

CABINET MINISTERS — PERFORMANCE

Motion

HON DR STEVE THOMAS (South West — Leader of the Opposition) [1.11 pm]: I move —

That this house notes the underperformance of a number of McGowan government ministers, resulting in the loss of community and industry confidence across a range of sectors, and calls on the Premier to remove the worst cabinet performers from their portfolios immediately rather than allowing them to warm their ministerial seat for months or years to come.

Not that long ago we discussed in this house a motion particularly aimed at the Minister for Regional Development and her performance in that portfolio. I have to say that was a good and robust debate, but at the end of it, I was wondering whether we had been somewhat unfair because we focused on one particular minister. To be honest, as I think I might have mentioned at the time, I am not even convinced that that minister is the worst minister in the government.

Hon Dan Caddy: You praised her many times.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: The honourable member is absolutely right. I propose that the house has a fair and accurate look at who are the worst-performing government ministers because I think we have been unfair to the Minister for Regional Development. In fact, so much so that I note in the argument over whether the Labor Party would run a candidate in a North West Central by-election, media coverage suggested that the strong advocacy of the minister for primary industries and regional development to run a candidate apparently caused offence with the Premier. I agree with her; she was right that the Labor Party should have run a candidate. But the minister with her good strong views was apparently, according to the media, hauled out of the Labor caucus up north and berated by the Premier for having an independent view.

How could we say that a minister who is prepared to stand up for the things she believes in, like the need for the Labor Party to run in the North West Central electorate, is the worst-performing minister in the McGowan government? I am not sure that we should assume that is the case. I am absolutely prepared to give this minister the benefit of the doubt because I have said frequently, as the honourable member points out, I certainly do not oppose everything she has done. I have been, in my view, quite fulsome in my praise of this minister for the things she has done right. I think my record stands there. Let us not assume that in identifying one minister, we have identified the only poorly performing minister or indeed the worst-performing minister, because I think that there might be a plethora to choose from.

In the brief time we have available, shall we just run through some of the ministers whom we might choose? I will ask my colleagues and members of the house to throw in their votes. Members of the Labor Party also have the opportunity to put in their votes for the worst-performing minister in the McGowan government. I am sure some of them would be very keen, particularly those well-performing parliamentary secretaries who might see an opportunity. We have some excellent parliamentary secretaries in the house here. They have done very well. I can see a promotion in line for Hon Matthew Swinbourn over here. He does a magnificent job. Hon Samantha Rowe does very well, as does Hon Kyle McGinn, who has put through a couple of good bills in Parliament. There are some opportunities —

Hon Darren West: What about me?

Several members interjected.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: We are in trouble when both sides of the house burst into laughter at a suggestion! I think it indicates that the parliamentary secretary should take that in the good humour in which it was meant, particularly by his colleagues on the other side.

Where shall we start? A lot of debate might be held here and I am not certain who should be given the primary role. I have mentioned before Hon Dave Kelly, Minister for Water; Forestry; Youth. I note he was the Minister for Fisheries and did his very best to both nationalise and damage the fishing industry, and it was realised he was not doing a particularly good job there despite the fact when we read the media, we see that some of his more interesting policies were written by people outside Parliament and the public service; they claimed credit for it. They said that he could not deliver the policy that was handed to him and written on a piece of paper; he was not capable of doing that in the fisheries portfolio. I would have thought he was fully up there. He has then lost that portfolio, but he is still the Minister for Forestry. He is the Minister for Forestry who shut down the forestry industry. I thought there would have been a strong argument that members in the chamber might make that Hon Dave Kelly should take the gold medal for the worst-performing minister in the McGowan government. Are we going to return to the comparison to the Minister for Regional Development, who surely has outperformed the Minister for Water; Forestry; Youth? He attempted to nationalise the fishing industry. He has made water registration as difficult as possible. I am not entirely certain what he has done for youth, to be honest, but we will potentially come to that.

Members might think that Hon Dave Kelly is a person whom they might look at, but he is not the only one who might rate a creditable mention in this comparison. I note that Hon Paul Papalia is considered by the government

Hon Dr Steve Thomas; Hon Kyle McGinn; Hon Nick Goiran; Hon Dan Caddy; Hon Stephen Dawson; Hon Tjorn Sibma; Hon Lorna Harper

to be a bit of a high-flyer, but let us consider his achievements. Let us measure them not by what he says but by what he does. How are police numbers going for you, government members?

Hon Peter Collier: Down.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: They are going down. What was the election commitment? Was it 900-odd more police officers?

Hon Peter Collier: Nine-hundred and fifty over four years.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: It was 950 more police officers over four years. This high-flying Minister for Police has overseen a decline in police numbers, not an increase. He will come out and say there is more coming through the —

Hon Kyle McGinn: Sorry; did you say over the last five years?

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: There was an original promise in 2017 and there was a second promise.

Hon Kyle McGinn: When did he become minister?

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: He has been the Minister for Police for a few years now. How is the performance? It is down, not up. He is going down, not up. This high-flying minister could well rate an honourable mention as well in the list of poorly performing ministers of the McGowan government. Is he at the top of the list though? Perhaps we should look at Hon John Carey, the Minister for Housing; Lands; Homelessness; Local Government. Perhaps somebody should have mentioned to Hon John Carey that when they are the Minister for Homelessness, their goal is not to increase homelessness; that is not the intent when they receive the ministry. This minister is in the middle of a housing crisis. His achievements to date have been remarkably unremarkable. Perhaps we can look at Hon John Carey as an underperforming minister because he is not performing, particularly in the housing portfolio. He has struggled in the homelessness portfolio.

I will give an honourable mention to Hon Rita Saffioti, the Minister for Transport—she also has the planning and ports portfolios—because not many ministers can oversee a budget blowout of something in the order of \$7 billion for one project. Not even the Minister for Regional Development, when she was the Minister for Transport all those years ago, managed to do that. She and I had some good arguments across the floor about how she was unable to deliver projects on time and on budget. The current Minister for Transport, Hon Rita Saffioti, has surely outperformed the previous minister in blowouts in time and budget by a factor of 10 as \$3 billion worth of Metronet became \$10 billion worth of Metronet. It would probably be a little more explainable if the projects were delivered on time because the budget was increased and it is a hard area to work. But the time taken to deliver the project has blown out, as well as the cost. I understand that the first project is about to open. The Forrestfield–Airport Link will potentially open in a month. I ask members to remind me: which government initiated that project? I have a feeling it might have been the previous government. Congratulations! It took a project that was already initiated and the planning work was done but it managed to blow out the budget and the time frame. Could we look at this minister for a potential podium finish?

Let us look at the health portfolio. We have had a couple of health ministers. Hon Roger Cook was the previous Minister for Health. He seems like a good fellow, from the little bit that I have had to do with him. How has he gone? How was his performance? How did he go with ambulance ramping?

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: How did he perform on ambulance ramping? Not very well. When he was the shadow Minister for Health prior to 2017, he said that 1 000 hours of ambulance ramping was a crisis. When it got to 4 000, 5 000 and then up to 6 000 hours, was it a crisis? “Oh, no, there are other things going on.” How did he perform? He made it five, six times worse. Again, the Labor Party saw that it had a problem, so it rolled Hon Roger Cook over to other portfolios and gave the job to Hon Amber-Jade Sanderson. A new broom was swept in. What has happened to ambulance ramping hours during that period? Have they gone back under 1 000 hours a month? Have they got significantly better? The answer is still no. If we decide that the worst performing ministers might be in health, we get two for one; there is a bonus of an extra person on the list! There is a reason people say we have a health and housing crisis, amongst other things—because we are not seeing these ministers perform.

I would like to make an honourable mention of Hon David Templeman, the Minister for Culture and the Arts; Sport and Recreation; International Education; Heritage; Leader of the House. I tried to look for some of the great achievements of Hon David Templeman. Generally, what came up was something in song. It would appear that the greatest performance of this minister occurs in the house.

Hon Tjorn Sibma: He does play a mean air guitar.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: He plays a mean air guitar. That is excellent. He is good at singing and air guitar, all at once. I am very pleased. What has happened with those portfolios? To be honest, it is a little hard to measure.

There are other things that people might like to talk about. We should give the new Minister for Fisheries his due. He inherited a bit of a disaster. We should not forget that Hon Dave Kelly was the minister at the start. We are about to see changes in fisheries, including a massive reduction in bag limits because the number of fish has been dropping for some period. We might give him a little bit of leeway.

There is no reason, when looking at votes of the opposition, for stopping simply at the ministers and not looking at the Premier himself. The Premier is the Treasurer of the state. Yes, he is very popular but has he managed the economy of Western Australia? Has he delivered for the people of Western Australia? During the biggest boom in the history of Western Australia, has the Premier; Treasurer converted that boom for the benefit of the people of Western Australia? I think that is how he will be judged over time. He will be judged on how he used this boom and whether he used it for the benefit of the people or for his own political agenda. I see no reason that the Premier; Treasurer should not be on the list of people going forward.

It is not the case that if members opposite respond, they should simply target those ministers that they think have not performed particularly well. I am sure there will be lots of support for them out there. I remember the speech that Hon Darren West, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Regional Development, suggested in this house that the Labor Party should be running in North West Central. There is a bit of communication and cooperation there. The parliamentary secretary and the minister are both now in the Premier's bad books, both on the naughty list for rewards going forward. Members of the opposition should just be cautious as we go forward.

By my calculation, there are something like eight potential options for poorly performing ministers. We will not necessarily target the ministers opposite because we want this to be a genuine measure of performance. It is not just a cheap political stunt, for example. I say that with a straight face. We are purely trying to identify those ministers —

Hon Stephen Dawson: We've said nice things about you so far.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: We say nice things about you guys all the time.

Hon Dan Caddy: Strike face!

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: Yes, strike face.

It is difficult to run through a list of poorly performing government ministers without mentioning the unreliable Attorney General. I am not sure how we go past a minister, the chief law officer of the state, that a judge says presents unreliable evidence. I am not sure how someone who looks so confused and so lost would not rate highly on the list of poorly performing ministers, particularly because Hon John Quigley is the first law officer in the land. It is hard to imagine somebody beating him to that position. We debated this not long ago and, of the final three, the Attorney General was given the gold medal. I originally gave Hon Dave Kelly the silver medal, but, given some activity that occurred on the frontbench over there, I bumped the Minister for Regional Development to silver and gave Hon Dave Kelly with the bronze medal for his poor performance on behalf of the government. Since then, Hon Dave Kelly has basically destroyed the timber industry, so it would be difficult to leave him on the third step of the podium, but other members might disagree.

Hon Nick Goiran: There is far too much competition.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: It is a fierce competition for poor performance. It is a difficult process to get under a low bar, unless the minister is particularly good at—what is that called when people go low under the bar?—limbo. Unless other ministers can limbo lower, it will be difficult. A number of government ministers are performing poorly. It is not just me saying that. It would be different if it was just me making a political speech, but the same thing has been written in the media. There have been a couple of very good articles, including one in *The West Australian* that said the Premier is being dragged down by the poor performance of his ministers. Do not just believe the opposition. The opposition is happy to explain it to the government in great detail, but do not believe that it is just the opposition that thinks this. It is a view that is held in a number of places and it is a view that the people are starting to believe. Yes, the government has a popular Premier, but the ministers have a performance problem. Of course, we, the opposition, are here to help. We want to have a good opposition and strong government, so we are here to help by pointing out the poor government performers so that the government might do something about it, because that a worthy cause for debate in the Parliament and in the Legislative Council. Neither the people of Western Australia nor the state of Western Australia have the time for badly performing ministers to sit there boosting their superannuation and occupying a seat. Surely there is a little bit of competition among those who are up and coming. There are a lot of Labor members at the moment. There is a big opportunity for those members to step forward and show us that they have some ambition. They should point out what they might do. There are some ministers sitting in places basically keeping those guys out, and it is time for change. There are a bunch of opportunities here.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas; Hon Kyle McGinn; Hon Nick Goiran; Hon Dan Caddy; Hon Stephen Dawson; Hon
Tjorn Sibma; Hon Lorna Harper

It is about time the Premier started applying a talent metric across the board and gave other members an opportunity. Let us see what the reshuffle will look like in December.

HON KYLE MCGINN (Mining and Pastoral — Parliamentary Secretary) [1.32 pm]: I indicate that I am not the lead speaker for the government. I wish I could thank the member for bringing the motion before the house, but I cannot. Once again, as much as he has tried to convey in his speech that it was not a political stunt, it is very clear in the wording that he used that it is a political stunt. If members look closely at what the member opened up with, they will see that it was what I take to be an apology to the house that he got it wrong in his last motion when he condemned the Minister for Agriculture and Food. From what the member has just put to the house, the way I see it is that the opposition was wrong to move that motion. That motion at the time must have been—are members ready for it?—a political stunt. That is exactly how the motion Hon Dr Steve Thomas just put to the chamber came across to me. Good on him for letting the house know that he stuffed up last time. I forewarn the house that it looks as though he has stuffed up again.

Those in glass houses should not throw stones. We have some very good information about some very underperforming ministers in the previous government. Opposition members are sitting there judging the current ministers while not taking ownership of some of the disasters that took place when they were in government—pure disasters. I pause there before I go back and look at the disasters in the last government. I have a story in my head when I think to myself, “Just imagine if the opposition was in government right now.” Can members imagine? There would potentially be a cabinet minister who does not know how to put on a face mask. That minister currently holds the shadow portfolios for planning, lands and heritage. Can members imagine Western Australians looking with pride at their cabinet when there is a shadow minister, who could possibly be a minister, who does not even know how to put on a face mask during a pandemic? That is the type of talent that the opposition is offering as an alternative government. That is the A-team right there.

The other thing we would have to do is increase the WhatsApp allowance, because that is probably how their ministers would communicate if they were in government. There would have to be a special WhatsApp allowance.

Several members interjected.

Hon KYLE MCGINN: It would have to be a very special allowance, because we know how many pages of WhatsApp —

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Bring it down a little, please.

Hon KYLE MCGINN: Members can imagine the cost of printing all those WhatsApp messages. It would be an absolutely huge cost and burden to the WA taxpayer. That is something we would have to change.

I heard Hon Dr Steve Thomas talk about cost blowouts. Let us look at a certain project from a minister in the last government, Hon Peter Collier. Let us look at the Muja power station project. This is an absolute beauty. Take note, Hon Neil Thomson, of what this honourable member did when he was minister, because this is a prime example of what a cost blowout looks like. That minister promised this place that there would be no cost to the WA taxpayer on that project—zero cost. He said he was getting the private sector to do that job; it was not going to cost the WA taxpayers. How much do members think it ended up costing WA taxpayers? It cost \$308 million. Zero versus \$308 million. That is just one example of what a failing minister looks like. On 13 June 2013, Hon Kate Doust asked Hon Peter Collier this question without notice —

Prior to the decision to refurbish these plants, was a business case prepared for the project; and, if yes, who prepared this business case?

What did the minister say? I want to make this very clear. When putting together the project, Hon Peter Collier came into this place and said —

Yes, the business case was prepared by Verve Energy and Inalco Energy Pty Ltd, with input from technical, financial and legal external parties.

However, it was discovered—and Synergy has since confirmed—that there was no business case prior to the project commencing. No business case at all. That leads us to a great report that was done—the Langoulant report.

Hon Colin de Grussa interjected.

Hon KYLE MCGINN: Let us have a look at Hon Colin de Grussa—the representative of singing toilets! He is back. He is here to talk about singing toilets and cost blowouts. That is exactly what he stands for.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Take a deep breath, please, members.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas; Hon Kyle McGinn; Hon Nick Goiran; Hon Dan Caddy; Hon Stephen Dawson; Hon
Tjorn Sibma; Hon Lorna Harper

Hon KYLE MCGINN: I am just getting fired up, President. These motions that get brought to this house are the same mudslinging contest that the opposition has brought in for the last five years. I think it has been the same motion every single time they have an opportunity to put something up. It is disgraceful.

Hon Donna Faragher interjected.

Hon KYLE MCGINN: Yes, I will say that Hon Donna Faragher has put up a good motion. That was a good debate, but this opposition motion seems absolutely pointless to me because the opposition constantly tries to throw mud, but it is not sticking. We can look at the Langouant report and see how good the former government's ministers were. Opposition members sit there throwing plenty of stones but they do not look at the failings of their own team and at what they did when they were in government and what they squandered. I understand that Hon Dr Steve Thomas was not here. To some extent, it may not be his fault as much as it is the fault of the members who are still here. After all the controversies and bugger-ups as ministers, I wonder why they are still here. We just talked about a \$308 million cost blowout from the WhatsApp king himself, Hon Peter Collier, and he sits right there on the opposition frontbench. Is it not interesting that members opposite sit there and consistently ignore their own failures. Then, when we raise their failings, they respond with, "Always looking backwards blah, blah, blah." It is unbelievable. They do not look at their mistakes to ensure that they improve. They do not improve. It is unbelievable. We will get to the Langouant report and some of the findings that came out of that. The findings include —

... Ministers worked to advance their individual agendas and often coerced public servants into applying significant resources to ideas and programs that they knew were unlikely to be approved.

Is it not amazing that the Langouant report found that the opposition, when in government, was an absolute laughing-stock. That is exactly what it was. Members opposite should have a look at what the Langouant report found. I find it absolutely bizarre and unusual that Hon Dr Steve Thomas has brought this motion into this house without reflecting on the fact that —

Hon Dr Steve Thomas: You are the current government.

Hon KYLE MCGINN: Yes, I understand that, but for the member to sit there and say that he is not in a glasshouse throwing stones is ridiculous. He has never acknowledged the failings that the past government left to this government. He refuses to do that. I find it insulting that he brings these motions, these one-eyed political stunts, into this house.

I want to talk about one of my favourite ministers, who is one of the hardest working ministers in this place. Now that the member has taken back the last motion and admitted that she is —

Hon Dr Steve Thomas: I didn't take it back.

Hon KYLE MCGINN: Absolutely the member did. He admitted that he got it wrong and that it was a political stunt to attack the minister at the time. Now he has come into this place to ensure that we are not being misled on the last motion. Thank you very much. I appreciate that the member is now getting the facts straight, and if I ever need to put on a face mask I will come to Hon Dr Steve Thomas—100 per cent! I will not be going to Hon Neil Thomson because I might not be able to get it on properly—it might be a little bit "hoo-ha".

Let us talk about the agriculture portfolio. The Nationals WA members claim to be the heroes of the regions and that they are "agriculture". What did the Nationals do when they had the agriculture portfolio, Hon Colin de Grussa? I will tell members what the Nationals did. The Nationals did nothing except to destroy the portfolio. Ministers Terry Redman, Hon Ken Baston, Dean Nalder, Mark Lewis —

Hon Darren West: Yes, some bloke called Mark Lewis.

Hon KYLE MCGINN: I do not know who Mark Lewis is. But we cannot underestimate the damage inflicted on the Department of Agriculture and Food whilst their mob was in government. Our minister, Hon Alannah MacTiernan, has come back in and fixed it up. Yet members opposite have the gall to come into this place and attack her and then apologise that they should not have attacked her. It is absolutely bizarre that they brought in a motion to attack a minister and then, under a new motion, they apologised for attacking the minister. It is just phenomenal!

Several opposition members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon KYLE MCGINN: Under the members for Warren–Blackwood and Bateman and Hon Ken Baston, acting as agriculture ministers, funding was slashed in that department—absolutely slashed, cut and burnt! This is the party of the bush, the National Party, that is supposed to be the leader in agriculture. Its members destroyed that portfolio.

Hon Darren West: The leaders of the coalition.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas; Hon Kyle McGinn; Hon Nick Goiran; Hon Dan Caddy; Hon Stephen Dawson; Hon
Tjorn Sibma; Hon Lorna Harper

Hon KYLE MCGINN: Yes, the leaders of the coalition. The previous government also built in another 37 per cent in cuts into the forward estimates. They slashed staffing numbers. The critical programs were funded on only a short-term and ad hoc basis. There was no vision. There was no view into the future. There was no strategy. There were just half attempts at putting on face masks—face masks here and face masks there. It was unbelievable. As a result, the department's ability to support the industry diminished in 2015.

The member talked about reports in *The West Australian*. Let us have a look at them. *The West Australian* reported on a long list of failures in the agriculture portfolio. It reported on big cuts to the Department of Agriculture and Food in WA, the refusal to reactivate the police department's stock squad to crack down on livestock theft and the foiling of the James Point port development against the wishes of live exporters and some grain traders. It reported on the half-hearted attempts to deal with the packs of wild dogs that were mauling sheep and cattle. What a disgrace it was that the previous government did not even look into wild dogs. How can its members hold their heads high? When we got elected to government in 2017, not one penny had been spent on fixing the dog fences across this state. But what did Queensland get? It got over \$12 million from the federal government. Where was Mark Lewis from? He was from Queensland—funny that; maybe we could connect the dots on that. *The West* reported on the debacle over the management of grain freight rail lines in the wheatbelt and the inaction on tenure reform needed to promote investment on pastoral leases. These are some of the comments in *The West Australian* about the opposition's past ministers in charge of the agriculture portfolio. I have not seen that type of stuff with this great minister, Hon Alannah MacTiernan, who has been ruthlessly working on getting the agriculture department back to its prime.

Hon Neil Thomson interjected.

Hon KYLE MCGINN: Go get a face mask. I am not going to acknowledge someone who does not know how to put on a face mask—seriously! We will look at the agriculture portfolio and Hon Alannah MacTiernan, who has done a fabulous job.

In the 2019–20 budget, \$131.5 million was provided to the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development to deal with the fiscal cliff left by the previous government and put DPIRD back on a sustainable footing. How can members opposite sit there and talk about the agriculture or regional development portfolios knowing that they destroyed that portfolio when in government? They absolutely destroyed it, yet they sit there smugly and pretend that they were half decent in government. I am sorry, but I want to go back to the \$308 million blowout from zero dollars—come on! It is unbelievable! We have provided \$48 million for grain research partnerships with the Grains Research and Development Corporation—brilliant. I am going to run out of time because there are so many great things to say about the ministers named by Hon Dr Steve Thomas, who almost named the whole cabinet the way he was going. To be honest, it almost turned into a praising session because he started praising a few ministers as well. We have provided \$25 million to kickstart Western Australia's agricultural research collaboration to futureproof the state's primary industries.

Hon Tjorn Sibma interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order —

Hon KYLE MCGINN: Wow! That is the first good rip the member has done in five years.

The PRESIDENT: Member, I am in the middle of calling order. It is perhaps not appropriate to speak over the top of me.

Hon KYLE MCGINN: Sorry, President. It was the first decent rip I have heard in five years from the opposition. I remember going to Carnarvon with Hon Alannah MacTiernan when we first got elected back into government in 2017. Members should have seen the way that the opposition had left the research centre. It was a disgrace. It was absolutely trashed. All the netting was ripped up. No money had been put into it. This had happened under a government that claimed to have worked with the regional party. That government trashed that research station. It was a disgrace. Hon Colin de Grussa should look harder at that because we came back in and fixed it up. The people in Carnarvon were very happy to see that happen. We have reinvigorated our research stations. We have provided \$1.2 million to upgrade Carnarvon's research station and populate it with research staff. We put an extra \$1.2 million into that research centre because the previous government took it out; its really good idea in the agriculture space was to just destroy everything. The so-called shadow Minister for Planning; Heritage would have been putting up signage around the place saying, "This is how we put a mask on." This is such a good one; I have not been able to get over it. Honestly, I have never seen anyone do something so amazing.

We have worked on restoring soils and land. We have re-established the Soil and Land Conservation Council after a 16-year hiatus and we have modernised the legislation. Do members know what was better than the member's face mask episode? It was his energy forum in Kalgoorlie. Was that not a beautiful flop? That was a lovely flop. Dr David Honey rocked up there and they paid —

Hon Dr Steve Thomas; Hon Kyle McGinn; Hon Nick Goiran; Hon Dan Caddy; Hon Stephen Dawson; Hon
Tjorn Sibma; Hon Lorna Harper

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon KYLE McGINN: That touches a nerve because I know that Hon Neil Thomson spent a fortune on advertising his you-beaut energy forum but he did not even invite Synergy or Western Power. He did not invite anybody because it was a Liberal Party event with just him, John Bowler and Dr Honey holding hands and singing *Kumbaya* and talking about what they think should happen to the energy portfolio. Do members know who listened to them? It was Bill and Ben, the flowerpot men, because that is all who were in the room. It was unbelievable. The front pages that advertised it read “Come to my energy forum, please. Please come.”

Hon Stephen Dawson: How many went?

Hon KYLE McGINN: How many went? If we take out the staff and all the Liberals they flew up there to make it look decent, I reckon there were about eight people in the room. It was beautiful. We never heard Hon Neil Thomson talk about the energy portfolio because he realised that he had bugged up and made a mistake.

Moving on—I could spend a lot more time on Hon Neil Thomson. I know the opposition loves it; they love listening to it. It is beautiful.

Hon Neil Thomson: Great to have power in Kalgoorlie!

Hon KYLE McGINN: Yes, it is. It is great to have power on in Kalgoorlie. Now Hon Neil Thomson needs to understand the grid. He needs to understand the grid before he starts talking trash at a Liberal-funded—I would not say a fundraiser because only Bill and Ben showed up. Maybe that is what the Liberal Party’s fundraisers look like nowadays—two people in the back corner.

Hon Dan Caddy: They got \$53.20.

Hon KYLE McGINN: That was how much it cost to hire the room. Let us be honest.

I will continue on about Hon Alannah MacTiernan’s achievements. There are so many of them. She is a hardworking minister who has continued to put her foot forward in regional development and also in new spaces such as hydrogen industry, which is a very important portfolio that has been created. The minister has acted very well and very passionately in that portfolio. I know because I have been up to Shark Bay where we are now building a hydrogen plant that is going to replace diesel power.

Hon Neil Thomson: She gave up on tidal power.

Hon KYLE McGINN: Wow. Sorry, I am still waiting to hear Hon Neil Thomson’s report on energy. Just calm down. I am waiting for the feedback from the three people who showed up.

Let us have a look at regional development. I think the transition with the development commission has been amazing. The minister secured \$45.8 million for regional economic development grants, which support regional projects, create jobs, expand or diversify industry and attract new investment. The RED grant scheme has been awesome and I know that many people in regional WA love the RED grants. The minister has been doing a fabulous job in that space. There was also a \$14 million digital farming program that brought enterprise grade broadband to more than 2 000 farm businesses from Kununurra to Mt Barker. Did Hon Colin de Grussa hear that? That is doing something for farmers. Maybe he could learn a lesson from the Minister for Agriculture and Food; Regional Development. It would be a far sight from singing toilets, that is for sure.

The state government has also committed \$48.6 billion to the WA regional digital connectivity program to improve mobile internet coverage in regional WA; and \$40.4 million to the Kimberley youth and community justice response, including \$15 million for an on-country residential facility. These are great things that are happening in the Kimberley. Hon Neil Thomson should have a look around at some of these great things instead of throwing stones because if he does actually look at what is going on around him he might notice that the government is doing things and he is just sitting here yelling and carrying on. It is the same stuff from the opposition. Honestly. Get with the times. Seriously.

I just want to say that I think this motion is a joke, the opposition is a joke and I support these ministers wholeheartedly. Thank you very much.

Visitors — North Perth Primary School

The PRESIDENT: Members, before I give the call to Hon Nick Goiran, I would like to welcome into the gallery students from North Perth Primary School. Hello. They are very welcome.

Debate Resumed

HON NICK GOIRAN (South Metropolitan) [1.53 pm]: This is a very serious motion that has been brought forward by the Leader of the Opposition. He has a serious grievance and has brought the underperformance of a number of ministers to the attention of the Parliament on behalf of the people of Western Australia. So far, the only response that has been provided on behalf of government is a 20-minute speech talking about mask-wearing. This is a serious matter that requires members to turn their attention to the merits and the performance of the various ministers for a moment. I am sure that my colleagues are going to continue to identify a number of underperforming ministers in due course. Yet, no-one will possibly compete with the Attorney General of Western Australia. He continues to have the portfolio of Attorney General thanks to a Premier who allows him to sit and sometimes sleep in his ministerial departure lounge.

I will begin with 10 matters that I wish to bring to your attention. The first of which is the utter incompetence of the Attorney General, which has seen the law of Western Australia broken more than 1 000 times. Exhibit A is the sixty-first report by the Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges tabled in May of this year. I ask members to turn to it and, in particular, consider the following unanimous comments by that particular committee at paragraph 5 of the executive summary. The committee referred to —

... the bald usurpation of the powers and privileges of the Legislative Council through the calculated intervention of the Attorney General and State Solicitor's Office ... to the potentially unlawful benefit of the CCC.

Members who have familiarised themselves with this substantial report will note that the committee has found that the law of Western Australia has been broken more than 1 000 times. In fact, the law of Western Australia has been broken 1 120 times because of the Attorney General of Western Australia. Exhibit B is the Supreme Court decision that was delivered on 13 July 2021. This was another inconvenient judicial decision delivered against the McGowan Labor government upon the decision of the President of the Legislative Council of Western Australia and the Corruption and Crime Commission on 13 July 2021. The Attorney General intervened upon a matter and the interventions resulted in the law of Western Australia being broken 1 120 times. What is the cost of this intervention? It is hidden from the taxpayers of Western Australia. All the government has been prepared to tell us so far is that it has cost just over \$23 000 in "external costs". What about the costs for the State Solicitor and the Solicitor-General? What about the CCC and the costs of the President of the Legislative Council? What about the costs for the Clerk of the Legislative Council? After all this time, after the law of Western Australia has been broken 1 120 times, have we had an apology from the government and the Attorney General? Not on your life!

Although we have an Attorney General who interferes with matters, which has resulted in the law of Western Australia being broken more than a thousand times, we have misplaced priorities. What has happened with the elder abuse reforms that were promised more than five years ago? It will soon be six years since the government promised to expedite the law reform for elder abuse and it is nowhere to be seen. There is a bill in the other place that the government is happy to ram through with their bulldozer with less than 24 hours' notice, but, nearly six years later, where are the elder abuse reforms? They are nowhere to be seen. They have given notice of another three bills in the other place today, as I understand it. Is one of them related to the elder abuse reforms? No! When will one of you stand up and talk to the Attorney General and say, "What are you doing? This is a disgrace!"?

This is serious. Hon Kyle McGinn wastes our time for 20 minutes to talk about mask-wearing, but what about the elder abuse reforms? What about the reforms to the judicial commission? At the moment in Western Australia who will people lodge a complaint with if there is a problem with the judiciary? It will not be with the Attorney General of Western Australia because he does not want to know about it. In fact, only in the last couple of weeks he was reported in *The West Australian* as saying that he will do something about the judicial commission. When, Mr Attorney General? He has had more than five years but he is too busy snoozing in the departure lounge! Where is the privacy legislation that was promised by this government? It is nowhere to be seen; there is nothing!

That the minister falls asleep is no trivial matter. It has been drawn to the Premier's attention that during a short 45-minute meeting regarding a highly sensitive and important issue the Attorney General fell asleep not once, but twice! Why does the Premier take no action about this underperforming minister? If it was an early morning meeting, one would think that it was perhaps strange that the Attorney General would fall asleep, given his ability to scheme to assist the Premier in the early hours of the morning, as he continues to play his expensive ego games with billionaires. What was happening in the early hours of the morning? As we know, the Premier and the Attorney General were exchanging SMS messages. In one of those messages, the Attorney General is reported as saying —

I must be a bit OCD! I have been awake since 4.15 thinking of ways to beat big fat Clive and his arbitration claim for 23.5 billion in damages remembering the turd has pulled off 2 big wins in arbitration.

Such was the approach of the Attorney General in the early hours of the morning. He is happy to wake up early in the morning. He is very lively early in the morning. He does not fall asleep, it would seem, in the early hours of

the morning. Why is that? It is so that he could get involved in another expensive and completely avoidable piece of litigation. That is what happened.

Meanwhile, what has happened with the elder abuse legislation? That is nowhere to be seen. What has happened with the judicial commission legislation and the privacy legislation? That is also nowhere to be seen. Why does the Premier take no action against this particular minister? Is there a response to that, or is the Premier just going to continue to allow the Attorney General to stay in that position and be in the departure lounge until March 2025?

It is very interesting that in that exchange and ego battle that was being played out, the Attorney General was so pleased with himself that he was quick to jump on ABC Radio and gloat about the game of tactics that he had been involved in. He said that it was like a fight —

... you've got to jab, jab, jab with your right, and move him over to the left, and then just knock him down with a right ... a left hook.

The Attorney General was found to have made remarks during this same ABC interview that were inconsistent with the evidence that he had provided to the Federal Court of Australia. When the Attorney General was first put into the witness box, he said that the comments that he had made in that ABC interview were incorrect. He effectively said, "Actually, what I said on radio was rubbish. It was incorrect." When the Attorney General had to return to the witness box for a second time to give his evidence, at a cost to taxpayers—a cost that is still hidden by this government that is obsessed with secrecy—he changed his evidence and conceded that the comments he had made in that interview were correct. He said one thing on radio. When he was put in the witness box the first time, he said that was rubbish. When he was put into the witness box the second time, he said, "Actually, I got that wrong. It was correct."

Can members believe that when Mr Palmer's lawyer asked the Attorney General in the witness box whether he had read the transcript of the ABC Radio interview, the Attorney General, as the first law officer in Western Australia, tried to defend himself for not having read it by saying that the font was too tiny. If the font was too tiny for our first law officer in Western Australia, and as a result he provided confused evidence in the Federal Court and wasted taxpayers' money by having to jet back to Sydney to give his evidence for a second time, it begs the question: How many more times has the Attorney General neglected to read important documents due to the font size being too tiny? What other unacceptable reasons has this underperforming minister provided for failing to read documents?

As a result of that, it is now well known that Justice Lee in the Federal Court of Australia made the following comment —

Regrettably, his evidence was both confused and confusing.

He is referring here to the first law officer in Western Australia, Hon John Quigley.

Justice Lee said also —

During cross-examination, however, My Quigley gave contradictory evidence.

...

With respect, Mr Quigley's second appearance in the witness box just added to the brume of his testimony.

He said also —

Counsel for Mr McGowan conceded that "if one were to try logically to reconcile [Mr Quigley's evidence] you would be utterly defeated", labelling it as "outright silly".

The very expensive lawyer for Mr McGowan, who has been paid for by taxpayers, is ridiculing the first law officer in Western Australia.

Justice Lee went on to say —

... Mr Quigley's evidence was not dishonest, but was "all over the shop". ... It suffices to note that Mr Quigley was not a reliable historian of events.

It follows that I do not consider it is safe to place any reliance upon Mr Quigley's evidence.

We cannot rely on anything that Mr Quigley says, whether it is in an ABC Radio interview, whether it is in the other house, or whether it is in a press release. We simply cannot rely on anything that he has to say.

The Attorney General's inability to provide reliable evidence, at the cost of taxpayers, was dismissed by him at that time, and he continues to say, as just a silly little error. Perhaps it was in small font, or during a time when he was asleep, or was it in the early hours of the morning when he is most lively? Who knows? The bar here is very low. We need the Premier to take action against his friend the Attorney General. It might be very inconvenient and uncomfortable for the Premier to say, "Sorry, John; it's time to move on", but he has to do it. The Premier has a duty

to do that on behalf of the people of Western Australia. Surely there is at least one other Labor member with a law degree who can hold this portfolio. We need somebody who will be reliable, lucid and transparent, and, at the very least, able to stay awake and read documents with a tiny font.

How can we and the people of Western Australia realistically expect the Premier and member for Rockingham to take action when in that same court case he said under oath that gold-standard transparency does not apply to every single thing? This takes me to the amount of information that has been hidden from the Parliament of Western Australia. Today, I got an answer to a question on notice in which I had asked for information about the judiciary. What has the Attorney General done? He has put up the almighty shield of, “It is the separation of powers. I do not have that information. I cannot provide you with that information.” When it is convenient for the Attorney General, he likes to hide information from the Parliament. Who is going to hold these people to account? Surely the Parliament has a responsibility to hold the executive to account. That must be a basic principle in our system. However, that does not work when the government is obsessed with secrecy and refuses to provide information. The Premier’s promise of gold-standard transparency is, honestly, a joke. After five years in government, it is a punchline and nothing more.

I note that in this same SMS exchange between the Premier and the Attorney General, the two of them are reported as having said that secrecy is of the essence. Such was their obsession with secrecy that people in this place like the hardworking minister Hon Stephen Dawson, and Hon Alannah MacTiernan and others, were kept out of the loop. They had no idea about what was going on, such was the level of secrecy between the member for Rockingham and his friend the Attorney General.

In the meantime, the Attorney General is continuing to refuse to disclose the full cost of the many cases to which taxpayers have contributed. Those are the two related Supreme Court of Western Australia actions involving the former President of the Legislative Council, to which I referred earlier; the Minister for Child Protection’s defence in the defamation claim by Ms Westerman; the unfair dismissal claim by the member for Kwinana’s former electorate officer; the Premier’s failed defence in the defamation claim by Mr Palmer; and the Premier’s optional cross-claim against Mr Palmer. What has been the cost of all those matters? The government will not tell us. The taxpayers have funded those court cases. These under-performing ministers, whether it is the Premier and Treasurer, or the Attorney General, are keeping it secret.

I have asked about these matters on multiple occasions, including on 11 August this year. The Attorney General said at that time that he would provide an answer the following week, and of course the response that came back the following week was that some of the information could not be provided and would be provided at another stage. Keep in mind that, as I understand it, the barrister who has been used by Premier McGowan in his optional cross-claim—it was the Premier’s choice to fire up a cross-claim—is charging \$25 000 a day. Anyone who knows anything about legal costs would understand that a claimant will get back about \$6 000 or \$7 000 a day at best. That is if they win the case. Of course Mr McGowan lost his defence, so taxpayers will not get back one cent of that. How much will taxpayers be up for, all because Mr Quigley was sending these messages in the early hours of the morning, when he is most lively unlike at other times? Occasionally he even forgets to wear a mask and gets fined! Hon Kyle McGinn carries on about mask wearing, but I find all that to be trivial; this stuff is serious. The taxpayer of Western Australia is up for all of this.

In the meantime, we find that the Attorney General likes to provide special favours for his cabinet mates. Whilst he continues to avoid scrutiny—of course that is nothing new with respect to the McGowan Labor government—the idea that government members will show special favour to their mates is particularly disturbing.

Last year, our Attorney General decided, yet again, that he would intervene on an unfair dismissal claim in which the applicant worker was seeking that a former boss, Hon Roger Cook, be summoned as a witness. It appears that the idea that the Deputy Premier of Western Australia might provide some information was all too uncomfortable for the McGowan government. What could possibly go wrong if he were on the witness stand? No wonder, when the Premier of Western Australia is put in the witness box, he says, “Oh, well, actually, gold-standard transparency—we don’t really do that!” The Attorney General completely messed up the evidence and had to go back for a second time. No wonder they did not want Hon Roger Cook, the former record holder for ambulance ramping in Western Australia, who is only now beaten by a current Minister for Health. The replacement Minister for Health seems to think that ambulance ramping is some kind of competition! The idea is to try to lessen the ambulance ramping, not increase it. That point is lost on the current replacement health minister, obviously. No wonder the Deputy Premier did not want to go into the witness box.

All we know as a result of this is that the Deputy Premier has been shielded from having to do that, but at what cost? Still, to this day, they will not tell us. We know that our government members have employed a very, very expensive senior barrister to defend them in all of this, but they continue to hide the cost. It is the people of Western Australia who continue to pay those costs.

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Meanwhile, the Attorney General of Western Australia released someone who is referred to as a “granny killer”. Anthony Lauritsen conducted a very calculated and cold-blooded murder—and attempted decapitation, mind you—and disembowelled his own grandmother. Under his own admission, he said that he planned to kill more people. This person was given a life sentence. Do members opposite know why he is out at the moment? It is because your Attorney General, the unreliable, confused and confusing Attorney General, has let him out. That is the simple reason why this granny killer is out in Western Australia.

According to the Attorney General, he just says, “Well, this person is low risk.” With all due respect, that reason is utterly inadequate, and it shows a callous disregard for the family of the grandmother who was sadistically murdered in a manner deemed by the perpetrator’s own lawyer to be at the highest end of brutality.

Lastly, I draw to members’ attention the allegations of evidence tampering and bullying within the judiciary, which the Attorney General continues to ignore. That particular matter ended up in the Supreme Court. We know that it has cost the taxpayer of Western Australia \$499 185.31. Why? It is because I have continued to ask the questions that need to be asked. They had to be asked on numerous occasions, because the Attorney General is obsessed with secrecy. If ever there were an underperforming minister in the McGowan Labor government, it is the Attorney General.

HON DAN CADDY (North Metropolitan) [2.13 pm]: It is incredible that this motion was put forward by Hon Dr Steve Thomas. I will make one point from the outset: I thank the member for acknowledging how incredibly able our parliamentary secretaries are, because the member is right; in the Labor Party, we run deep. There is talent right through the party.

The member starts this motion by basically apologising for the last one. The member stood there and said, “We attacked Hon Alannah MacTiernan. We attacked her, and our attack was so pathetic that now we have to have another go.” The member put back the sniper’s rifle because it did not work and he pulled out a blunderbuss, and now he is just going for everyone and hoping something will stick because he has nothing else to go with.

I will take members down memory lane. Hon Kyle McGinn spoke about previous agricultural ministers, and Hon Ken Baston is a favourite of mine. I would like to thank Ken Baston. He did an extremely important job for all of us in this place: he kept Jim Chown off the frontbench! Even when Baston was sacked for being the most incompetent Minister for Agriculture and Food that we have ever seen, Hon Colin Barnett—Hon Colin de Grussa might want to listen to this—despite having a swag of Nats, decided to give the agricultural portfolio to Dean Nalder. He gave agriculture to a metropolitan Liberal! What does that say about the lack of depth in the Nationals WA? What does that say? Let us not forget that he also completely gutted the Department of Agriculture and Food.

A few weeks ago, Hon Dr Steve Thomas stood there, attacking the finest Minister for Agriculture and Food this state has ever seen—one of the finest ministers this state has ever seen, one of the most accomplished ministers and the entire country—such is the jealousy and absolute, complete lack of depth and ability from that member’s side. Hon Alannah MacTiernan has achieved more in her time and has certainly contributed more to the fabric of our society than the mob opposite put together. Members opposite now choose to play the man, or the woman depending on the minister, because they are operating in a zone completely devoid of policy ideas. They bring these political motions to the house to have a shot at the government.

As Hon Kyle McGinn said, the motion the other day from Hon Donna Faragher was outstanding because she actually put some thought into it. It was excellent. She did not just come in here and say —

Hon Nick Goiran interjected.

Hon DAN CADDY: I will get to you later, shadow Attorney General.

Several members interjected.

Hon DAN CADDY: No; I believe what happened is that we improved the motion.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT: Order, members!

Hon DAN CADDY: If members opposite want to have a go at Hon Alannah MacTiernan, let us look at some of the things that people from industry have said. Many members will be familiar with Trevor Whittington. According to my notes, two years ago he said —

- This is “*the first time in well over a decade we’ve seen some serious new money go directly into the department*”.
- *It’s gone into directly funding the department, and we welcome that ...*

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In July, Nigel Hart said that Minister MacTiernan “wore her heart on her sleeve”, and in regard to additional funding being put into research he said —

“It is a credit to Alannah, that she is fighting the good fight in securing \$25 million to rebuild that capability in WA ...

My favourite quote is from Hon Dr Steve Thomas, who said —

I will give some credit to the Minister for Regional Development; Agriculture and Food ... as I think she has worked passionately to support the opening up of this marketplace.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas: We give credit where it’s due!

Hon DAN CADDY: But the member is sitting there, taking a scattergun approach at all the ministers, having a shot at everyone because he has nothing to stick on any of them.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas: You’ve just proved my point: we give credit where it’s due.

Hon DAN CADDY: When members opposite were in government, Hon Dr Steve Thomas, they had no respect at all for the agricultural portfolio —

Hon Dr Steve Thomas interjected.

Hon DAN CADDY: It had a revolving door of ministers. There was Terry Redman, Ken Baston, the metropolitan member Dean Nalder and that other bloke, Mark Lewis.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon DAN CADDY: Under the member for Warren–Blackwood, the member for Bateman and Hon Ken Baston, funding to the department was slashed. The previous government also cut another 37 per cent in the forward estimates. Staff numbers were slashed. We lost skills, but, most importantly, we lost experience in that department. Ken Baston was sitting there drowning in conflict-of-interest allegations. He completely mishandled it. He completely mishandled animal welfare issues and the RSPCA. Ultimately, he was sacked. But do not take it from me. Take it from Dale Park and what he said towards the end of the previous government’s tenure. He was quoted in *The West Australian* as saying —

Their long list of the Government failures included:

...

- Big cuts to the Department of Agriculture and Food WA
- The refusal to reactivate the Police Department’s stock squad ...
- Foiling the James Point Port development against the wishes of live exporters ...
- Half-hearted attempts to deal with packs of wild dogs ...
- Inaction on tenure reform needed to promote investment and pastoral leases.

It is little wonder that Hon Dr Steve Thomas came in here today wanting to attack everyone, because his point of attack on the Minister for Agriculture and Food got him absolutely nowhere last time.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas interjected.

Hon DAN CADDY: It got him absolutely nowhere.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas: Is the minister leaving at the end of the year or not?

Hon DAN CADDY: Is the member going to take credit every time a member of Parliament decides they have served the state for nearly 40 years and they wish to retire? Is he going to take credit for that? Oh my Lord!

Several members interjected.

Hon DAN CADDY: Let me move to something else.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon Peter Foster): Order! I have called the house to order; it is customary to stop speaking. I give the call to Hon Dan Caddy, and I encourage him to direct his comments through the chair.

Hon DAN CADDY: Thank you for your sage advice, Acting President.

The member brought up homelessness. That was interesting, because he failed to mention the disgraceful decisions made recently by the City of Perth. He should get on the phone to his mate at the City of Perth and talk about those decisions. He also failed to mention the decision taken by Hon Rita Saffioti to overturn that disgraceful decision—

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a decision made against council officers' advice, and a decision that was a real kick in the guts for homelessness service providers, especially Ruah Community Services. Thank God that decision has been overturned. The member also referred to Hon Roger Cook; I am not even going to talk about him, because he needs no defence. This is the health minister who guided us through the pandemic.

Several members interjected.

Hon DAN CADDY: Let us look at the overall stability of this government and cabinet. Hon Nick Goiran got to his feet and said that this was a serious matter, and he is correct.

Several members interjected.

Hon DAN CADDY: Why does the member not listen? The competency of cabinet is serious, which is why the people of Western Australia threw out the member's mob in 2017, and it is the reason that in 2021 they realised the opposition was even worse and gave them another very good kick.

Hon Darren West: I'm looking forward to 2025!

Hon DAN CADDY: I tell the member what, it is interesting. When we reflect on the stability of —

Several members interjected.

Hon DAN CADDY: I am struggling to speak here, Acting President.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon DAN CADDY: If we are going to reflect on cabinet stability, I note the McGowan cabinet is more or less unchanged; there have been a couple of small changes. The Barnett cabinet —

Hon Nick Goiran interjected.

Hon DAN CADDY: No, no, no; absolutely not. I will take the member's interjection, but I will not take his advice! I will take his interjection, because the people of Western Australia overwhelmingly said at the last election that we are doing a good job, so why would we change when we have a stable and competent cabinet? I do not know whether members opposite remember this, but I refer to an article from *The West Australian* titled "Colin Barnett uncut: Success, defeat, regrets and his lasting legacy". Do members opposite remember Colin Barnett? He used to be a member of the lower house. In it he refers to his own cabinet. It states —

"The second-term Cabinet was not as strong as the first. In any Cabinet, whether it be Federal or State, you usually have half a dozen people who are the drivers. And I lost most of the drivers.

We have not had that problem. We have cabinet stability, and it has endured over two election cycles. The article continues —

"I was conscious of the lack of horsepower in Cabinet the second time around. It frustrated me when I had some ministers who were not dealing with what I thought were pretty simple things."

That is a quote from Colin Barnett. The previous government had a revolving door of housing ministers. The Leader of the Opposition wanted to talk about homelessness, which now sits alongside housing with the Minister for Housing, but we should have a look at the previous government's revolving door of housing ministers. I cannot remember off the top of my head how many there were, because there were so many of them, but there was Buswell a couple of times, Marmion a couple of times, Redman, and another National. Grylls was there; Holt was there. It was an absolute revolving door, but my favourite thing about the Barnett cabinet was the cabinet photo that appeared in that article: there were two women in it. That was absolutely incredible.

I want to address Hon Nick Goiran, because he likes to talk in this place about the Attorney General. I would suggest that there is some sort of obsession there! Every opportunity he has, no matter what the motion is and no matter what is before the house, whether it is committee reports or anything else, and whether or not it in any way relates to anything to do with the Attorney General, Hon Nick Goiran will find a way to talk about the Attorney General.

Hon Nick Goiran interjected.

Hon DAN CADDY: I listen to you all day, honourable member. Who would blame me? Let us have a look at the Attorney General's achievements. Let us have a look at what he has done. I have a list here, and there are so many things: increased penalties for meth trafficking; no body, no parole legislation; joining the National Domestic Violence Order Scheme; strengthening the powers of the Corruption and Crime Commission to investigate unexplained wealth; and tougher laws against dangerous sex offenders, to better protect the community. Hon Nick Goiran should write this down; I will give him a copy of the list! The Attorney General also removed the statutory limitation period for child sex abuse actions; passed legislation for the expungement of convictions for historical LGBTIQ+ sex

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offences; and introduced the custody notification service, providing 24/7 legal advice for those in custody. The list goes on and on. He also criminalised revenge porn; passed tougher legislation for persons linked to terrorism; launched the homicide funeral assistance scheme; reappointed Hon John McKechnie, KC, as Corruption and Crime Commissioner; commissioned Western Australia's first strategy to address sexual violence; and passed historical legislation bringing equality to WA's unfair and outdated electoral system, which is one of my personal favourites. He also passed legislation to make WA's anti-consorting laws the toughest in the nation.

Hon Neil Thomson interjected.

Hon DAN CADDY: The member will be all right. He will be at the top of the ticket, because no-one else wants to join his party at the moment.

The Attorney General also established Elder Rights WA and introduced a bill to allow de facto couples to fairly split their superannuation, which we talked about just a couple of weeks ago.

Hon Ayor Makur Chuot interjected.

Hon DAN CADDY: Game, set and match! The current Leader of the Opposition was unable to keep up.

Let us have a look at what would happen if, by some miracle, there were to be a change of government. Let us look at the Attorney General waiting in the wings, the shadow Attorney General. The Liberals and the Nationals —

Hon Nick Goiran: You're starting to sound obsessive!

Hon DAN CADDY: Oh, very obsessed! I will get to the end soon, Hon Nick Goiran.

The Liberals and Nationals would seek to have Hon Nick Goiran as the Attorney General. Unlike the plethora of legal minds we have on our side, the opposition is somewhat limited, so it probably would be Hon Nick Goiran. Let us have a look at who the next Attorney General could be: a self-described branch stacker and member of "The Clan". He was accused —

Hon Nick Goiran: What's the source of that information?

Hon DAN CADDY: That would be in the WhatsApp transcript. I could give the member the whole list, if he has not read it. It is a great read; I recommend he have a look at it. He was accused in a Liberal Party review of odious behaviour that shamed the Liberal Party and trashed its reputation. Contrary to Liberal Party —

Point of Order

Hon NICK GOIRAN: I warn the member that he is currently misleading the house. It is on the public record that the matter he is referring to has been recently examined at length and I was cleared of all charges. The matter was wholly unsubstantiated and dismissed. It is entirely inappropriate for the member to now raise it and suggest that it is a matter of substance.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon Peter Foster): There is no point of order, but I will remind all members of standing order 45, "Imputations and Personal Reflections". I give the call back to Hon Dan Caddy.

Hon DAN CADDY: He dishes it out but cannot cop it himself.

Hon Nick Goiran: No. I'm happy for you to put the truthful matters on the record. By all means, have as many shots as you want, but not that one. That was wholly unsubstantiated.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT: Order! When the Acting President asks for order, there needs to be silence. I give the call back to Hon Dan Caddy.

Debate Resumed

Hon DAN CADDY: Let me continue. I will reflect on that, but I will say—I am not even going to go into "The Clan" messages in depth, because they have been repeatedly quoted in this chamber. It is a matter of the public record that Hon Nick Goiran opposed or at least wrongfully said that the laws to stop Clive Palmer would not stand up in court. I am happy for Hon Nick Goiran to correct me, but on 13 August 2020 he said —

There are plenty of heinous provisions in this bill, much of which I suspect will be ineffective.

He went on to say, at the end —

I distance myself entirely from this fiasco.

The member distanced himself from something that potentially saved the taxpayers of this state \$30 billion. I just put that out there.

While we are talking about ministers of the former government—I could go on and on, but I only have 30 seconds. I just want to look quickly at Hon Paul Papalia, because the member asked me about the Minister for Police and

his achievements. I asked for something to be sent through to me so I could talk about his achievements, and I got a 22-page document. I do not have time to read all 22 pages of achievements into *Hansard*.

HON STEPHEN DAWSON (Mining and Pastoral — Deputy Leader of the House) [2.32 pm]: It is my pleasure to rise to speak to this motion this afternoon. In case it was not clear to honourable members on the far side, we will not be supporting the motion. It is quite an extraordinary attack on a fantastic bunch of ministers who have worked incredibly hard for the last five years and who continue to work incredibly hard. Who got us through the COVID-19 pandemic? Who helped turn around the state's finances? Who has left us in the situation we find ourselves in? I think it was Hon Dan Caddy who commented on Hon Colin Barnett's second cabinet. He spoke about its inadequacies and the fact that the second cabinet was not up to scratch from the first.

This is an extraordinary attack, an outrageous attack, and I do not use that word sparingly. Some of the things that Hon Dr Steve Thomas brought up about ministers were plainly silly. The member had a go at the Minister for Culture and the Arts, for goodness sake, because he sings a song. What about the 144 000 people down the Canning Highway at the *Highway to Hell* event? That brought in about \$6.5 million for the local economy and \$17 million more broadly. He funded that. He worked with the Perth Festival. The member had a go at him for singing songs. Goodness gracious!

Hon Dr Steve Thomas had a go at the Minister for Police, who is updating the firearms legislation and who banned things like gel blasters in this state. We have seen recently what gel blasters do. They can cause lots of issues. The minister is building fire stations in places like Forrestfield and Baldivis. He is also creating a defence industry in this state, putting Western Australia on the map and ensuring we get our fair share of defence industry from the commonwealth. He has done that, and he is working to increase the numbers of police.

The members opposite have all been asleep for the past couple of years, living under a rock. They refuse to acknowledge that we have had COVID-19 in this state and that our borders have been closed. That went well. They had a go at the former Minister for Health, for goodness sake. What did he do? He, along with others in the state, kept us alive. He had good policies, and those opposite have hated it every step of the way. They have hated it. They called for the borders to open and they called for restrictions to be eased. What would have happened? More than the 642 people who died would have died. Shame on them, for goodness sake.

The member had a go at Minister Dave Kelly. Those opposite do not like him. They did not like him as Minister for Fisheries and they do not like him as Minister for Forestry. Guess what! He, along with the Minister for Environment, is stopping the logging of old-growth forests in this state. He is not just doing that; he has a plan to work with local communities to give them jobs and to have a sustainable future. Minister Kelly has also done things in the youth space. He has funded LGBTIQ+ groups. I know Hon Colin de Grussa is very good on this stuff because he has a personal interest in it, but many on the far side hate the idea of gay and lesbian people getting funding, getting acknowledged or getting support. Many do. Historically, those opposite have had issues with this. Shame on them. Minister Kelly has also funded TransFolk of WA, a group in Western Australia who have been marginalised continuously over the years. Minister Kelly has worked with that group to make sure that those young people have a voice. He has done that. Members opposite might not like it, but he has done that, and it is to his credit. As a gay person in this place, I am very pleased that he is doing that stuff. He is modernising government, something those opposite never did when they were in government.

The poor old Attorney General continues to get attacked, whether it is by this shadow Attorney General or by the last one. As we heard from Hon Dan Caddy, we have had 70 pieces of legislation from this Attorney General. He has been modernising the laws in the state, going after criminals, going after meth traffickers. Members opposite cannot hide from the fact that he is doing an exceptional job in this state.

Let us reacquaint ourselves with the last Liberal–National government in this state and what it did. In fact, Hon Peter Collier was quick to point out in our last term that we would be judged on election day. He used to point at us across the chamber and say that we would be judged on election day. Well, we were judged on election day, and the people decided that we did a good job in our first term. That was our ministers and our Premier doing a good job, and we continue to do a good job in this term. Members opposite only need to look around to see that the people judged heavily in our favour.

The list of failures of those opposite when they were last in government is long. They were the worst financial managers in this state's history. They had multiple project management failures, whether it was the Fiona Stanley Hospital, the Perth Children's Hospital, the stadium footbridge or Elizabeth Quay. They left the training sector in ruins. There were very few Western Australians accessing TAFE. What has this government done? We have invested in TAFE, invested in third-level education. What is happening now? People are getting skilled. People are able to take on the jobs that exist today. Instead, the previous government left the sector in tatters.

They tried to close remote Aboriginal communities. Does Hon Neil Thomson remember that? His government, when it was in office, tried to close Aboriginal communities, to its great shame.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas; Hon Kyle McGinn; Hon Nick Goiran; Hon Dan Caddy; Hon Stephen Dawson; Hon
Tjorn Sibma; Hon Lorna Harper

Hon Neil Thomson: What have you done for Aboriginal communities?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I spoke out against it. To their great shame, those opposite tried to close them down; they tried to kick Aboriginal people out of their communities. In the agriculture region, they closed the tier 3 rail lines. Shame on them. We are still paying the price for that. Thankfully, the Minister for Transport, Rita Saffioti, has been working closely with the agriculture industry in this state to get grain on rail again.

Of course, we also had the John Langoulant report. That report was absolutely damning. In his report, he said —

... Ministers worked to advance their individual agendas and often coerced public servants ... Ministers were very focussed on their individual priorities and did not advocate a whole-of-government agenda.

And the report went on and on. But what have we seen since we got elected? We have seen ministers who have worked in a collegiate fashion, right across portfolios. We have seen ministers work together to pay off the debts that you guys left us. Ministers work together. Members will not hear that criticism of us. In whatever portfolio, we have worked collaboratively. We have kept Western Australians safe and strong. So the opposition can bring this motion against the Minister for Agriculture and Food or the ministers who have been mentioned today, but, quite frankly, it is ludicrous—absolutely ludicrous.

Hon Dan Caddy made a good point. Hon Donna Faragher, who I think of highly, moved a good motion in this place recently that we could have a proper debate about; there was truth in it and presented an issue to be looked at. To the credit of the house, we voted to establish a new parliamentary committee. What did the member bring today? The member brought a load of baloney, quite frankly—a load of baloney. It was “horseship“, quite frankly!

Several members interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I would like to keep going for hours, but I am losing my voice today. There are a number of other members who want to contribute today, so I will re-indicate we are not supporting this motion before us today. Do not waste your time bringing forward another one like it again.

HON TJORN SIBMA (North Metropolitan) [2.41 pm]: I think to some degree Christmas has come early or maybe Thursday morning has come a little bit earlier in the week. I think it is generally good for our collective health that we get to get some matters off our chest. The opposition is obviously doing it in a sensible, measured and targeted way. I find it extraordinary that only one party in this entire house is permitted to practise politics, and it is not the opposition. The selective —

Hon Stephen Dawson: I am not sure you can call a scattergun approach “targeted”. I think already there are some problems in your comments.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: I think we need to correct the record somewhat. It is important. I do not want to detain the house because other contributors wish to —

Hon Kyle McGinn: Bit scant.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: No, no—identify some facts that to date have gone unmentioned. We started proceedings today in a most extraordinary fashion. It is quite incorrect to say that this motion is without a target when this government provides us with evidence condemning it and its performance on almost an hourly basis. I have been here for only five years, but I have not seen such incompetence and a dereliction of administrative standards, as this paper tabled previously shows—list after list, minister after minister finding an excuse for their agencies not to table their annual reports on time but blaming the Auditor General, who was doing an effective job of holding this government and its performance, not in a political sense, to account. It looked deeply into the mechanics of government administration and due process in this jurisdiction and found government agencies wanting in some very serious areas.

Who is the minister responsible for employing the Auditor General? Who is the minister responsible for funding that organisation? It starts at the top. It is the Treasurer. Is this evidence that the Treasurer refuses to adequately resource the Office of the Auditor General and burden her with work to such a degree that those hardworking auditors do not have the opportunity to accredit, surveil and account for the agencies’ financial statements? I think that is the issue. How can a government sitting on a \$6 billion surplus not fund that organisation appropriately? I will tell members how it will make the decision not to do so; it is because it does not like scrutiny. It hates it.

Hon Stephen Dawson: No-one is sitting on \$6 billion.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: You might criticise the motion for this as being unduly political.

Hon Stephen Dawson: We paid \$6 billion back of your debt.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas; Hon Kyle McGinn; Hon Nick Goiran; Hon Dan Caddy; Hon Stephen Dawson; Hon
Tjorn Sibma; Hon Lorna Harper

Hon TJORN SIBMA: You did not do that. You did not bring it in. What I find a hallmark of this government — Several members interjected.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: Deputy President, I will address my remarks through you, being a competent person who is not wont to entertain unruly interjections. This is symptomatic of this government. Members opposite might not believe it, but this government has hit its political half-life. The gloss has come off. The people have worked it out. Yes, members opposite may talk about the success of campaign slogans such as “safe and strong”. This is the greatest diversion in Western Australian political history because as the government was saying that, the hospital system in this state was being run down to its bare bones. We do not need to spend long looking at the KPIs to substantiate that allegation; 5 000, 6 000 hours of ambulance ramping —

Hon Stephen Dawson: What role has COVID played?

Hon TJORN SIBMA: COVID—that is brilliant. COVID is the permanent get-out-of-jail-free card the government pulls out. It is its ultimate excuse for administrative failure and not to hold ministers, such as the Attorney General, to account for effectively a dereliction of duty. For a state’s chief law officer to be accused by a federal justice of being an unreliable witness, of being confused and confusing—I am sorry—does not give me confidence in your capability to run a proper government. What does that say not only about the protection racket, in a political sense, being run for the current Attorney General? What does that say for the seven or eight degree-qualified lawyers in the caucus? What does that say about them? Does it say that none of them is up to the grade? Are they not as confused or as confusing as the Attorney General?

If I were a member of the Labor caucus with a legal practising certificate and my aspiration and my capability to make a contribution was overlooked and this person who has had his day was preferred, I would be disappointed. He is a storied person; I like him personally, but, frankly, members of the chamber, that individual is a liability. He is a liability to the government and the people of Western Australia, and for the government’s own good he must be moved on. There are people to select from. Parliamentary secretary Hon Matthew Swinbourn would make an excellent replacement, or Hon Dr Tony Buti. There is also Hon Alannah MacTiernan. She is progressing with her own future in her own way. There is the member for Mount Lawley, who is a clever young chap; the member for Swan Hills; the member for Cockburn; and Hon Pierre Yang. They are all lawyers. What does the Premier think of their capability? They are not ready. They are not as competent as the Attorney General. I would be ashamed. Why are members not putting the pressure on to move him off? It is for the good of their own career progression.

I have heard a couple of very interesting job applications this afternoon. All we have heard today is job applications, rather than a defence of government performance. I was very interested in the contribution given by Hon Kyle McGinn. I have an affection for the honourable member.

Several members interjected.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: It might be the love that dare not speak its name, but I am prepared to do it. Do members know what I like about him? I listened to his maiden speech in eager anticipation; it was unreconstructed industrial militancy. I disagreed with everything he said, but what I loved about it was the passion and authenticity with which it was delivered. His performance after that has been mediocre, particularly in motions like today. I think he came prepared to read another speech but realised his spirit guide, the honourable Minister for Regional Development, was not the minister to which this motion necessarily is directed. But we came in and we thought with some socialist bonhomie we would be more equally distributive in our attention across the cabinet and not focus on only one member but focus on some more.

Hon Dan Caddy: Why don’t you focus on policy?

Hon TJORN SIBMA: This is an interesting interjection. This government’s policy is to remain in government. That is all it is about. This is a crew that has been in government for over 2 000 days, nearly half of which has been spent in a state of emergency, but we will get to that issue at another time. Over that 2 000 days, what has been achieved in the government’s signature infrastructure project, Metronet? In that 2 000 days, somewhere between 450 and 500 media releases have been issued—media releases, doorstops and pic ops.

Hon Stephen Dawson: Why don’t you like trains?

Hon TJORN SIBMA: I would like to see them. That is the point, minister.

Hon Stephen Dawson interjected.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: I once again seek the protection of the chair. I love trains. Do members know what I love about them most? I love to see them running. After 2 000 days and above, there has been more effort devoted to media statements —

Hon Stephen Dawson: I reckon you were a Thomas the Tank Engine fan when you were younger, weren’t you?

Hon TJORN SIBMA: Actually, I developed my affection for that character later in life, not early.

I tell members what: in those 2 000 days, which of the major Metronet components have been delivered? How many sleepers have been laid? How many kilometres of track have been laid? In 2 000 days, about 10 kilometres of track have been laid. Fantastic. Two kilometres of track a year is the McGowan government's work rate. That is its KPI. It is absolutely sad that that is the sum total of the transport minister's contribution to public infrastructure in this state other than being evasive and not being forthcoming with the full economic consequences of running a massively expanded rail network with diminishing patronage.

Hon Dan Caddy: Tell us about your policy—the central line to City West.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: That is very interesting. I will tell the member something, because I like him. He takes an interest. We had a policy to put together a master plan to investigate the feasibility of something, which was sinking some rail. That was a reasonable commitment of \$5 million. I will tell the member a fact that he might find interesting. His government has blown \$1 billion on elements of the Armadale line because they are economically unfeasible. The government has spent \$1 billion building something bigger and better than it needed to, and that \$1 billion comes at an economic opportunity cost, my friend. That means the government must get selective about which level rail crossings it builds and that it will not necessarily fund regional hospital expansions and upgrades, which probably goes some way to explaining the government's absence from the recent North West Central by-election, which was very shameful. If only the Minister for Transport's actual infrastructure delivery was commensurate with her predilection for wearing hard hats and high-vis vests, which I do not detract from, but if she wants the acclaim, she has to own the downside.

Father's Day recently passed and there was another one of these galling social media flurries in which, effectively, the Premier was endorsed by an overenthusiastic officer as the best father Western Australia has, which I think most people took with either mirth or offence, because that day can be a particularly significantly sensitive time for a lot of people. It is a nice day, but it is one that we should keep cheap politics out of. I do not necessarily take issue with the tweet that was then deleted, but it piqued my curiosity about something the minister could have answered yesterday but refused to answer, which is: how large is the media publicity marketing team in the Department of Transport, the Public Transport Authority and Main Roads Western Australia? How big is the government's spin team throughout all of government? I would be surprised if it did not reach over 100 people. Day in, day out, its operatives are tweeting, Facebooking and propagandising on behalf of the McGowan government. This is where the government has lost its way. It is now more addicted to spin than substance. It is more addicted to the accoutrements of office—the gifts, the lavish fundraisers and tickets to corporate boxes at the football; all the lashings of government—without any of the responsibility. The reason that the quality of the cabinet has deteriorated is that the Premier now just does not care. He has transcended off into some alternate ego plain and I think he has lost absolute touch with his responsibilities as a responsible first minister of the state and his capacity to show leadership to his cabinet team. All that does is deteriorate the government's own talent pool. I am looking forward to the next election because there will be a lot of disappointed people on the government side and not as many of them. I commend the motion to the house in the strongest terms.

HON LORNA HARPER (East Metropolitan) [2.55 pm]: I think, again, that it will come as no surprise that I will not be supporting this rather bizarre motion. It is a motion that has echoes of a previous motion put forward by the Leader of the Opposition in the other place that we dare not talk about. I am happy to say that the volume might come down a little bit and I suggest members do not interject because otherwise the volume may go up and I may get a bit more Scottish and Hansard will then have trouble.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas: Is that a challenge?

Hon LORNA HARPER: It is not a challenge, Leader of the Opposition; it is just a forewarning.

I have very kindly taken my pinny off to be a female representative to speak about this atrocious motion that is attacking a group of fine people who are doing a very difficult job. It is very easy to sit on the other side and throw little pebbles, tiny pieces of gravel and stones at other people and shining a light on them and saying this is wrong, but we should be getting up and talking about all the great things that are being done. The Leader of the Opposition seems to have a particular thing about Minister Dave Kelly. I do not know why. He comes up on a regular basis when the Leader of the Opposition talks. I am confused because I have known Minister Kelly for a long time. I thought I would double-check and have a wee look at some of the stuff that has been happening in the minister's portfolios. What came up? Global recognition for Perth's expanded water recycling scheme. Global recognition. We are not talking about just here in Australia; we are talking about globally. We are talking about a judging panel that had 203 entries from 52 separate countries.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas: Initiated by Minister Marmion.

Hon LORNA HARPER: Excuse me, Acting President, I said no interjections.

The \$320 million expansion—that is 3-2-0, for those who cannot quite compute that—doubles the long-term capacity of scheme water that uses purified recycled water to replenish groundwater supplies. That is a minister who is not only working hard now, but also laying the tracks for the future of the state.

While I was looking at that, I thought I had better look at the shadow Minister for Water, who I understand is Dr David Honey, the member for Cottesloe. I thought I would have a wee look to see what he has been contributing to this field. I am quoting an extract from *Hansard*, dated Wednesday, 6 April 2022. A question from Dr Honey to the Minister for Water reads —

What drives the minister’s hostility to families with two or more children that he would punish them financially just because they happen to need more water than smaller families?

First, I personally feel that is an idiotic question. Second, the Minister for Water replied —

The member for Cottesloe obviously did not listen to the answer to the question. I reminded you that when you were in government and the Leader of the Opposition was the Minister for Water, the water supply of 2 500 families was reduced to a trickle every year because they were struggling to pay their water bills. That is how you dealt with families.

This is how members opposite dealt with families. Prior to the COVID pandemic, we reduced that number by 60 or 70 per cent. During COVID, we stopped the practice altogether. I am not going to be lectured by members opposite about what we can do to assist families. Through the processes that we have put in place, we discovered that over 100 households had significantly high water bills because a member of the household was doing home dialysis. Home dialysis saves taxpayers’ money because these people are not having dialysis in hospitals. What did we do? We started the Medical Assist program whereby families with a family member on home dialysis are given 30 000 litres of free water every two months to do dialysis at home and not end up with a huge water bill. We actually care about workers and their families. Through the structures that we have put in place with the Water Corporation, we are helping those families who, for whatever reason, may be struggling to pay their water bills. This Minister for Water is being proactive and assisting people who might have financial problems instead of punishing them.

As Hon Stephen Dawson mentioned, Minister Kelly has provided funding support services for transgender, non-binary and gender-diverse young people. It might be outside the capacity of some members to understand what that is about, but it is very vital to ensure that these young people have this assistance.

Then we had all this talk about ambulance ramping. News flash! Ambulance ramping is happening not just here in Western Australia, but across Australia and in a lot of western countries and other places as well. I know that the United Kingdom has issues with ambulance ramping and the health sector. America is different because their health sector is weird. The member opposite had a go at the Minister for Health, which I find weird because since Labor came into power in 2017, both Ministers for Health have tried to fix the issues caused by the previous Barnett government. I remember a lot of those issues when I was the leader of a health team who worked in hospitals and I spoke to people there. I could see the reduction in staff and investment in those hospitals. Under this health minister, over 1 500 FTE—for those who are unsure, that means full-time equivalent—have been added to the health system since January. Under the Barnett government, the health FTEs declined by over 900 between 2014 and 2017. Members of the opposition are throwing little rocks at the current health minister, but not reflecting on what they did when they were in power. In June 2020, we had significantly more FTE than at the same time two years ago.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas interjected.

Hon LORNA HARPER: I am sorry, honourable member. I did not quite catch that.

Hon Peter Collier interjected.

Hon LORNA HARPER: I might not be taking interjections, but Hon Peter Collier just did that. Let us not get started on what happened in the education portfolio when he was the minister.

Hon Peter Collier interjected.

Hon LORNA HARPER: Oh no, no, no! That was atrocious. Opposition members are very good at shining the light and saying this is wrong and this is wrong. As mentioned, apart from Hon Donna Faragher, we have not heard members opposite come up with some solutions. It is very easy to point and say, “That is wrong and that is wrong.” Every day I could stand up here like opposition members and point out things that I believe are wrong with their parties or their alliance that does not look much like an alliance. But that is not what I am here for. It is not what members opposite are here for. I do not understand why they are here if they just want to point the finger.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas: We are here to hold the government to account.

Hon LORNA HARPER: Yes, people need to be held to account, and it is fine to ask questions. Every day at 4.30 pm, honourable members ask questions; that is fine. But how about instead of pointing fingers and saying “You’re wrong”, come up with a way, as Hon Donna Faragher just did, to solve any issues arising.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas; Hon Kyle McGinn; Hon Nick Goiran; Hon Dan Caddy; Hon Stephen Dawson; Hon
Tjorn Sibma; Hon Lorna Harper

Hon Dr Steve Thomas: Then you water it down again. You watered it down.

Hon LORNA HARPER: I was listening to the debate earlier when I had to leave the chamber on urgent parliamentary business and I believe that Hon Dan Caddy mentioned that the electorate of Western Australia has taken notice of what the government is doing and it decided that it was happy with the government. That would have been—when was it? What happened in March 2021? Yes, it was a landslide victory.

Hon Nick Goiran interjected.

Hon LORNA HARPER: I am certainly not taking interjections from that member.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon Jackie Jarvis): Members, order! I will remind the member speaking that we will cease debate with five minutes to spare to give the opposition leader time to respond.

Hon LORNA HARPER: I am more than happy to make sure that I finish in time, Acting President. I am more than happy to stand here for one minute and 41 seconds and talk about how amazing it is that in this chamber we have people who enjoy screaming and yelling unintelligently across the chamber. We have people who are incoherent when they scream and yell, yet we are supposed to sit here and take it when these little stones are thrown across to us about how terrible our ministers are when they are working extremely hard to ensure that they are following a plan —

Several members interjected.

Hon LORNA HARPER: Acting President, I am finding it very difficult to hear myself with the chatter in the chamber.

The ACTING PRESIDENT: Members, I will ask you to be quiet. The member has 40 seconds remaining.

Hon LORNA HARPER: Yes, I have 40 seconds. It is amazing what one can do with 40 seconds, especially when one has beautiful, lilting Scottish accent like mine. It is amazing. I will read out a quote —

*O wad some Power the giftie gie us
To see oursels as ithers see us!*

We, over here, are very aware and we review and reflect on what we do on a regular basis. That is why in Labor we grow, we develop, we listen and we consult. That is what Labor does. I suggest that if the member wants an alternative to what happened at the last election, then maybe honourable members, apart from Hon Donna Faragher, should have a look at and reflect on themselves. Thank you very much.

HON DR STEVE THOMAS (South West — Leader of the Opposition) [3.07 pm] — in reply: I would like to thank all the members who contributed to the debate today. I pass on my apologies to Hon Steve Martin who I know was prepared to make a contribution but did not get the opportunity. We will have to make sure that he gets an opportunity at a later date. I will run through those members who made a contribution.

I am always pleased to hear from Hon Kyle McGinn. He makes a spirited speech every time and it is great. I do not necessarily have the same affection for him that Hon Tjorn Sibma does, but obviously I treat him with some respect. I note that in his entire 20-minute address, the only minister whom he defended was the Minister for Regional Development. Despite the fact that we mentioned all these ministers and their lack of performance, the only minister Hon Kyle McGinn deigned to mention was the Minister for Regional Development, who Hon Dan Caddy suggests will be moving on perhaps at the end of this year. I wonder whether Hon Kyle McGinn was putting in a resume for an opportunity to advance, given that we were assured that the only minister to be stepping away was the only minister that the member chose to defend—unless one of the other members opposite wants to tell me that more ministers are on the list. I thought that was interesting.

Hon Nick Goiran's contribution was, as usual, to the point and solid. He asked why the Premier has taken no action with the unreliable and confusing Attorney General. Could it be that during the ill-fated Stephen Smith leadership attempt, the Attorney General might have been getting information from the conspirators and passing it along to the now Premier, having a foot on both sides of fence, and is therefore perhaps in an unassailable position as a confidant of the Premier?

I suspect that might have had something to do with it. I am not being howled down in protest by those opposite, so one thinks that might be an appropriate comment.

Hon Dan Caddy made another very good contribution. I am sure that his resume is being brushed up as we speak, because he needs to move himself up the preselection chain. Be careful, minister. There are a few members here who are looking to rise up the ranks. Hon Dan Caddy mentioned some of the ministers whom we have pointed out, so well done for that. He generally focused, as did Hon Kyle McGinn, on history. He did not quite take us back to the Burke era and WA Inc, but almost, so the standard defence of the Labor Party is in place again. He mounted something of a defence. He mentioned Hon Roger Cook. It is good that a second minister was mentioned. He also mentioned the Attorney General, in response to the comments of Hon Nick Goiran —

Hon Dr Steve Thomas; Hon Kyle McGinn; Hon Nick Goiran; Hon Dan Caddy; Hon Stephen Dawson; Hon
Tjorn Sibma; Hon Lorna Harper

Hon Dan Caddy interjected.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: I will come to that—and suggested that having a legislative agenda was a defence against an accusation that other things that he had done were not very good. Well done for the mere fact that the Attorney General has a legislative agenda. Well done. There is a whole pile of people who are going down that path. Congratulations. I am sure that is very good. That is what he is relying upon.

Hon Stephen Dawson, the Minister for Emergency Services, of course did manage to mount something of a defence for a range of other ministers. It was not a spirited defence. He got quite excitable during part of his presentation, but he did mount something of a defence.

Hon Stephen Dawson: I'm very proud of my ministerial colleagues.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: Once again, the defence that the minister mounted did not necessarily talk about the achievements of those ministers. He kept trying to drag us back by referring to previous governments. He did not have enough faith in his colleagues to let them stand on their own performance. He was not prepared to simply back them on performance. I know that it is tough; it is very hard. Many of the members opposite who spoke in this debate struggled to defend the performance of their own ministers. I understand that in this circumstance, it would be difficult to do so. However, the defence by the government of those ministers who are poor performers was very sad. There were a couple of half-hearted efforts, such as saying that one of those ministers has a legislative agenda, but, for the most part, just for those ministers to turn up was enough. They then stepped back to their usual defence of going back to previous governments and diverting attention from their own poor performance. Once again, this government has failed to make its case.

Division

Question put and a division taken, the Acting President (Hon Jackie Jarvis) casting her vote with the noes, with the following result —

Ayes (7)

Hon Peter Collier
Hon Donna Faragher

Hon Nick Goiran
Hon Steve Martin

Hon Tjorn Sibma
Hon Dr Steve Thomas

Hon Colin de Grussa (*Teller*)

Noes (19)

Hon Klara Andric
Hon Dan Caddy
Hon Sandra Carr
Hon Stephen Dawson
Hon Kate Doust

Hon Lorna Harper
Hon Jackie Jarvis
Hon Ayor Makur Chuot
Hon Kyle McGinn
Hon Shelley Payne

Hon Stephen Pratt
Hon Martin Pritchard
Hon Samantha Rowe
Hon Rosie Sahanna
Hon Matthew Swinbourn

Hon Dr Sally Talbot
Hon Dr Brian Walker
Hon Darren West
Hon Pierre Yang (*Teller*)

Pairs

Hon Martin Aldridge
Hon Neil Thomson

Hon Sue Ellery
Hon Peter Foster

Question thus negatived.