems that exist. This is being experienced in Carnarvon as well. The minister can easily dismiss it by saying that it is just social media, which is playing a huge part in this American-style crime that is occurring. I can tell members that it is more than just social media issues when it comes to crime and youth who are wandering the streets at night because it is not safe to go home. Over the last five years there has been no investment in the Department of Communities and in child protection to deal with the problems in regional areas. That is because funding has been cut, the number of FTEs has been cut and resources are not being provided to back up the police.

The liquor restrictions in the Kimberley region clearly are not working, given the fact that sly grogging has become a large economy. Members might not know, but people who live in Fitzroy Crossing or Halls Creek will drive to Broome or Derby to purchase alcohol and often will sell that alcohol. A carton of beer can cost up to \$150. Sly grogging is a massive problem. A lot of the issues that are occurring are alcohol and drug-related. Clearly, those liquor restrictions are not working, and sly grogging needs to be tackled. If people have to pay \$150 for a carton of beer, it means there is no money left for food to feed the kids. That causes crime in itself, because often children who are hungry will go and steal food.

It is shameful to see what has been occurring in the Kimberley region. As I have said, it is no different in Carnarvon. What is occurring in the Kimberley may be on a grander scale, but in Carnarvon, one business has been broken into 11 times in 12 months, and another four times in four days. In the last three days, the sports store was broken

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into, not from behind or through a small window but through the front of the shop, and bikes were stolen. Bowling clubs have been broken into, not through the back door but by using a grinder to cut off the security mesh to get in. People have been locked in their garage while they were being robbed. Youths are filming people asleep in their own homes and posting it on social media. Countless motorbikes are being stolen. In one incident, a young woman was bashed unconscious by six youths and brought to the hospital. The attack was so bad that, in her words, the hospital staff thought she had been sexually assaulted. This is what is happening, yet we have had no action from government.

As I said, I have media statements and letter after letter. What is really concerning is that in this incompetent police minister's responses to me in question time, and in his responses to grievances about crime, he has dismissed and attacked me for being divisive. When I have asked him a question, he has said, "Who has brought up these issues? Tell me their name. I'll go and see them and I'll convince them that nothing is wrong."

One of the issues that I brought up in this house last year in budget estimates was the government's policy to reduce the Aboriginal incarceration rate by 25 per cent. That is a fair policy to have. However, a policy needs to have a plan. It needs to have programs in place to deal with antisocial behaviour, crime, and drug and alcohol-related offences. But that is not what we are seeing. There is no support for this policy, which has merit. No work is being done to support those who need help. I have said in this place that there has been a directive not to charge youths under the age of 15. We are now seeing—we have seen this over the past 12 months—an escalation in youth crime right across WA. Why has that occurred? It has occurred because youth are not being charged or if they are charged, it is after committing hundreds of offences. We have heard of instances of juveniles fronting the Magistrates Court after committing 100 or so offences and being let out. An hour later, they are charged with another 13 offences and again are let out. A day later, they are charged with maybe 10 other offences and are finally locked away.

The problem is that this government has its head in the sand and does not understand the severity of what is occurring. Elderly people and government employees are affected. We cannot get nurses in regional towns because they are scared to stay home by themselves. There is a problem, stemming from the lack of investment to deal with situations of youths under the age of 15 not being charged. This is the consequence of the lack of respect for law and order. There is a lack of respect for anyone in the community. We have seen elderly Aboriginal people being ginned because they pull up Aboriginal youths. It is disgraceful to see what is going on. The situation is out of control. It is a crisis. No-one is listening to what is happening. I truly believe that it is only a matter of time before someone gets seriously hurt or killed. The inaction of this government is clearly adding to that.

We welcome the news today, 16 February, that Operation Regional Shield will crack down on Kimberley youth crime. That is the first time the government has acknowledged that there is a problem. It is not just about increasing the number of police, although we need to make the community safe. People in the community do not feel safe.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr V.A. CATANIA: We also need an injection of police officers to help out the local police officers who are doing the best job they possibly can under the circumstances. The police have not had a full complement of officers. They are under a huge amount of stress. The incompetent police minister stands up and says that we have more police than ever before. The police officers say that about 1 000 officers are working on COVID issues. When we have uniformed police working on G2G passes, I say that is a waste of resources. Can it not be done by someone in administration? Let us get the uniformed police on the beat to deal with these problems and assist the police officers who are burnt out and tired. The government should be taking the police off the COVID squad and making sure that they are on the beat helping out our regional police officers who need their help.

The proof is in the pudding. Suddenly, the government has got involved in something it dismissed only several months ago, saying there was no problem in Fitzroy Crossing, Halls Creek, Kununurra, Derby and Broome. It got involved after the opposition held forums. We got 200 people to come out in Derby. We had to hold that forum before the sun went down because people were scared to leave their premises because there was a good chance they would be broken into. That is what has been happening.

Business owners have had enough. The owner of Coral Coast Helicopter Services in Carnarvon has been broken into several times. He now sleeps at his premises because he has had enough. Insurance premiums have gone through the roof. People cannot afford to insure their businesses or their homes anymore because of the increased premiums they are paying.

What is a way forward? Today I presented a petition in Parliament that includes a request for a task force. That was launched back in December. It is good to see that the Premier and the incompetent police minister are now starting to talk about a task force. We need someone in control, someone who can make the decisions and who can map and gap what is going on and hold departments and not-for-profit groups to account. That is not happening. No-one is in

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control. No-one is in charge of this situation. The petition calls for regional agency department managers to come back to Carnarvon. A similar situation is occurring in the Kimberley. We need to bring back regional managers who can make decisions instead of a drive-in drive-out from Geraldton or a fly-in fly-out from Perth coming in for the day and flying back out. How does that build a rapport with youth and families? It does not. That is what has been going on.

As I said, a task force needs to be established, along with more resources and staff for departments. It is great to see the Minister for Child Protection; Community Services in the chamber. The government needs to lift its game. Families need help. They need to know what a functional family is. That is absolutely critical when dealing with the families as well as youth. But that is not happening. Often, when someone is put into Banksia Hill Detention Centre for a time, they are put back into the same environment, so the cycle continues. There needs to be real change. The department needs to lift its game. If only people knew what was happening in these households.

The Minister for Child Protection is laughing. We have a serious situation occurring when kids say they do not want to go home because there are bad people there, because they are going to be abused, bashed or anything else that goes on. The community is turning a blind eye to what is happening in the Kimberley and Carnarvon, which is creating these problems. The government needs to start tackling this problem. It needs to get its head out of the sand and deal with these serious problems because we are talking about kids. These kids have been taught this behaviour. We hear that roughly 50 per cent—maybe more—of children in Halls Creek have foetal alcohol spectrum disorder. How do we expect those kids to be able to go to school and function? How do we expect teachers to be able to teach kids who have those problems? The education system needs to change and be tailored to meet the reality. People do not like talking about it, but the reality is that FASD is playing a huge part in the development of these children—the youth. It is playing a huge part in school attendance and having a functional society. It is not there. The education system needs to be tailored for the children who have these issues. We need to work with these families so that they can deal with these issues. In some cases, there are kids who have not gone to school for three or four years. How do we expect a society to function? How do we expect those kids to be able to go into a school? They do not know how to go back to school. How do we expect a community to function when all this is going on, and when we do not have sobering-up shelters, safe houses for children or programs? We hear all about these programs. In Kununurra, two A1 posters of all the programs that are occurring were put in front of us. I asked which one works. That was a pretty simple question, but the answer is very difficult.

Enough is enough. We, as members of Parliament and representatives of the community, cannot continue to turn a blind eye to what is occurring in regional Western Australia. It is disgraceful. The people of Perth do not know what is happening. There is antisocial behaviour and crime, and the dysfunction in homes means that children cannot go home. Second, third and fourth generations of people are unemployed, children have foetal alcohol spectrum disorder and abuse is occurring in homes. I am not including everyone in this, but there is a major problem with social housing in these communities and that is leading to what is happening.

There are no services to support these youths and their families. There need to be consequences for the parents or guardians who do not do the right thing. If they are drinking, they need to go on the banned drinkers register. We talk about the banned drinkers register, but if no-one's name is put on it, it does not work. The police, the Department of Health and the Housing Authority need the tools to put people on the banned drinkers register. Those who do not drink responsibly or those who should not drink should be targeted.

The federal government is also involved in this issue. There is the BasicsCard. If kids are wandering the streets because their parents or guardian are not doing the right thing, they should not be able to access alcohol. They should have a BasicsCard, because that would prevent a cash payment being made if they try to buy a carton of beer for \$150. If they do that, it means that they cannot feed their kids, and that is why they wander and break in—to get food.

It is time for change. We need to change now while the state is prosperous, but we have shame in the regions because they are out of sight and out of mind. We need to be tough, but we also need to be realistic. It is a complex issue, but it needs to be addressed by everyone in the community. Aboriginal organisations need to play their part. Local governments seem to be carrying the can. Of course, the federal and state governments need to be involved. It cannot happen without state and federal government involvement. Otherwise, we will be having this conversation again in another 12 months.

Suddenly there has been a bit of political pressure on the member for Kimberley because of what is happening in the Kimberley. A task force is being set up in the Kimberley, so we are seeing intervention occur. What about Carnarvon? The incompetent Minister for Police talks about other regional towns. What about Carnarvon? It is not a Labor-held seat, so perhaps that is why the incompetent minister will not do anything about it. It is disgraceful that the government has not tackled this problem. In fact, it has abused opposition members and community members and said that nothing is going on—there is no crisis. There is a crisis, members. Someone is going to get seriously hurt or killed, because they will take matters into their own hands. That is the danger. I cannot raise the issue often

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enough in this house. We need urgent action. We need a task force. We need it not just for the Kimberley, Premier and Minister for Police, who is incompetent, but for the Gascoyne and the people of Carnarvon, Meekatharra and Newman. Regional communities need help and they need it now, not lip-service. They need a task force to tackle these problems.

MS L.L. BAKER (Maylands) [4.54 pm]: Before I start my presentation, I would like to thank the Minister for Sport and Recreation for his brief ministerial statement this morning about the remarkable life of Dr Kathleen Partridge, OAM.

I like to take these opportunities to speak about something that is a little bit outside the regular to get people to think creatively about the future. We get only two chances to do that, one of which is during debate on the Premier's Statement and the other is the debate on the budget a bit later in the year. I want to speak on something I have raised on previous occasions and present some of the science on the relationship between health, climate change, food production and food consumption. I will look at the robust evidence and high agreement among both agricultural scientists and climate change scientists that the mixture of foods we eat has a highly significant impact per capita on arable land, water use and greenhouse gas emissions, particularly those driven through livestock and related food production processes.

Acting Speaker, you will have to forgive me for consulting my notes, because I have referenced this, as I do with all my speeches, so I would like to follow my notes.

I have provided reference sources documenting the links between dietary imbalance and how it relates to the over-consumption of red meat in particular and an alarming number of health issues, including, but not limited to, obesity, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and certain types of cancers. Anyone who has suffered from diverticulitis or related conditions will have been given a sheet by their general practitioner with dietary advice that says that they should limit their intake of red meat in particular to two to three servings a week. Depending on which country we live in and whom we ask, the maximum amount should be two to three servings of 300 to 600 grams of meat a week.

Research studies show that animal agriculture uses disproportionately high amounts of environmental resources—nearly 25 per cent of all fresh water on the planet and nearly 30 per cent of all land on earth. It also causes significant greenhouse gas emissions and is impacting on climate change. Meat consumption in developed countries, including Australia, continues to exceed recommended dietary health limits. With the gradual increasing awareness by consumers of some of the negative health and environmental consequences of meat-rich diets over time, consumers are shifting their preferences towards plant-based options and meal replacements.

I am not going to dwell on the science behind the facts. Anyone who is interested is welcome to read the more than 200 references I went through to put this speech together. I have them on my desk upstairs. It took a small aircraft carrier to get them here, but there you go! Today I intend to present an argument for directing government support towards these new solutions that aim to relieve the human, environmental, animal welfare and food security problems associated with the excessive production and consumption of meat.

Meat and Livestock Australia and the federal Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment have stated that in Australia, the agricultural sector's food production accounts for approximately 15 per cent of our country's greenhouse gas emissions. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report from 2021, just last year, in Australia over-consumption accounts for an estimated 33 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions associated with food. Australia has taken a very strong position in developing climate smart agriculture. Running in parallel with this, we also have the world's second largest vegan community and a rapidly expanding vegetarian and flexitarian population. In fact, according to Roy Morgan data from 2019, nearly 2.5 million of us are vegetarian—I am just one of that number—which is an increase of 300 000 people over five years. If members have never heard the term "flexitarian", it refers to the growing number of consumers who eat less meat in their diets and are opting for alternatives. Much of this shift in demand to plant-based and meat analogues or meat alternatives is being met by overseas imports, so here is a big opportunity for Western Australian agriculture and biotech businesses. This is where the government should be helping support research startups in both fields. I will go over some of this later. There is some work being done on this. Alternative or analogue substitutes for meat products resemble meat in appearance, flavour and texture and are made from either plant-based ingredients, like tempeh, tofu, oats, seitan or fungus, or they may be lab grown—I did not mention insects, member for Moore—from a cellular culture often called "clean meat".

We have some wonderful startups in Australia, and at the risk of missing some of the great new ventures, let me just refer to a few of them by name. We have Vow; Heuros, which is a lab-grown meat; Vegie Delights; and Farm Foods, which does wholesale manufacturing. There are also many small dairy-free cheese producers starting up in WA and around Australia. Back in 2009, Vow created—this might be controversial—the first dumpling from the cells of a wild kangaroo. In a *Newsweek* article about Vow, the journalist reports that it is one of a number of Australian agricultural technology businesses that is crafting meat alternatives. Vow is one of the leading companies in the alternative protein market. Co-founders Tim Noakesmith and George Peppou seek to attract consumers who

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traditionally eat meat. With \$7.7 million in venture capital behind them, their intention is to bring products to the market by the end of 2022. I have a quote from George Peppou, who states —

“Growing meat sustainably from stem cells will have a fraction of the footprint of traditional livestock farming in terms of land use and water use and there is no need for culling animals,” ... “But we are not in competition with traditional livestock farming. There is plenty of room for traditional meat as well as plant-based and cell-cultured meat to provide greater choice for consumers.”

As the preference for plant-based eating becomes more and more common in Perth, we have upped our plant-based food scene with an ever-growing number of restaurants that cater for modern consumers. My personal favourite is the five-star restaurant at Pan Pacific called Ten Acre Block Vegan Restaurant. If members have never been there, it has fabulous food. There is Flora and Fauna, Little Bird Cafe, Mother, Yo Donuts, Nuthin Fyshy, Eat Drink Raw, Noble Perth, Chic Pea Vegan Cafe, Source Foods, Little Raw Deli, Loving Hut Vegan Cafe, Peace’za, Raw and More Cafe, Veggie Mama, Roho Bure, The Leaf and the list goes on. Last week I am sure that, like me, some members read that the burger chain Grill’d announced that it is changing to a totally plant-based menu at two locations, Darlinghurst and Collingwood. Customers at the new Impossibly Grill’d restaurants will order from an entirely plant-based menu, including burgers from Impossible Burger and Plantein chicken. Founder Simon Crowe said that Grill’d is a progressive brand that supports all “food tribes”.

Although there are challenges in both the supply and demand sides of the equation, new meat alternatives hold huge market potential. Government intervention is showing to be most beneficial in encouraging both supply and demand sides of new food production. In WA we have instigated some impressive strategies to address the supply side. Our focus, through the Minister for Agriculture and Food, has been spread over changing land use and crop and livestock management practices, reducing emissions and increasing carbon stocks. We are working with industry to produce efficiencies through carbon sequestration in soils and biomass, while emissions from energy use across all stages of the food system are being considered through improved energy efficiency, fossil fuel substitution and carbon-free sources, including biomass.

In our first term in government, we focused on carbon farming opportunities in the southern rangelands. Using the human induced regeneration, or HIR, carbon farming methodology, southern rangelands pastoralists are now able to acquire saleable carbon credit units. There are 84 HIR carbon farming projects in the southern rangelands covering more than 12 million hectares of pastoral lease lands. Debbie Dowden from Challa station, between Mt Magnet and Sandstone, has realised the immense benefits of carbon farming in the rangelands. The landscape on Challa is being regenerated and is sequestering carbon in the process.

In 2020, the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development livestock and farming systems staff worked with Dr Stephen Wiedemann of Integrity Ag and Environment to undertake a baseline organisational carbon footprint assessment for reducing emissions for the Katanning Research Facility, with the goal of achieving carbon neutrality for the research facility by 2030. Looking at another aspect of agriculture businesses, the live export industry continues to be challenged on not only animal welfare grounds, but also the question of whether boxed beef is economically viable and able to generate net jobs growth. These pressures have combined to drive a groundswell of interest in managed grazing practices, with a focus on biological systems and natural capital preservation.

In July 2018, the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development released a report summarising the findings of 10 first-phase research projects that were selected to outline constraints and opportunities for Northern Beef Futures and to join the dots in terms of what the Northern Beef Futures findings mean across the whole northern beef industry. One proponent’s approach to the challenges is to see a micro abattoir in Wyndham service established in the East Kimberley. The success of a new value chain of high-value boxed beef piloted at one such facility—a micro abattoir in Wyndham—could give rise to the expansion of the strategy throughout the East Kimberley, thereby addressing market volatility and the ethical questionability of live export and, therefore, the long-term financial sustainability of an industry in a narrow market.

Diggers Rest station in the East Kimberley is committed to a new way of running rangeland cattle, which has paid dividends. The proponents’ cattle operations comprise the 2 500-acre freehold property, which is the Diggers Rest station, and the El Questro sublease, which combines to 750 000 acres, a substantial landholding. The proponents are well placed to take the lead with the development of a micro abattoir project in Wyndham. Over the past three years, they have produced an ecologically sustainable resource management plan for both Diggers Rest and El Questro, removed over 400 head of cattle from high conservation areas, run low numbers in productive country, improved their herds with better quality bulls, secured a partnership between Diggers Rest and El Questro on developing techniques and products for erosion mitigation and the list goes on. They have already demonstrated and will continue to practice regenerative grazing methods. The recent partnership with DPIRD in a pasture improvement

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strategy augurs well for their herd cattle and stimulates a new era for the East Kimberley cattle industry. This type of innovation is what we should be supporting.

On the demand side of the market equation, changing diets and reducing food waste will help. The early investment dollars in plant-based and meat alternatives attract those investors looking for ethical investments within their portfolio. We now see an increasing number of investors recognising the opportunities for the future growth in these markets. They are turning their attention to disruptive technologies and climate smart systems and alternatives to meat that are similar in texture, taste and nutrients. They have all come a long way over the last 20 years.

I wanted to have a bit of a look at the international players in this field. In the United States of America's Californian technology hub, the company Dutch Delta Group was initially known as a key player in the development of meat alternatives. In an atmosphere described as a "gold rush" in California, the CEO of Hampton Creek Foods, Josh Tetrick, announced that he would bring clean meat to the market in 2018. Hampton Creek is famous for its brand Beyond Eggs, which is its remarkable plant-based egg replacement products, and it is backed by Bill Gates. Quorn invested heavily in improving and extending its product range, promoting its products as tasty and nutritious. By 2017, Quorn had seen its products rise to the top of the meat alternative companies list in many countries. Ojah and Meatless are global frontrunners. For decades they have been developing this technology. Tivall entered the Dutch market in 1986 and was then bought out by Nestlé and renamed Garden Gourmet. In 2010 in the Netherlands, the very innovative "Vegetarian Butcher" pioneered plant-based alternatives in the market. It sought to raise capital to fund a new factory, but was turned down by the banks, which were not familiar with this concept at all. It then turned to crowdfunding, and in less than three weeks had crowdfunded €2.5 million; in fact, it could have been more, but the Netherlands has a legal limitation on crowdfunding capped at €2.5 million. Vegetarian Butcher is now producing 500 meat analogues a year, not only for the Dutch market, but also exporting to a large number of countries—probably Australia!

In the late 1990s, the Dutch government became a participant in funding research on new meat alternatives—the Novel Protein Foods project, followed by the Protein Foods, Environment, Technology and Society program in 1999–2004, and since 2017, the Plant Meat Matters research project. Now we have a new alliance of non-government organisations, supermarkets, producers, farmers and scientists in what is called the Green Protein Alliance to collectively increase the market share and overall share of plant-based food in diets. In 2005, the Dutch dairy giant FrieslandCampina launched a milk-based meat substitute called Vales. Mosa Meat has recently been supported by Google co-founder Sergey Brin. In July 2018, Bell Food Group, a major Swiss meat producer, became a main investor in Mosa Meat raising €7.5 million. Canadian meat processor Maple Leaf Foods holds interests in plant-based meat substitutes as a way to diversify its portfolio. Tyson Foods, one of the world's largest meat processors, has invested in Beyond Meat and Memphis Meats, and the French multinational and dairy stronghold Danone acquired American plant-based food and beverage company WhiteWave Foods Company in April 2017.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms L.L. BAKER: In August 2017, Memphis Meats received a \$US17 million grant—in fact, from Bill Gates, Richard Branson and the agricultural giant Cargill Inc, among others. This shows the level of support and credibility this industry had. PayPal co-founder the Thiel Foundation has backed Modern Meadow as well. The list goes on.

Israel is a major player in this field. Back in the United States, New Harvest, a not-for-profit organisation, has helped in the startup process of most of these companies. New Harvest focuses on all cultured meat, egg and dairy technologies. Also in the US, the Good Food Institute focuses on plant-based alternatives and clean meat.

What do consumer studies show? Next to vegetarians and vegans, whose consumer choices obviously benefit from increasing the variety of plant-based and meat alternatives, the next biggest target group is, in fact, meat eaters, and more specifically the growing flexitarian market, which I mentioned earlier.

It is important to recognise that the new alternative protein products coming to the market are consistently improving in quality and provide excellent nutrient and vitamin supply. Low food literacy and perhaps a narrow understanding of the range of recipes and cooking options linked to plant-based and alternative meat products is restraining markets. I was at dinner with some friends on Saturday and one of my most wonderful friends, who is a remarkable cook, cooked vegetarian for me—with a much-pained expression on her face. I thanked her and she said, "Lisa, the options are so limited for me." Here is someone who is a real foodie telling me there are limited vegetarian options to cook. That is just not so, but we need to get that message out.

In 2018, in a Canadian study of consumer choice of burgers, consumers were offered meat, plant-based or cultured meat burgers. The study did not think they would all taste the same. Vegetarians preferred the plant-based burgers, women preferred plant-based and men preferred the cultured meat version. Frequent meat eaters are more likely to choose cultured meat rather than the plant-based burgers. This is an indication that we should be targeting meat lovers to encourage market growth in cultured meat. This is an opportunity for developing this market.

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Projections show that meat substitutes are anticipated to account for nearly 33 per cent of the total world protein market by 2030. That is a significant figure. Although there are very good reasons to believe we are on the cusp of seeing the mass production of clean meat, what will be needed in order to support this shift is consumer confidence and changes in production practices. Also needed will be breaking cultural and gender associations that run parallel with meat eating, making sure our agricultural sector is supported in trialling alternative crops and moving away from animal-based livestock food production.

It will be important to communicate the massive advantages of clean meat over livestock meat in terms of ecological balance—water consumption, land area demand, greenhouse gases—world nutrition, and that it is more efficient for health because it reduces global risks in pandemics and antibiotic-resistant germs, individual personal issues such as the reduction of lifestyle diseases as well, and, of course, animal welfare. Clean meat must become more accepted as a good option.

Driving an innovative market typically requires the support of public policy, whether directly in financing small and emerging enterprises or funding research and development via reduced tax burdens. Active roles played by governments in other jurisdictions include subsidising new meats, removing needless regulations, supporting information campaigns to raise consumer awareness of the protein transition, including meatless as an option in cultural frames of reference and social practice, removing subsidies and encouraging unsustainable production practice and shifting government procurement in favour of vegetable-based proteins. I remember some time ago when a former Liberal member, Joe Francis, lobbied the members' dining room of Parliament to serve free-range eggs. That is because we had not thought of that; it was a long time ago. Sometimes it is the small things that help to drive cultural change.

A key development the government could support is to establish a research manufacturing business hub or incubator in WA, which could be a real game changer for the industry and support the sustainable transition into plant-based products and create new biotech alternatives. Our food supply chain should be disengaged from the slaughterhouses, abattoirs and wet markets. We have seen where this gets us. The vicious cycle created by intensive farming, such as techniques used in chicken and pig farming in Australia, require continuously developing new antibiotics and chemicals to combat diseases within these unsustainable production facilities. When the diseases cross from animal to human, we are faced with unstoppable viruses that cripple global and national economies—in fact, pandemics! Food technology and plant-based manufacturing creates jobs, puts us at the forefront of innovation, futureproofs food security in the face of climate change and will enable WA to capitalise on soaring global demand that is currently being met by overseas producers.

When I last spoke about food security, I was amazed to receive, among other things, death threats and an accusation hurled at me that I was undermining masculinity. Now I have read more extensively of the body of evidence around this issue, I understand where that comes from. It is safe to say that in this new millennium, concepts of gender are slowly changing. Gender roles and norms are much more fluid and there are many different manifestations of masculinity and femininity. A new alternative to masculinity, as it has traditionally been known, is emerging. It is now linked to, among many other things, concern for health and wellbeing and endorsing the notions of environmental care and climate change action as part of today's cultural expectations. These new alternatives are gradually disconnecting meat consumption from masculinity and establishing different roles for men, including those that encompass the fight against climate change, deteriorating human health and looking for ways to dismantle animal suffering from food production.

While presenting meat alternatives in a way that is attractive to the increasingly health and environmentally conscious male, it is important that we hurry things up, and it is important to the future to food security and the planet, hence the need to support the development of meat alternatives that target meat lovers without compromising the sensory experience they enjoy. Several years ago, when I first raised these issues and linked them to climate change, health and diet, I was arguing then that change is coming and as a government we should investigate whether and how to support positive transition. There is no question in what the evidence shows us, and consumers have started their own move towards a more balanced diet. Now it is a question of how quickly we in government can support our agricultural and biotechnology industries in their efforts to change direction and futureproof food security, create jobs and support our economy. Our government has a responsibility to do everything in its power to safeguard Australian communities and that is what we already do through policy, innovation, enabling legislation, leadership, collaborations and partnerships.

The science undeniably tells us that the evidence is increasing that longer term impacts and consequences of excessive meat production and consumption are directly related to health and climate change outcomes for our world. We now urgently need an equally focused, courageous, evidence-based and innovative response from government to address and transform our food systems. We have been a world leader in mitigating the worst impacts of COVID and we should now address our attention, among the many other competing agendas, to developing the policy,

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direction, legislation and innovation that are necessary to support and move the market towards creating environmentally and socially sustainable, safer and more secure food systems.

MS C.M. COLLINS (Hillarys) [5.20 pm]: Acting Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak on the Premier's address. Yesterday, we heard the Premier discuss our unique and effective strategy to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic in Western Australia. Like all Western Australians over the last two years, the good people of the Hillarys electorate are concerned about the impacts of COVID-19 upon their lives, their families and their businesses. As many members have attested in their speeches and both my staff and I can also attest from our daily interactions with constituents, they are very much aware of the challenges that Omicron will present in 2022. But concerned as they are, they are also aware of how fortunate they have been to live in the state of Western Australia. They have put their trust in the McGowan government and the excellent leadership of the Premier to steer them through the worst pandemic of our lifetimes. The residents of Hillarys are adaptive people, and despite it all, they look to the future to hope. That is mostly because, over the past two years what we have not experienced in Western Australia is the rampant spread of COVID-19. That is unlike many of our friends and family over east or living overseas who have experienced high case numbers, high hospital rates and high death rates. This is largely because of the hard choices that this government has made—choices that may not always be popular, but choices backed by science, compassion, and common sense. Lives have been saved and the economy has been saved from falling into a dark abyss.

Currently, we have the lowest unemployment rate in the country—in fact, the lowest unemployment rate in 13 years—sitting at only 3.4 per cent. It is clear that our safe and cautious approach to managing COVID-19 continues to deliver for Western Australians. For comparison, we only have to look east to see the chaos and confusion from poor management. Schools and businesses have closed down for months on end. There have been over 4 500 deaths caused by COVID-19 in Australia. Only 10 of these deaths were in Western Australia and only two of those were caused by local transmission in the community.

I stand proudly as the member for Hillarys knowing that this government will never turn its back on its people or become complacent to loss of life. Sometimes government health and safety decisions are unpopular with segments of our society who are few yet loud. In fact, just recently I had four protesters standing outside my office door in Hillarys chanting that this was like living in Nazi Germany. As a teacher who has taught the Nazism in Germany unit for over six years, this comparison is baffling. It is offensive, it is wrong and it is completely ignorant. In a nutshell, it is comparing one regime in 1930s Germany that had a leader with the sole intent of exterminating a segment of the population with the leader of Western Australia, whose sole intent, despite criticisms or pressures from over east, is to keep the people of Western Australia safe and prevent anyone from dying needlessly. I should not even give oxygen to such a ridiculous comparison because the majority of Western Australians clearly support the cautious, considered and methodical approach of this government. People mostly want to do the right thing. They understand that vaccinations, mask-wearing and social distancing help control the spread of COVID. The slowing down of the virus is working. We will be in the best position to open up at some stage in the near future by allowing people to get that third vaccination dose and by allowing children to get vaccinated

We have already expanded our health system capacity. We are hiring new nurses and doctors. We have 530 new beds, the equivalent to a tertiary hospital. We have an abundance of RATs. We have just hit 99.3 per cent first-dose vaccination for Western Australians aged 16 and over, which is one of the highest rates in the world and something the McGowan government can be very proud of. All of these things will give Western Australians the best chance to stay safe until and when our borders open. I commend the residents of Hillarys and businesses who have widely supported proof of COVID-19 vaccination as a way of keeping themselves, their staff and patrons COVID safe.

On a more positive note, Acting Speaker, in case you missed the good news, the Hillarys electorate office has moved! We inherited a lovely, well-appointed office from my predecessor overlooking the marina no less, with fantastic view. It quickly became apparent that as fantastic as the views were, given that the office is upstairs and without a lift, there was little to no possibility of anyone with any sort of physical limitation to be able to access this office. That's right; the former Liberal member for Hillarys did not consider people living with a disability, pregnant women, people who perhaps needed to push a pram, the elderly or people who might be sick or injured. Well, things have changed in Hillarys. As the local MP, I love welcoming all people to the Hillarys electorate office. I am interested in all issues that people want to share with me. It was, therefore, an easy decision to relocate my office to a much more accessible and inclusive space over the summer break. The Hillarys office is now located at the corner of Marmion and Banks Avenues. It is a wonderful spot. There is ample parking at ground level and lots of traffic. It does not have a great view but it is totally accessible, and that is what we like. More importantly, it is what my constituents like. They been visiting us in droves over the last few weeks.

Mr P.J. Rundle: Are you sure it wasn't the DPC? It might have been the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

Ms C.M. COLLINS: Visiting us in droves?

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Mr P.J. Rundle: No, not wanting to change the office.

Ms C.M. COLLINS: Nope; I requested that.

Not only is this office a place where people now feel they can access us, they have come in droves to enjoy our services, namely the ServiceWA app. We have assisted hundreds and hundreds of people to get set up on their phones. They have not always been tech savvy, but these are residents who are full of good conversation and are knowledgeable about the community. We have been assuring them that the McGowan government values their health and their lives in equal measure to others. It was also fantastic to recently visit St Ives North Shore Retirement Village in Kallaroo, where we were able to assist many residents.

As challenging as this pandemic has been, it has often made us think outside the box. Many businesses and individuals in the Hillarys electorate have shown great initiative and adaptability in recent times. I would like to give a few shout-outs to these people and businesses. Firstly, I would like to shout out to the Hillarys Boat Harbour Traders Association and to Teresa McDonald from Lease Equity for bringing Hillarys Boat Harbour to life this summer. In November, they hosted an exclusive fashion show showcasing some of the marina's best fashion retailers. It created an amazing buzz, selling over 500 tickets, and supported local retailers who had lost tourist dollars. In fact, it was such a success that there is talk of this happening annually. Fringe World also came to Hillarys again this year, with many comedy nights at the Whitfords Brewing Company, and AQWA even hosted a la fiesta evening, giving people the full Latin experience. Also in the spirit of COVID adaptability, we saw a new initiative emerge at the boat harbour. It was aimed at those seeking a slice of a European summer. It is known as the Boardwalk Beach Club. There were custom-built cabanas, lounges, delicious cocktails, food, DJs, acoustic music, games and more. This event promotes outdoor dining, which allows people to scan a QR code to order food from the surrounding local vendors at the marina.

I particularly love it when food trucks park 600 metres from my house. I want to shout out to the owners of Big Kid Events for its food truck events. Their names are Mitch Clarke and Corinne Truslove. I also shout out to the manager, Craigie resident Katie Kinneen. These guys deliver multicultural food trucks, live entertainment and lots of fun multiple nights of the week in various suburbs in my electorate, such as Padbury, Mullaloo and Hillarys. They employ amazing local talent such as Sarah Waddington, a local Hillarys singer with a sensational soprano voice. I commend these outdoor community dining and entertainment events and businesses across the Hillarys electorate that have adapted so well to COVID.

Another individual who I feel deserves a shout-out today is someone people in this chamber may have heard of. His name is Rosco McGlashan. He is an Australian drag racing record holder. He has demonstrated local ingenuity and a can-do attitude even during a world pandemic. I visited Rosco recently at his house in Mullaloo where he has lived for over 45 years. I kid you not, in the back of his house he has a workshop that houses a 16-metre long rocket car. This is something his team and he have built. It is a long, jet-powered vehicle known as the Aussie Invader 5R. Even NASA is interested. Rosco currently holds the Australian land speed record, but is interested in breaking the world record here, hopefully in the Kimberley in Western Australia. I am proud that the McGowan government is supporting the innovation sector, and I will advocate strongly for us to support Rosco's incredible project.

I was a teacher when the pandemic hit in 2020, so I understand to some extent the stress and anxiety caused by the changes in policy and a virus entering WA. Considering what anxiety teachers, families and children endured on the east coast, I know Western Australians have fared very well. In fact, the member for Roe commented on the frustration that many felt about our decision to extend the hard border beyond 5 February. Every single teacher I have spoken to recently, many reaching out to me not just from my electorate but all over the state, have said that they are very grateful that that decision was made, given that it coincided with the start of the school term. Although many were ready with online learning, because we had had those mini lockdowns in previous years, this was something different and schools felt that internally they wanted more time to get ready, and were grateful for that decision. There has not been chaos or confusion as the opposition would like us to believe. In fact, schools over east have had to close for months or weeks on end. A few schools here have had to react to the new emerging situation. I have every confidence that schools in Western Australia, both state and private, will do very well. They have done an outstanding job so far to ensure safety and the efficiency of our children's learning environment for the past two years, and will continue to do so. Our schools are aware. They have planned and they are prepared, with contingency plans in place for remote learning and arrangements to replace staff who are required to isolate.

On the topic of schools, I would like to give a shout-out to St Mark's Anglican Community School, which is based in Hillarys. This school achieved a wonderful Australian tertiary admission rank result, and for the first time made it into the lead chart. I particularly want to congratulate one of its philosophy and ethics teachers, Padbury resident Andrew Rogers, for receiving the 2021 Australian secondary school teacher of the year award for a non-government school.

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I also want to congratulate Hillarys resident William Brook for not only graduating, but also his role as a Hillarys Youth Parliament student. I wish this incredibly talented young man all the best on his future endeavours, and I have no doubt that he will one day sit in this chamber.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms C.M. COLLINS: Finally, I want to discuss a topic close to my heart, the environment. I want to thank the member for Maylands for her well-researched and riveting speech about the need for people to start thinking more about plant-based foods. The health and wellbeing of our environment is a priority for the Hillarys electorate and the McGowan government. This summer I was able to take a short break in Albany where I visited the famous wind farms. I was quite literally blown away at the impressive renewable energy that harnessed the power of the wind to ultimately power 80 per cent of Albany. Our state is one of the most blessed places on earth when it comes to renewable energy resources, and I hear this regularly when I am out doorknocking. People want us to endeavour to harness this power for not just environmental reasons, but also economic benefits. In fact, many of my constituents would like to see a future in which all of Western Australia has grown prosperous by leveraging green energy. The McGowan government's green energy focus presents an exciting opportunity for WA to benefit, as industry and supply chains around the world decarbonise.

Finally, on my way home from Albany I took a stop in Denmark. I was in Denmark when the fires took hold, and we were evacuated from the beach. I saw firsthand the bravery of our fire safety and emergency crew. I also want to praise the member for Warren-Blackwood for the great work she is doing in her community during this very difficult time. I commend all the firefighters for the dedicated work that they do throughout this state, with great skill and often in threatening conditions, defending lives and livelihoods. The McGowan government is very proud to support them. Thank you.

MS M.J. HAMMAT (Mirrabooka) [5.39 pm]: It is a pleasure to rise today to be able to speak in response to the Premier's Statement. Today, I want to share with the house some of the great things that have been happening in my electorate of Mirrabooka. I recently asked my supporters what they loved most about living in the electorate of Mirrabooka, and their responses overwhelmingly identified that the thing they love the most is our great diversity, as well as our great food, so I thought today I would concentrate my comments on exactly that, particularly the diversity in the community and the great work that is being done by this government in the area of multicultural interests.

I know that members in this house will be aware that Mirrabooka is one of the most diverse electorates in the state, with 45 per cent of people born overseas and 45 per cent of people speaking a language other than English at home. It is the case that people come from all over the world to settle in Mirrabooka, as either migrants or refugees. Multiculturalism and the needs of our culturally and linguistically diverse communities are always matters on my mind as the member for Mirrabooka. The fantastic diversity in my community is on display every day and is regularly celebrated with cultural celebrations and national days right throughout the electorate and beyond.

I have been delighted this year to have not one but three opportunities to celebrate the new year. For anyone who has ever failed to keep their new year's resolutions, I can confirm that it is excellent to have more than one opportunity to commit to them. In addition to our traditional 1 January celebrations, the Karen community recognised the 2 761st anniversary of the Karen New Year on 2 January. Unfortunately, they were not able to gather to celebrate this year due to concerns about COVID, but having attended last year, I can report that this is a wonderful and colourful celebration that showcases their food, dancing and amazing traditional costumes. I want to thank Joansy King from the Karen Welfare Association of WA for her leadership in the community and her work on these and other events.

Recently in the electorate, and beyond, we have also celebrated the Lunar New Year, which was officially recognised on 1 February. In Mirrabooka, it is mainly our local Vietnamese people who enjoy this celebration. They call it Têt. I have enjoyed celebrations with the Vietnamese seniors' clubs that meet in Koondoola, and another celebration that took place at the Mirrabooka community markets, at which we enjoyed line dancing and amazing food. I can attest to the Vietnamese seniors' excellent line dancing and karaoke skills.

The Vietnamese Community in Australia WA usually celebrates Têt with an enormous festival, which was due to be held in early March this year, but again, unfortunately, will not proceed. Last year, the Têt festival attracted thousands of people to celebrate on the oval of Girrawheen Senior High School, with incredible dancing, lots of food, amazing costumes and a great showcase of traditions. I look forward to joining Dr Anh Nguyen, the president of the Vietnamese Community in Australia WA, and all the wonderful members of the Vietnamese community in my electorate and beyond to celebrate this occasion when hopefully we come together next year.

In addition to celebrating the new year, we have also enjoyed a number of other cultural celebrations. The Organisation of African Communities in WA hosted the fantastic Jambo Africa festival at the end of January.

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Although this was held in the member for Wanneroo's electorate, many people from my community in Mirrabooka and in fact from all around the Perth metropolitan area enjoyed this celebration of all that Africa has to offer over the two-day festival. There was again much dancing. I believe even the minister showed us his best moves. There was food and great music and there was a terrific show of the incredible vibrancy of the 54 nations that make up the African continent. For me personally, it was a great joy to witness how proud the African community is of Hon Ayor Makur Chuot, as indeed we all are, for being the first South Sudanese person elected to this Parliament, and I particularly enjoyed seeing the African community celebrate their sister as they welcomed her onto the stage. They celebrated with traditional African dancing and women literally ran from the crowd to surround her and dance with her, celebrating her success as she made her way to the stage to speak.

I want to congratulate Joe Tuazama, Dr Casty Nyaga Hughes and the other members of the Organisation of African Communities committee, who worked so hard to make this a great event. The event has grown over the years and this year found its new home at the Wanneroo Showground. I am sure it will continue to go on to bigger and better things in the years to come.

I also want to briefly report on the celebration of the seventy-fourth Chin National Day, which was celebrated at the weekend on Saturday, 12 February. Unfortunately, I was not able to attend due to other commitments, but it is a very important event in the calendar of our Chin community in Mirrabooka. It is celebrated around the world on 20 February, which is their national day. In Western Australia, they come together. It is a great opportunity for the community to again show off its culture, dancing, food and songs, and particularly to honour the achievements of its community members. Over 300 people gathered on Saturday to celebrate this important occasion.

I report on these events not just because I want to show off the fantastic fun and food that we enjoy in Mirrabooka, but because I think these events also speak to the wonderful multiculturalism that we enjoy in Mirrabooka and in WA more broadly. I think we are so lucky in Western Australia to enjoy a vibrant, inclusive, strong community where diversity is celebrated and shared. Anyone who has paid close attention to politics recently both in Australia and around the world should understand that a society that welcomes and celebrates diversity does not happen by accident. Governments can and do play a positive role to encourage a diverse and inclusive society, or unfortunately governments can, through their actions and words, create division, disharmony and suspicion. I am very proud to be a part of the McGowan Labor government, which is actively fostering and celebrating multiculturalism and supporting our culturally and linguistically diverse communities here in WA. Deliberate actions by this government are building resilience and cohesion in our communities. I want to draw attention to some of that work in my comments today.

Firstly, I will talk a little bit about the Ministerial Multicultural Advisory Council. The purpose of this council is to provide the minister and the government more broadly with direct grassroots feedback and advice on relevant policies relating to multiculturalism and the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse communities in WA. It provides a direct link between CALD communities in Western Australia and the minister. It is an honour to have been appointed as a member of this committee and to be part of the important work that it has been undertaking. It has worked on a number of things, but I want to talk particularly about two things today. The first is the *WA Multicultural policy framework*, published in March 2020, which puts into practice the state government's commitment to multiculturalism. The framework requires public sector agencies to develop multicultural plans and report on their implementation through agency annual reports. The ministerial advisory council will play an ongoing role in monitoring the implementation of this framework. Having a plan is an essential first step to making progress, and this is the first such plan in WA—a powerful first step to ensure that we are building a harmonious and inclusive community and developing government policies and programs that are responsive to the needs of our diverse population.

The second piece of work that the council has been involved in that I really want to spend some time talking about is the essential role it has played in fashioning the response to the COVID pandemic and ensuring that it has been effective and well targeted within our multicultural communities here in WA. I want to thank and acknowledge all the leaders of the CALD communities—not just those on the ministerial advisory council, but leaders right across WA—because they have played such an important role in spreading and reinforcing important public health messages that have helped keep our community safe during COVID. From early messages about hand sanitiser and social distancing through to key messages about getting vaccinated, and now at the stage where we are managing close contacts, it has been incredible to see the leadership within our multicultural communities as they have stepped up to keep their communities safe. The Multicultural Ministerial Advisory Council has provided essential advice about how to increase vaccination rates among our culturally and linguistically diverse communities by addressing the key languages and making sure that messaging is appropriately targeted; by ensuring that there are lots of opportunities for vaccination to take place in culturally appropriate settings; and by helping to spread the message about the importance of vaccination, both in their own language, and by using their own community networks.

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We have experienced amazing cooperation from communities to ensure that their community events provide pop-up vaccination clinics. The Jambo Africa Festival, for example, the Chin community national day, and cultural sporting carnivals like the Perth African Nations Sports Association Cup, have all provided opportunities for pop-up clinics, making them easily accessible, and ensuring that community leaders at those events can speak and promote the importance of vaccination. The MMAC is continuing to provide essential support as we enter this latest phase of COVID, using community networks to spread the essential messages that will help keep us all safe—messages about self-isolation, about the need for testing, and about the definitions and how to manage close contacts.

The McGowan Labor government is also supporting our multicultural communities through grants from the Office of Multicultural Interests. I want to draw attention to a few of those. The OMI funds a range of projects, both large and small. There are many excellent examples of these projects. I want to talk briefly about one such project in my electorate that has received funding. That is the Abigail Mamas Sewing project. This 10-week project is run by an organisation called Abigail Mamas, in conjunction with the Organisation of African Communities. The focus of this project is on empowering African women by teaching them to sew. That will assist them to learn a new skill, perhaps leading to employment, or maybe even to start their own home business. Importantly, it also provides an essential opportunity for those women to build a strong community of support among themselves and helps them to overcome language barriers and social isolation.

I was really delighted to attend the opening and the launch of this program in January and meet the three women who have been engaged as teachers. It is a great example of finding culturally appropriate ways to build strong communities and provide opportunities for employment and, therefore, economic independence. I particularly enjoyed visiting the launch of this project because it is being delivered at the new home for the Organisation of African Communities in Nollamara, which was made possible due to an election commitment made by both myself and the Minister for Health. Personally, I cannot wait to see the amazing clothes that these participants will make. Even though the program had only just begun, they were at the Jambo Africa festival showing their wares and beginning the first steps towards creating a small business and economic independence.

The government is also providing funding to support community language schools. A number of these schools are operating in the electorate of Mirrabooka. I know they operate all around the Perth area. They are run by volunteers and provide essential services to many of our culturally and linguistically diverse communities. In my electorate, hundreds of kids aged between five and six, and up to 17, attend these language schools on the weekends to learn the language and traditions of their home country. As a parent of two teenage boys, I have to say I am amazed at the commitment of both the parents and of the students for continuing to attend these language schools every weekend, in many cases up to the age of 16 or 17. As students have explained to me when I have visited them, they value the language schools because it helps them to communicate with their grandparents in particular, but also sometimes their parents, who often are able to communicate only in the language of their home country. Supporting and teaching language to young people is a great way for governments to help to ensure our culturally and linguistically diverse communities remain connected with their family, and particularly to ensure that older people can remain connected and overcome social isolation. It is a powerful thing for both a child and a grandparent to remain connected through their home language.

I love our community language schools and I have visited a number of those that operate in the Mirrabooka electorate, including the Vietnamese Community School, the Myanmar Learning Centre, the Karen Language School and the Vietnamese Evangelical Ethnic School. The support that these schools receive from the McGowan Labor government is helping them to continue to perform their excellent work.

I now want to talk a little about the role of the Labor Party in promoting multiculturalism. As I said earlier, governments make choices, through their actions and their words, that have consequences for our community. This is particularly true for our multicultural communities. I have talked briefly about some of the things the McGowan Labor government is doing in this space. It is important to compare that record with the deliberate and appalling actions that we have often seen from the federal Liberal–National governments in this area, which I think are designed to deliberately create division, distrust and disharmony. It is hard to forget the comments of Minister Dutton, who as Minister for Home Affairs claimed some years ago that Victorians were scared to go to restaurants because they feared African gang violence. That was a disgraceful slur on the African communities in Victoria. That claim was widely discredited, but not before the damage had already been done. The statement was clearly designed to bolster the failing fortunes of an inept and incompetent federal government, without any concern for the hurt and damage such comments might cause.

As I was writing these comments, it occurred to me that we have seen that behaviour yet again from the federal Liberal–National government just last week. It is straight from the same playbook where they target minorities in our community as a way of trying to bolster their own political fortunes. Last week, the target was the trans and diverse people in our community, rather than multicultural communities. I reflect on the contribution from the

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member for North West Central today on issues that he is describing in his electorate. Again, there is a tendency among our opposition number, certainly federally, and I think they risk it in this state as well, of building into division to cover up the lack of ability of some of their members.

We should compare that with the track record of the Labor Party, not just its track record in government, but its track record in supporting multicultural and culturally and linguistically diverse candidates.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms M.J. HAMMAT: I am proud to be a member of a political party that has always been committed to building a strong and vibrant multicultural society. It has always been the Labor Party that has led the way in this pursuit. It is the Labor Party that is committed to ensuring that candidates from diverse backgrounds are preselected to seats that are winnable in this Parliament. I referred earlier to Hon Ayor Makur Chuot and the great joy her election to this Parliament has given her community and the African community at large. It has also given them great hope. As I look around, this Parliament boasts a significant number of elected representatives from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. I think we have previously acknowledged the members for Riverton, Pilbara and Jandakot, who are part of the Indian community. In the other place, Hon Pierre Yang and Hon Klara Andric also hail from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. I must mention the Italian community, which is well represented in this house as well with the members for Armadale, West Swan and Warnbro.

Time and again, the Labor Party has demonstrated its commitment to selecting candidates to contest seats that they can win. Just last year, the Multicultural Labor Organisation was established as a way of encouraging people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to get involved in politics. The mission of that organisation is to promote political empowerment, participation and engagement of multicultural communities. I want to acknowledge the work of the Multicultural Labor Organisation for what it has already achieved and wish it well in the work that it will be doing. I know that many in my electorate are particularly energised by the creation of this organisation. I want to congratulate those who have worked so hard to create that organisation. Although the Labor Party is about representing the richness and diversity of our community, others fail and fall short. Again, look at the candidates for the upcoming federal election. The Labor Party has some fantastic candidates from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, including: Anne Aly, the member for Cowan, the first Muslim woman elected to an Australian Parliament; Zaneta Mascarenhas, the candidate for Swan, an excellent candidate, who no doubt will very well represent the people in the electorate of Swan; Sam Lim, the candidate for Tangney, who was born in Malaysia and has worked as an engagement officer for WA police and with multicultural communities right across Western Australia; and Fatima Payman, a candidate for the Senate, a young Muslim woman who I think will be an outstanding representative in our federal Parliament. The Labor Party has always been committed to making WA and Australia a diverse, multicultural, inclusive and strong society. The Labor Party has the commitment to preselect candidates to contest seats where they have a chance of being elected to our Parliament.

Acting Speaker, I noticed that in your contribution yesterday you spoke about the excellent women whom the Labor Party has managed to preselect and get elected, and pointed to the opposition, suggesting that it should do much better in this regard. I want to echo those comments in respect of multicultural candidates for this place and the federal Parliament. Although the Labor Party has the commitment, it is clear that the Liberal and Nationals need to do much better in this regard, instead of continuing to preselect candidates who are, to use the expression, pale, male and stale. It is the Labor Party that has the policies and a commitment to implementing those policies while the Liberals and Nationals take cheap shots and build on division in the community, like we saw from Minister Dutton.

I am very proud to be a part of the McGowan government and acknowledge the work that it is doing in this space. I have really been honoured to experience the vibrancy and generosity of our culturally and linguistically diverse communities. I want to thank those communities for sharing their culture so generously with me and everyone in Western Australia. We are richer for our diversity. It makes our community stronger and fairer, and it makes all of our lives better. Governments have a responsibility to provide leadership that builds a positive and inclusive multicultural community. Here in WA, the McGowan Labor government is investing in building our multicultural communities, making them stronger and increasing our social cohesion.

I want to thank the minister, the member for Armadale, for his work in this portfolio area. He is well known for his athletic endurance, and I think he puts that to good use in his portfolio.

Ms S.E. Winton: And dancing.

Ms M.J. HAMMAT: I have already mentioned his dancing. The demands on his time are many, yet he is committed to attending a great many of the events that are held by our culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and he is committed to working hard on their behalf.

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I also want to thank the Premier for his commitment to our multicultural communities. He is greatly respected and admired by many people in my community for his strong leadership, particularly his strong leadership on COVID, which has kept us so safe and strong in WA since the pandemic began. Many of the people I represent who have close family and friends still in their home country know very well how well WA has fared throughout this pandemic. They have, unfortunately, had a front row seat to see how their families who remain overseas have fared in other countries. They have lost family members and they have lost friends to COVID. In other countries, they have seen their friends and family members lose jobs and suffer terrible economic consequences because governments have not prioritised the health needs of their community. In my community, people understand, from their front row seat, that our COVID response in WA has been one of the best in the world. It has not only preserved our economy, but it also has saved lives. On behalf of the people that I represent, I thank and commend the Premier for his strong leadership and thank and commend all members of cabinet for the work that they have done to keep us safe.

I want to conclude by acknowledging that it is a great honour to represent the fabulous diverse community of Mirrabooka. It is a great honour to be part of a government that is committed to celebrating our multiculturalism and promoting its success. As many other members have said before me, I look forward to what the 2022 parliamentary year will bring. I wish everyone here well for the coming year.

MS S.E. WINTON (Wanneroo — Parliamentary Secretary) [6.04 pm]: Madam Acting Speaker, guten abend! I very much enjoyed the contribution from the member for Mirrabooka. Various cultural groups got a shout-out, so I thought I would do a quick shout-out to the German community. Like many other members of Parliament, I was not born in Australia. I came to Australia with my family when I was eight years old, so English is not my first language. Quite often I use that as an excuse when I get tongue-tied, which I will also do tonight, if you will let me, Acting Speaker.

I sincerely wish to say that I really enjoyed the contributions of various government members over the last couple of days in responding to the Premier's Statement. In particular, I very much enjoyed listening to the member for Churchlands earlier today. She had the honour of being the first person to deliver a speech remotely. Also, I enjoyed the speech of the member for Hillarys. As we all know, these seats are traditionally held by the Liberal Party and they have been so badly neglected. It is fantastic to see those local members supporting their residents and constituents, working hard and constantly getting feedback from people, saying how amazed they are at what a local member can do to serve their local communities. I congratulate those members and I look forward to watching their progress throughout this parliamentary period.

The last sitting day of 2021 was 25 November. We could unpack quite a bit of what has happened since then. I am tempted to talk about the implosion of our Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, but there is so much to say. Rather than talk about his various missteps, I will mention the one in particular that just blew my mind. I still have that image of him sitting at the cricket during a photo opportunity and brazenly saying, "We're taking wickets during the virus", while at the same time hundreds of people were dying on the east coast. It still blows my mind that we get that kind of commentary from our federal leader. Having said that about our federal leader, of course we do agree with him, and he agreed with us on one point, when he recently acknowledged that the tough decisions that the Premier has taken to delay the opening of the borders was the right decision to make. I want to put this on the record. I know it has been put on the record quite a few times. When he was asked, he said, "Yeah, I think he did do the right thing. Omicron, as we learnt over the summer, is a completely different virus. The things we were doing before don't work the same way under the Omicron virus."

Over the past two days, it seems that the opposition has been pretty much preoccupied with opening up the border, yet when the Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, finally gets the opportunity to come to Western Australia, I imagine he would want to sidle up to the Premier for a photo opportunity rather than the opposition leader or the current leader of the Liberal Party. If I were a member of the opposition, to spare myself that embarrassment, I would be fully supportive of, and would advocate, keeping the borders closed. It will be quite a challenging dilemma for federal coalition members, with their coalition partners in the state, to work out how they will campaign and convince people that a federal coalition government is the way to go whilst the Prime Minister stands beside them, fully supporting the actions that the Premier and this government have taken in the last two years, and also the most recent decision on delaying the opening of the borders. I will endeavour to make some comments about our safe transition plan in a moment. There is no question that those decisions have been difficult but very courageous and are the right decisions that needed to be taken to change the settings over the summer. We in Western Australia have a Premier who has made tough decisions to keep us safe. His decisions are saving lives, while at the same time he is continuing to keep our economy the strongest in the country and around the world. Our Premier has made tough decisions, but they have been based on what is best for the majority of Western Australians and on what is right, not what is popular.

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During the summer recess, an important anniversary took place on 23 January. It was the anniversary of Mark McGowan having achieved 10 years as Leader of the Labor Party in WA. For 10 years, we have had the same leader of the WA Labor Party. That is not lost on me when I compare it with the dysfunction that the opposition has gone through in the last 10 years. It is not just that he has been the leader for the five years since we were elected in 2017; he was the opposition leader when we went to the polls in 2013. Despite losing that election, this party supported him to stay leader in the period between 2013 and 2017. As an opposition party, our focus was on listening to the community and building policies and platforms so that we could offer the WA Labor Party as an alternative vision for the state, and we know what happened in 2017. Being in opposition is not about whining or whingeing, which is all current opposition members are capable of doing; it is actually about coming up with an alternative.

I do not have the time to compare the Liberal Party's performance and lack of stability over 10 years; there is too much to unpack and certainly not enough time tonight, but I will look back to 2017. We started with Mike Nahan, who was just keeping the seat warm while Liza Harvey was being prepared for the role. We know how that went. She constantly undermined the McGowan government's stance on our COVID response to keep WA safe. Finally, just a couple of months out from the election, the Liberal Party turned to Zak Kirkup. I want to highlight when that happened. Members might remember that on the day that he became opposition leader, he was at great pains to announce during the election campaign that he fully supported the Labor government's position and strategies on COVID-19. I will paraphrase him, but he said, "There is no Labor Party. There is no Liberal Party. We are all united in our response to the pandemic." Did that not fall apart straight after the 2021 election when we ended up with David Honey, and the member for Central Wheatbelt, Mia Davies, as the Leader of the Nationals WA and the leader of the official opposing party, became the opposition leader. Since then they have again gone back to the days when Liza Harvey was opposition leader and are sniping at the sidelines, whingeing and complaining, constantly undermining and seeking to divide the community rather than working as one with the government to make sure that our community stays connected and that we all support each other throughout this pandemic.

Members of the Liberal Party are still fighting amongst themselves. Another bit of information that came out during the summer recess was that Hon Nick Goiran pursued legal action to make sure that he was not mentioned by name in the Liberal report that clearly showed the workings of "The Clan" and its hold over the Liberal Party. We have not heard the Leader of the Liberal Party address that. I know that he says in this place all the time that he has been out talking to people and he has been listening to people. It seems that he is failing to listen to grassroots Liberal Party supporters and does not want to address that elephant in the room.

I note that earlier today the member for North West Central was almost frothing at the mouth during his contribution when he pointed out to various members that some people are unhappy with the tough decisions that the Premier has made to keep us safe and to save lives and that somehow that is going to make a difference at the election in 2025. What he fails to comprehend is that he cannot win an election just by stealth or just by hanging around. He and his alliance partners have to come up with some policies at some point. I note that 12 months ago, a report in *The West Australian* said that the honeymoon was over and that David Honey, the Leader of the Liberal Party, agreed and told Liberal members that his party had no policies. It has been 12 months since then and it appears that the Liberal Party still does not have any positions or policies, other than those that try to undermine the efforts of the McGowan government to keep Western Australians safe and to keep our economy strong.

Although the member for North West Central was frothing at the mouth, we know he is quite ambitious. We know he has form. He was previously a member of the Labor Party, and since defecting to the National Party, he has fancied himself as the Leader of the National Party. He has fancied himself as Deputy Leader of the National Party, but I do not think he counts too well! He was quoted in a report in *The West Australian* of 16 October as saying that, for the opposition to work well, he had called for the alliance agreement between the Liberal Party and the National Party to be changed to a coalition. But Ms Davies, the Leader of the Nationals WA and Leader of the Opposition, does not agree. It seems to me that they are still unsure of how the arrangement between them works, other than that they need the numbers in Parliament. They have a marriage of convenience, so to speak. The people of Western Australia are absolutely clueless about how such an alliance would function if the parties were ever to be returned to government. That is a critical thing for members to remember.

Some members might remember that prior to the last election, Hon Dr Steve Thomas was highly critical of the royalties for regions scheme. I quote what he said on the ABC —

... I think the Langouland report demonstrated exactly what I'm saying and that is that we need a better set of rules around what Royalties for Regions is doing. We need a better set of analysis after we spend the money so that we can ensure that regional people ... are getting the best value for money.

He finishes by saying —

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... there's a couple of billion dollars that probably could've been spent better and I'm simply saying that better rules would actually reduce that wastage.

It is clear that the National and Liberal Parties are still not united on what royalties for regions would mean for them in putting themselves in front of Western Australians to form a government. It is a critical point that they have to get their head around. The member for North West Central enjoyed reminding our members that their positions were under threat. The Liberal and National Parties have three years to come up with an approach that presents them as a viable alternative government. That is the work that they should be spending their time on doing.

Mr P.J. Rundle interjected.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Member, can I just read something out to you?

Ms S.E. WINTON: Yes.

Mr W.J. Johnston: I'll just read you a quote from *Hansard*. The quote is —

The ACTING SPEAKER: Hold on, minister.

Point of Order

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I do not know whether it is appropriate for the minister to interject and start quoting in the middle of someone's contribution on the Premier's Statement.

Mr W.J. Johnston: If you'd let me, I can!

Ms S.E. WINTON: Yes! I am happy.

Mr W.J. Johnston: She's happy. She's accepted the interjection.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms A.E. Kent): No point of order, member. Minister, continue.

Debate Resumed

Ms S.E. WINTON: I am happy to receive his contribution.

Mr W.J. Johnston: The quote states —

Labor spent a lot in the regions, particularly the north west, and the new government must continue this. Labor policy calls for the fair distribution of the benefits of economic growth, continuous improvement in the welfare and living standards of the Australian people, and the reallocation of resources to those most in need. We do not need a program labelled "royalties for regions" to adhere to this policy.

Do you know who said that?

Ms S.E. WINTON: No.

Mr W.J. Johnston: The member for North West Central in his inaugural speech in this chamber!

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, minister.

Ms S.E. WINTON: He has always been known as a bit of a rat, so perhaps he can explain that sometime in the future!

Members, what I am really trying to articulate is that there is a clear distinction between the McGowan Labor government and the rabble that is the opposition—the very small rump of a rabble. It is the stability that has allowed our government to respond to this pandemic in a way not matched by any other state or many other countries around the world. It has ensured our economic success and minimised the health impacts, and Scott Morrison likes it! We are an experienced government. We are a renewing government filled to the rafters with inspirational members who do not take their electorates for granted, who are experienced and who, like the member for Mirrabooka said, come from a diverse range of backgrounds that give strength and power to this government.

Members, I just wanted to highlight the ministry changes that have occurred, and I wanted to take this opportunity just quickly to thank the Deputy Premier for his role in the health portfolio over a long period. Under his stewardship, we have seen record investment in health.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms S.E. WINTON: It is the best funded health system in Australia. We have the highest per capita spend on public hospitals. It is 13 per cent above the national average. Between the budget and midyear review, an additional \$3.2 billion is being invested into our health and mental health systems. There has been \$1.8 billion put aside to fully fund our new women's and babies' hospital. Joondalup Health Campus has had an extraordinary expansion program that is still underway. We have a stroke unit. We have more mental health beds. It has been a significant

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expansion of health services for the northern suburbs. On behalf of all the northern members of Parliament, we are very grateful. The minister has done a great job and I wish him well in his new portfolio of tourism. I am of course honoured that I get the opportunity to support him as his parliamentary secretary.

I also want to quickly congratulate the member for Morley on becoming the Minister for Health. I was truly amazed with her leadership and oversight of the voluntary assisted dying legislation that passed in the fortieth Parliament. Her work on that was extraordinary, and I think that the health portfolio is in great hands as she and this government—no doubt about it—face continuing challenging times with the pandemic.

In the same way in which good governments reset, refresh and renew, good governments show flexibility in their plans and policies. Nothing is ever set in concrete, particularly during a pandemic. We could list, by the hundreds, the changes of approach or settings that have happened by the federal government and various state governments as they grappled with this pandemic. But we need to make the tough decision the right decision, and our safe transition plan, when the Premier announced it back in December, for a border opening of 5 February is no backflip or lie as the opposition would like to make it sound. It took account of the changing circumstances that were developing in the eastern states. Anyone could see that the situation in the eastern states was dire and the settings that we had in place to open up in February related to the Delta variant and not the Omicron variant. We have changed the settings to allow people to return on compassionate grounds—to the extent that in the last, I think, 12 days, over 30 000 people have arrived into Western Australia. COVID will continue to be the major focus for the government this year, but there is other important work that we have done and will continue to do. Other ministers often take the opportunity to highlight the important work that this government does. Although COVID has been the main priority, the other work of government has continued.

We have \$2.1 billion for social housing in this term of Parliament, which will see over 3 300 homes delivered. In this financial year alone, we are investing more than \$150 million in homelessness support and prevention. I will not go into the record education and TAFE support that this government has achieved and is delivering, which makes training affordable for our young people. Metronet has 15 projects currently employing thousands of people right across the metropolitan area. I want to highlight one policy change that sometimes does not get the mention it deserves but impacts significantly on a daily basis, particularly for those of us who represent outer metropolitan electorates, and that is the two-zone cap on train fares. Every day in every way, we are making it more affordable for people to use our growing transport system. I will not have time to go into the legislative reform that we have achieved and that we are boldly delivering as we go forward in this forty-first Parliament.

I want to finish with a couple of things from my electorate. The electorate work that members of Parliament do is really important, and it is no more important than during a pandemic. I know that I and my colleagues have done an incredible job of supporting our residents. Most recently, many of us have helped hundreds and hundreds of people connect to the ServiceWA app. I am not talking about just giving them a piece of paper, sending them home and hoping for the best that they can work it out for themselves. My office in particular invests however long it takes to get that person connected digitally to the ServiceWA app. It has been truly rewarding work, particularly with the seniors in our communities who want to become digitally literate but just need support to do it.

In that regard, I wanted to finish by mentioning two special people. My electorate officer, Justin Pereira, who has been with me since 2017—the member for Kingsley knows Justin well—is leaving me and leaving my community of Wanneroo. He is leaving all his good friends within the WA Labor Party. He is a most extraordinary young man. He is off to pursue a career in the graduate program with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, which is a highly sought after position, and anyone who knows him is not surprised by the fact that he was chosen and given this opportunity. Justin, I wish you all the best. We will see you in Canberra. I know that you will be coming back because I know that you love us as much as we love you, and we thank you for all you have done for me in my electorate office and for all the people you have come across in Wanneroo. He really goes above and beyond and he is very, very much loved by the community of Wanneroo.

I want to briefly also mention another special person, who sadly passed away last night. I lost a wonderful friend, and our community lost one of its most generous, hardworking and crazy community leaders. Lewis Flood passed away suddenly last night after a short illness. I was first introduced to “Crazy” Lewis in 2012 by the member for Butler. At the time, I was beginning my campaign to run for the City of Wanneroo council. John Quigley, the member for Butler, said, “Go and see Lewis. He’s the pool man and passionate about fighting for an ocean pool in Quinns Rock.” Boy, was he that! What started as a casual relationship turned into a really wonderful friendship over many years. He taught me to share his vision for an ocean pool, and we became good friends. His generosity and encouragement of me by holding my hand when I first started handing out campaign leaflets at shopping centres is something I will never forget. He made everything much more fun and a lot easier. He never took himself too seriously. He was always prepared to laugh at himself, and he never, ever held a grudge. I won a seat on council and I tried really hard for the City of Wanneroo to explore the idea of an ocean pool in a more comprehensive way. We lost that battle, but we did not give up.

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In 2017, he again selflessly helped in my campaign for the state seat of Wanneroo. I broke the record, which I think is probably still standing, of wobble boarding every morning at 7.00 am for 95 days straight. Lewis was beside me for nearly every single one of those days. That is probably why I did it for that long. That is just the kind of gentleman he was. He was always there, laughing nearly every day. It was really wonderful to finally see him put himself first for a change. He ran for council and became a councillor from 2017 to 2021. He loved wearing that badge. He was very proud of being a councillor. His family was very proud of him. He had no enemies in life, because he was so lovable. He always had a smile. He was cheeky to his core and he loved his community. He was a very fiercely loyal man and he always put other people and his community first.

Lewis, I still share your vision for an ocean pool. It just seems that other people do not share our vision. I think it was the member for Butler who posted on Facebook today that he thinks Lewis is up there collecting signatures for a petition for that ocean pool! My very deepest condolences to his wife, Evie; children and grandchildren and to all who knew and loved him. I know lots of members of Parliament, including the member for Burns Beach, member for Kingsley and member for Butler, loved him dearly and he will be sorely missed. Vale Lewis.

MR P. LILBURNE (Carine) [6.33 pm]: The Premier, Hon Mark McGowan, said this in his speech on 19 March 2020 about the WA Parliament —

We need to lead. We need to set an example for our community ... We cannot have government departments shut down. We cannot have essential services stop operating.

He continued to say that we cannot have our schools and hospitals not operating; we need to lead. I am immensely proud and humble to be a part of the Western Australian Mark McGowan Labor government. We heard this afternoon and yesterday the incredible way our Premier and his cabinet have driven a cautious and effective strategy within the evolving global pandemic that is COVID-19. I have been impressed how the Parliament's elected Labor Party representatives have promoted solutions and advocated for change, while other states in Australia have simply given up on their peoples, forgotten about the elderly in their society and become apathetic to compassion, care and perseverance. The WA Labor Party in Parliament will never give up on its citizens and will always protect our elderly in our community. The opposition's National and Liberal Parties publicly endorsed Clive Palmer's outrageous proposition about opening the borders before the state's population had a proper opportunity to get properly vaccinated. The leader of the opposition alliance, the member for Central Wheatbelt, Mia Davies, said in one of her press releases, and I quote —

“It is the government's failure to deliver effective health and education campaigns, make the vaccinations as accessible as possible and lay out a plan for re-opening that has left them with no other option than to mandate,” ...

I say in response to that statement: what a load of utter rubbish! The reality is that the whole electorate has endorsed the health and education campaigns and the electorate has taken up the vaccination opportunities in all locations around WA. That is the reality we have seen in Western Australia. My constituents have asked me to say to Hon Mark McGowan: well done, and thank you, Mr Premier.

In the community there is huge support for Mark McGowan. The WA Labor Parliament has encouraged and supported a community team effort towards COVID protection and tracking through the ServiceWA app and the SafeWA QR code tracing system. The consumers of WA have received the message, understood the logic and endorsed the solution. The WA population are intelligent and objective in their appraisal of our Premier's leadership and has categorically accepted this strategy. Well done, Mr Premier! Well done!

In recollection and reflection on the work situation in this state, the WA Labor Parliament has produced the highest employment rate anywhere in the world. This large disposable income has had a staggering multiplier effect through the private, family and business community and support services in our community. In relation to success, WA has amongst the highest triple-dose vaccination rates anywhere in the world with 10 million rapid antigen tests in storage available for use if a COVID outbreak requires their use.

In relation to government departments in any state, all WA government departments are functioning effectively in the dynamic environment that COVID creates. My congratulations go to the member for Morley, Amber-Jade Sanderson, for her recent promotion to become the Minister for Health; Mental Health. My constituents in the Carine electorate who work in the Department of Health have visited me to explain that our hospitals are prepared for the onset of COVID in our community. Prior to being elected as the first Labor Party member for Carine, I had the pleasure of serving for 21 years in the Department of Education and in spheres of the then Department for Child Protection and Family Support.

Due to responsible financial management within Western Australia by the Labor government, the Department of Education has been able to allocate \$33 million for the redevelopment of Carine Senior High School. I had the pleasure of turning the sod of the school development with the school principal and the school prefects within the

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student population. I personally congratulate the Carine Senior High School student community, the staff and the executive on the outstanding ATAR results they recently received. The Premier and I attended the announcement at Duncraig Senior High School of the \$32 million redevelopment of this school in my Carine electorate. I look forward to watching the school build and develop within our community and seeing the positive effects it will have in the suburb of Duncraig, which I represent.

During my first 10 months in my role as member for Carine, I had the pleasure of facilitating an education forum with the Minister for Education and Training, Hon Sue Ellery, MLC, for all school principals, deputy principals and P&C members and their community representatives. This forum was very well received by all attendees. It provided all local education leaders in the Carine district direct access to the minister with information, feedback and communication networks being established and enhanced.

In relation to the essential services, there has been a massive funding boost for health in the recent state budget. The McGowan government has committed to significant investment in health and mental health services and initiatives. Acting Speaker, Joondalup Health Campus is expanding with construction of a \$256.7 million development underway. The upgraded hospital will include a new mental health building, more emergency department and inpatient beds and a new operating theatre.

In addition, \$3.1 billion has been allocated to expand WA's health system, with \$1.3 billion towards improving health infrastructure, major hospital redevelopments and expansions underway across metro and regional WA. I had the pleasure of attending the opening of the COVID testing centre with the Deputy Premier, Hon Roger Cook. The COVID testing centre within the Joondalup shopping centre was stocked with state-of-the-art testing equipment, qualified staff and a world-leading clinical sample laboratory. An amount of \$1.8 billion has been dedicated to plan and construct a new women's and babies' hospital. This significant investment builds on the McGowan government's \$1.1 billion commitment towards that hospital precinct with the funding already secured and the state budget including an additional \$5.4 million to support the development and planning.

Another quick point: there is \$487 million for COVID-19 response and preparedness, including hotel quarantine and vaccination. There are 332 new hospital beds open and supported by over 100 doctors and 500 nurses. Another quick point: there is a \$100 million emergency department support package, which includes \$35.6 million to bolster the health workforce to help alleviate demand on the health service. That significant investment to recruit more doctors and nurses is producing very good results within that recruitment drive.

The McGowan Labor government is delivering important infrastructure for my Carine community, providing a range of improvements to schools, sporting facilities and more. We are investing \$32.3 million for additional facilities at Duncraig Senior High School; \$32 million for a major development, as I mentioned, at Carine Senior High School; \$1 million to upgrade facilities at Sorrento Football Club to support FIFA 2023 women's football; and \$38 million for a multistorey car park at the Greenwood train station—a true transformation of the Mitchell Freeway in my electorate. The election commitment of \$8.1 million is being delivered to rebuild the Sorrento Surf Life Saving Club, after seeing it unmaintained for the last 67 years. It is my pleasure to have been appointed the patron for the Sorrento Surf Life Saving Club and I am very humbled and honoured for this role. A range of future building projects at local primary and secondary schools are just some of our great community building projects that are not only improving our community in the Carine area, but also creating a pipeline of work for local workers going into the future.

In relation to the economy, the \$5.6 billion surplus means something to the community. The mining state, as some like to refer to it, posted for the 2020–21 financial year a surplus that was \$2.5 billion more than anticipated by Treasury in February. The McGowan government inherited a disastrous economic situation from the Liberal and National Parties. One example of the disastrous economic mismanagement from the conservative government was the state's debt level of some \$43 billion. This reflects the effectiveness of the McGowan Western Australian government and the stringent economic management, which has been the most discussed element within my electorate of Carine. There is a 3.4 per cent unemployment rate. In a nutshell, this rate is not represented in any other state globally. Employment underpins the economic output of the nation and enables people to not only support themselves, but also their families and their communities. It is also connected to physical and mental health and it is a key factor in overall wellbeing. The Premier and this WA Labor government have been widely congratulated on all sectors connected to stringent economic management. WA Labor and our Premier provided a commitment to deliver 125 000 new jobs over the next five years and so far we have produced 140 000 new jobs. Leadership is intrinsically linked to success and performance, and here we see the positive results of effective planning going above and beyond the set benchmark targets. Thank you, Mr Premier.

I am proud of the *WA Labor: Plan for jobs*. It is a plan that will create a more vibrant and diversified economy with a broader range of industries and jobs. We will deliver a government focused on the long-term needs of our people, a government that is prepared to make decisions that will create a stronger state and opportunities for all.

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Our economy should be strong, diverse, efficient and resilient. We should be able to ride out the ebbs and flows of the mining cycles due to the innate inner strength and diverse array of vibrant industries. Investment in jobs by a McGowan Labor government will make current and future small businesses a priority.

An amount of \$100 million has been set aside to attract new investment in WA projects, particularly local manufacturing and new technologies. Recently, I visited the Pawsey Supercomputing Centre, powering future high-impact Australian research projects and making WA an even more important player on the global research stage. The McGowan government is pleased to have supported Pawsey with more than \$17 million in funding over the past four years to support world-class supercomputing capability in WA. The research and development going on at that centre is astounding. The Bureau of Meteorology is able to create real-time processed data on the weather systems moving around Western Australia to give early warning to the Department of Fire and Emergency Services and other agencies and additional time to prepare other loss prevention and mitigation techniques.

WA Labor and our Premier have provided \$37 million to overhaul the state's mining data and information systems. Here we see ongoing increases in productivity within one of Australia's most important export commodities. WA Labor and our Premier have provided \$15 million for local manufacturers to build iron ore rail wagons and their parts, which develops innovative manufacturing techniques. This is one of the holy grails of manufacturing in an economy. Our economy is so strong under the WA Labor Party that the Premier has provided a commitment not to increase royalties on gold production. This assurance encourages greater investment in prospecting new resource nodes within our wonderful state of WA. The state of Western Australia is so economically active that local jobs are abundant.

Another point I would like to raise is Labor's commitment to make Easter Sunday a public holiday in WA, to allow workers to be paid double-pay penalty rates. The McGowan Labor government has delivered on its election commitment to make Easter Sunday a public holiday for 2022.

I listened to the leader of the opposition alliance today say in her speech that this McGowan government is failing. Honestly, member for Central Wheatbelt, that assessment is so incorrect it is cringe-worthy. Leadership is exemplified by 10 important components, and I see all of these traits in our Premier, Hon Mark McGowan. One, being supportive to those most in need; two, being inspirational to those seeking guidance; three, being honest and forthright with those around you; four, being highly committed whilst under duress.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr P. LILBURNE: I continue with the fifth point about leadership: I see that the Premier is being a passionate and effective communicator to those in the community at all times. Six is being reflective and decisive and having the ability to adapt to changing circumstances. Seven is being creative under pressure. Eight is being part of an effective team. Nine is being a problem solver and seeing the macro picture when confronted with issues. Ten is having values that support the community of Western Australia. The Premier of Western Australia, Hon Mark McGowan, demonstrates all of these attributes, and the Western Australian electorate knows it. Mr Premier, my Carine constituents have spoken and written to me and asked me to say to you, "Thank you, Mr Premier. Carry on with your policies." I say to you, Mark, thank you, Mr Premier.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Ms C.M. Rowe**.

House adjourned at 6.52 pm
