

PREMIER'S STATEMENT

Consideration

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore) [2.52 pm]: Just before the lunchbreak and the interruption for question time, I was speaking about the decision by the Minister for Fisheries, who is actually now in the house and able to listen. Now that he is able to listen, it is good, but he was not in the house before lunch, as we know. Look, he is leaving, so he is not interested in what I have to say. Never mind that my electorate represents a substantial amount of the fishing industry in Western Australia, he is not interested in what my constituents think of his actions over recent months. If I had done the things he has done to the industry, I probably would not want to listen to it either. I note that he has sat down again, so there we are.

As I said earlier, just before Christmas there was a rather curious announcement by the minister, which was not really an announcement, saying that he was going to make some changes to the industry. Some of my constituents rang me and asked what this was all about, because they did not really know.

Mr D.J. Kelly: I offered you a briefing and you cancelled it.

Mr R.S. LOVE: That is not true. The minister has misled the house. I had an appointment with the minister to discuss this very matter, at nine o'clock in the morning. At five o'clock on the afternoon before the meeting, his office rang and cancelled the meeting. The minister should withdraw that remark.

Mr D.J. Kelly: That is right, but we offered to reschedule it, and you have not responded.

Mr R.S. LOVE: As a country member who has to travel to get to meetings, that was very inconsiderate of the minister and his office, and I have not forgiven them for it. I expect that the people in my electorate probably suspected that that was going to happen, because I told them that the minister probably would not want to discuss the matter. In the first announcement that the minister made, he made it quite clear that the industry was not making enough of a contribution to the state's finances. Right from the very start, this was never about greater employment or tourism; it was only about a profit share for the government. The minister did his very best to try to rip away from the industry its private property rights and transfer wealth from the fishing industry into the coffers of the government. The minister is leaving now, and I cannot blame him for doing so, because I would not want to listen to this sorry tale either if I were the minister responsible.

We know that the government has backflipped on that decision, but only after it has caused an enormous amount of damage to the confidence of the industry—not just the rock lobster industry, but the fishing industry right around Australia. Questions are being asked by fishers right around this nation about the value of the entitlements they have to carry out the work in the industry that they are involved in. It is not just about crayfish anymore; this is a wider problem. We hear a lot about sovereign risk from this side of the house, but the government has opened that Pandora's box in the fishing industry. The ramifications are still there. I was reading the other night, on the website of *The Geraldton Guardian*, a report about the continuing damage resulting from the loss of confidence in the industry. People are not sure whether they should be making plans to stay in this industry into the future or whether further unilateral decisions will damage their industry completely. As I said, it was never about finding local jobs or bringing crayfish into the local market. We had already done that. The former government changed the system so that local fishers could sell fish directly into the local market. Not only that, I am told that the Western Rock Lobster Council put to the minister a number of different proposals to provide for product into the local market. There was no need for this grab. It was nothing other than a grab for revenue—a grab for cash—and it went horribly wrong.

Just as happened with Moora Residential College and other cuts, the government found that it had overstepped the mark. Western Australians know what is right, and they know what is a decent outcome, and what to expect from a proper government, and they are not getting it from this government. In the country areas especially, they will punish the government at the next election. Government members who have an affiliation with country areas, and those who represent country areas—not many of them are in the house at the moment, I note—can be sure that they will face a backlash at the next election.

Education cuts and attacks on the fishing industry are the types of things that people expect to be served up at Christmas time, but what has been increasingly destructive in my electorate is the rolling series of lengthy power outages affecting towns such as Mullewa and Dongara. This situation has a long history, and has come about as a result of a change in the way Western Power and the Department of Fire and Emergency Services view the risk on days of high fire danger. Communities in my electorate are being regularly left without power for days. In

Mr Shane Love; Mr Terry Redman; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr David Templeman; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Janine Freeman

Mullewa, back in 2017, a town meeting was held with Western Power to discuss the continuing outages and the effect they were having on the community.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr R.S. LOVE: Unfortunately, nothing much has changed since that meeting, despite assurances that greater attention would be given to maintenance. This year, right across the area outside of Geraldton, through Tenindewa, Mullewa, Pindar and other areas, we had lengthy periods of days on end without power, when the temperatures were well into the 40s. Elderly residents are not able to turn on their air conditioners and the local swimming pool must close because the pumps are not able to operate in those extreme conditions. Local businesses get driven away because people, dare I say it, go to Geraldton when they are not able buy produce at local stores. The ATMs cannot work anymore. The telephone system goes kaput because there is no power and the fridges and freezers do not keep the produce cold. People get into the habit of not shopping locally. They make decisions about where to live based on the discomfort that occurs regularly throughout late spring and early summer in towns fed by that system in my electorate that are just outside the Geraldton area. All of that is detrimental to the future of those towns. This issue threatens the future of communities in my electorate and it needs to be taken very seriously.

The previous government faced a similar situation in Kalbarri. When the community highlighted those issues to the then Minister for Energy, the now Leader of the Opposition, he put forward a plan that would have seen Western Power invest \$10 million into the development of a microgrid in Kalbarri. Those sorts of solutions are needed throughout the electorate. Local communities need local power supply and local generation so there is power whenever they need it, not just when it is not a very hot day, because when it is a very hot day in my electorate, people do not usually get power.

The original plan for Kalbarri was to install a battery. That battery would be matched with a substantial amount of generation through solar panels, which would then be able to recharge the battery throughout the day so that it could provide power throughout the day and into the night. If the town was completely isolated for several days, there would be a period of time that the town would have no power, but that would be late into the evening. The town would still function nicely. The shops would still be able to open during the day, the air conditioners would be able to run during the heat of the day and the pools would be able to run in the motels and caravan parks, which are the lifeblood of Kalbarri. Tourism is the lifeblood of that community. That microgrid system is dependent upon a source of local generation, but what did this government do? It awarded the contract to a group that will not provide local generation. The member for Warren-Blackwood has seen this happen before. Energy Made Clean is now doing that microgrid and the program is based on a battery that holds power.

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Just let me continue. The only generation source that will feed into that battery will be an existing small wind farm that Synergy has located about 15 or 20 kays south of town. The battery will go there. There will still be the risk that if something happens to the line between town and the battery, the battery will be no good at all. Because it is not married to a substantial generating capacity of four or five megawatts, the battery will not recharge and after a couple of hours, the town will be out of power again. The government will spend \$4 million or \$5 million on a solution that will provide the answer for some of Western Power's regulatory problems, because it will reduce some of those short power outages. It will be able to say that it has had only X number of outages in Kalbarri this year, but the outages that damage the economy are the ones that go on for days and days. The town will empty because people cannot buy beer or food, cannot get fuel, cannot use their phones and cannot swim in the caravan park and motel swimming pools. They will leave. If they leave at the height of the season, the chances are a huge amount of damage will be done to the town. It also results in a huge amount of reputational damage not just for that year, but for the years going forward. Again, the whole system at the moment is threatening the viability, the very existence, of communities in my electorate. When people come into communities such as Mullewa and they see that they cannot have power on hot days, they will make choices. When they look over the hill and see that there is a town only 90 kilometres away that has lots of power, is on the ocean and all those things, they will go there. That is what will happen.

If we want to make genuine commitments to people living in small country towns, the first thing we have to do is recognise that the power supply is important. I would very much like the Ministers for Energy and Emergency Services to readdress the decision to not turn the power back on on days of high fire danger. They can tell me all the reasons they cannot turn it back on, but the fact of the matter is that it stays off for days and days and days and days.

Mullewa is not Manjimup. It is not in a forest. Once the crops of Mullewa are stripped, there is not that much fire risk.

Ms M.J. Davies: There's a bit of scrub.

Mr Shane Love; Mr Terry Redman; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr David Templeman; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Janine Freeman

Mr R.S. LOVE: Yes, there is a bit of scrub. People in the area are able to fight fires. They would rather that the analysis that suggests that leaving a community, especially a community that has a number of elderly people in it, without power be reconsidered. A fire is not the only risk; there is a risk that the community will suffer real harm economically, and the health and wellbeing of its residents will suffer from having no power for lengthy periods of time. I will be writing to both ministers—I am sure that they have letters on their desks already; if they have not, I am sure they soon will—asking that this whole situation be reassessed. It is getting out of hand and it is simply regulatory. This problem started happening only in about 2013. Before that, power was considered to be an essential service and people would do their best to get the power back on. Now, the last thing we do is turn the power back on. We are worried that on a hot day there might be a fire! Never mind that there are plenty of people around with firefighting skills who will offer to help by going around the paddocks and looking at the problems and getting out and fixing them. Turn the power back on. The town would actually thank the government very much, and my communities would not be in the position that they are in at the moment.

After living in the community for many years, I know that fire is a very real risk. The Minister for Planning said today that she had been out and fought a fire. I have been out and have fought fires once or twice myself! In the town I live in, Badgingarra, the whole community is able to fight fires because we do it every year. In fact, I remember in 2009–10 there was a very big fire in Badgingarra. I remember that the then Minister for Agriculture and Food, the member for Warren–Blackwood, toured around the area to look at the damage that had been done. He was a very good minister and he was very keen to get out and see what could be done to help people in the district. This happened before I was elected to Parliament, when I was shire president. On the very same day of that big fire, there was a very large fire in Toodyay. I was not the member for Moore then, but I had very good relations with members of the Shire of Toodyay. I remember discussing with them the issues they faced. I rang them and said that although we had had a big loss, it was nothing like the losses they had suffered. Toodyay lost so many houses and the fire disrupted that community in a big way. The Toodyay fire was a very big threat. Despite what the Minister for Planning said before, Nationals WA members, such as myself, represent communities on the outskirts of large communities—indeed, on the outskirts of the metropolitan area in Chittering, Toodyay, Gingin, Wundowie and the like. We are very much aware of those issues and risks. I was elected to the electorate of Moore about three or four years after that fire occurred. I personally went to see people who had still not been able to rebuild their homes because of insurance issues. Years later, their lives were still being disrupted by this very issue. Matters of fire control and community safety are of the gravest nature when we are dealing with these heavily timbered areas in the hills on the outskirts of Perth and in the forest areas that members such as the member for Warren–Blackwood represent. It is no laughing matter; it is no joke. We do not put economic opportunity ahead of public safety in these types of arrangements. As the member for Moore, I have seen the consequences that have occurred when a Minister for Planning —

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Could I just finish, please?

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Could I have the protection of the Chair, please?

As the member for Moore, I have witnessed the very serious situations that can occur when ministers override the good advice of planning agencies. I represent the town of Seabird. The advice given by the department was overridden by the minister of the day. The minister of the day decided that it would be a good idea to build houses right on the sandy foreshore of Seabird. The member for Warren–Blackwood, as the then Minister for Regional Development, had to come to the rescue and save those houses from being washed into the ocean, because the government was saying, “Too bad, so sad”, even though its own minister made that decision.

Mr P. Papalia: It was your government.

Mr R.S. LOVE: It was the state government. Governments of all persuasions had a policy to not intercede in these types of situations.

Amendment to Question

Mr R.S. LOVE: Given the grave nature of this circumstance and given what the minister has allowed to happen, I propose an amendment to the Premier’s Statement. I move —

That the following words be added after “noted” —

and that this house condemns the McGowan government for putting property and lives at risk due to the rejection of prudent planning advice and a haphazard approach toward bushfire risk management

Mr Shane Love; Mr Terry Redman; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr David Templeman; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Janine Freeman

Having moved that motion, I wish to put on the record how important it is to ensure that communities in the hills areas are managed. We have seen that Stoneville and all those areas have had problems. We know how dangerous those areas can be. We know that people can lose their lives, not just their property. We know that the Western Australian Planning Commission issued advice that this should not proceed, even though it proposed the matter in the first place.

MR D.T. REDMAN (Warren–Blackwood) [3.12 pm]: I wish to speak to the amendment moved by the member for Moore. It is quite appropriate. He raised a number of issues relating to fire management in Western Australia. Indeed, a lot of speakers this week have raised issues about fire management in their electorates and their concern for fires, and spoke particularly about their support for the volunteers and so on who have to respond to them. We also heard responses today to two questions asked by members of the Nationals WA of the Minister for Planning and the Minister for Fire and Emergency Services. Over the past number of years, some significant fires have led to inquiries and government agency responses, resulting in changes to the structure of those agencies, resourcing and planning. A whole heap of changes were made in response to the fires in the hills, Yarloop, Margaret River, Northcliffe and Forrestfield. Even yesterday, a fire down at Albany got away. Of course, there are also all the prescribed burning activities that happen around the state.

There are largely three areas in which the government can respond to the fire risk issue. It can respond with resources. Resources are about fire trucks, the emergency services levy for sheds to support those trucks, and the protective equipment and all the gear that goes to volunteers and career firefighters so that they are ready for the acute response to those fires. We can also put resources into prescribed burning and fire mitigation work, which certainly happened over the term of the last government and has, to a certain extent, under this government. We know that there is a bit of uncertainty with the enhanced prescribed burning program, because that finishes in June this year. There is no certainty of that program going beyond June. That has led to the department being able to meet its burning targets for the first time in about eight years—the first time targets have been met consecutively since about the early 1980s. We know that is very effective. The people on the ground say that it is critically important to have the landscape reduction of fuel to protect against those big landscape fires that happen from time to time. Fire mitigation investment on crown land—taking a tenure-blind approach to the fire planning in and around those regional communities—is happening, and there is a certain amount of support for it.

The other tool that is available to government is planning. We know that good planning reduces the risk of fires. What we have seen today in a response and last year in a decision from the Minister for Planning has gone against that planning advice and the advice of the Department of Fire and Emergency Services. Let us now bring ourselves to the heart of that. We are talking about a Mt Helena urban precinct. A metropolitan regional scheme amendment was put up.

Ms J.J. Shaw: Have you ever actually been there, member?

Mr D.T. REDMAN: I have been to plenty of places.

Ms J.J. Shaw: You haven't actually been to Mt Helena, though.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: I do not take the approach that the Minister for Emergency Services has taken.

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Leader of the Nationals WA, I understand that there have been some interruptions from the floor that are unacceptable to the member for Warren–Blackwood, so we will stop that, please. Member for Warren–Blackwood, would you please continue.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: Let us go through metropolitan region scheme amendment 1277/57 to the Mt Helena urban precinct. Members can get this off the web. Page 1 states —

The purpose of the amendment is to rezone approximately 45.83 ha of land to the south east of the Mount Helena townsite, from the Rural zone to the Urban zone in the MRS.

The proposed amendment will facilitate the urban expansion of the Mount Helena area and the development of the land, generally at an R5 (2,000m² lot size) density.

This is the report on submissions, dated October 2017.

Mr V.A. Catania: Madam Deputy Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the house. I think it is very important and that most members should hear what the member for Warren–Blackwood has to say.

Ms J.J. Shaw interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Swan Hills, I call you for the first time.

[Quorum formed.]

Mr D.T. REDMAN: I refer to page 3 of the report, which refers to the conclusion and the recommendations of the WA Planning Commission, which makes recommendations to the minister and provides advice before the minister signs off and makes her decision. It states —

The WAPC carefully considered all submissions lodged on the amendment and had regard to the advice of the DFES, Shire of Mundaring and the proponent. The WAPC also undertook a site inspection.

I understand that is something the Minister for Planning did not do. The Minister for Emergency Services certainly did not do that. In fact, he googled it. That was his response. It continues —

SPP 3.7 applies a presumption against approving strategic planning proposals (i.e. MRS amendments) or intensification of land uses, where there is a lack of certainty that the potential for significant adverse impacts can be adequately reduced or managed in the opinion of the decision maker. On balance, the WAPC resolved that the amendment should not be finalised as it does not comply with SPP 3.7.

Apparently, the minister is happy to build houses there and uses the argument that there are already houses there.

Ms J.J. Shaw interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Swan Hills, I call you for the second time.

Ms J.J. Shaw interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member, that is enough. You might have problems with what is being said. There is a time for you to interject and present your opinion. It is not now. The member for Warren–Blackwood is not taking interjections.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: It continues —

The WAPC, after considering the submissions, is satisfied that the amendment as shown generally on Figure 1 in Schedule 3 and in detail on the MRS Amendment Plan listed in Appendix 1 should not proceed to finalisation.

The WAPC recommends that the Minister for Planning refuse the amendment.

That is based on the “State Planning Policy 3.7: Planning in Bushfire Prone Areas”, which is a state government policy. It seems that the minister is happy to go back and argue, as she did in question time, that the building codes and the building regulations are a satisfactory response; that is, “We build a house that won’t burn down”, rather than what is also a state government policy position—state planning policy 3.7—which she has fundamentally ignored. She is going against the Western Australian Planning Commission’s planning advice, which is a group that went out and visited the site.

I also refer to the back of the document, which is a submission from the Department of Fire and Emergency Services. This is interesting. The department goes through a number of considerations in its response. The first consideration talks about policy objective 5.1, which is one of the objectives in state planning policy 3.7. It reads —

In line with the above policy objective, DFES do not support the proposed MRS amendment as an extreme bushfire hazard exists making the location unsuitable for intensification. The proposed MRS amendment would introduce an increased bushfire threat though the introduction of additional people, property and infrastructure at this location.

The department goes on to say —

The proposal is consistent with the definition of a ‘strategic planning proposal’ pursuant to SPP 3.7 therefore Policy Measure 6.3 and the relevant policy requirements must be applied.

As part of that, policy measure 6.7 of state planning policy 3.7 is a significant one because it is the one that says a bushfire management plan has to be in place.

The Minister for Planning has said on both the radio and in question time today that a bushfire management plan is in place. It is interesting that this policy says the bushfire management plan needs to have the endorsement of the Department of Fire and Emergency Services. I will finish with this before I come back to that point. The comments made by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services about policy measures 6.3 and 6.7 are —

Extract from *Hansard*

[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 14 February 2019]

p411d-428a

Mr Shane Love; Mr Terry Redman; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr David Templeman; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Janine Freeman

The proposed scheme amendment would significantly intensify development in an area with an extreme Bushfire Hazard Level.

The next point is policy measure 6.1.1 of state planning policy 3.7, which applies to the proposal. I have picked a comment out of the DFES commentary. It states —

DFES is of the opinion that the site represents an extreme bushfire risk that cannot be adequately reduced.

That is summed up by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, under the minister's very own state planning policies that give her guidelines to how she should make these decisions. The recommendation that came back, unsurprisingly—it goes to the WAPC in this instance—states —

DFES advice is that the intensification of development at this location would result in an increase in the threat of bushfire. The proposal does not comply with the intent, objectives and policy measures of SPP 3.7 and is subsequently not supported.

It is pretty comprehensive. A position is taken by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services recommending to WAPC that this should not go ahead because it simply cannot be made safe. We can now look at the decision that was made, which is in the same document. I quote from page 4 of the report on submissions —

The Minister has had regard to the WAPC's recommendation and in particular the advice of the Department of Fire and Emergency Services and has approved the amendment to an Urban zone.

The minister has made the decision to overrule the WAPC on the best advice from the agency that we have that looks into issues of fire risk. It is not an insignificant issue in Western Australia. I am not very familiar with planning, but I know it is rare for a Minister for Planning to override the decision of WAPC simply because it has all that background knowledge and it benefits from the advice of the best agencies we have to support ministers in putting planning policies in place. The minister has gone against her own planning policy. That is rare.

Think of the next steps. The minister has approved the zone change; it is now zoned urban. The developer will come along and say, "Righto, we're going to do a structure plan." On the radio, the minister banged on saying that a bushfire management plan has to be put in place, so she has backed what the policy says she has to do. That is quite right, but the policy also says, as I highlighted, that it needs the endorsement of the Department of Fire and Emergency Services. What is it going to do? When the structure plan comes into the department's office, they will say, "Right, let's get in a huddle and make a response to this." First of all, they did not support the whole development because they said it could not be done in such a way as to reduce the risk. Even WAPC hung on the last point in state planning policy 3.7, which is the precautionary principle. It states that if there are uncertainties and worries, the plan should be conservative. What is the department going to do? Will it give advice that says X, Y and Z should be done and then it will sign it? That means the department is signing off on advice for something it did not support from the start. That means the department is compromised. If it is signed off at the minister's insistence or the minister overrides it, we are breaking the bonds that have been put in place in planning policies in Western Australia to protect the people of Western Australia. I do not buy the argument that there are 20 houses there already. There are already houses, buildings and developments in places where there probably should not have been developments. However, this minister knows that we and, I am certain, governments, are about planning for what will happen in the future. That is why we have state planning policies. They are to give us guidance on the issues that are fundamental to protecting Western Australians. It is rare that a minister overrides a position of the Western Australian Planning Commission. In this case, it is not just a decision about amenity or environmental issues; it is this decision that is fundamental to the safety of people who are going to be living there in the future. I struggle to understand the argument that the minister is relying on the building codes and regulations. Rather than take a good planning approach with smart planning, they will build houses that will not burn down; that is impossible.

The Minister for Emergency Services said I had googled it. He was pretty wobbly in his response about whether he thought his agency was giving good advice. To paraphrase him, he said that the minister probably got it right. That is really securing yourself to your aims, the decision and to cabinet. He was pretty wobbly at best. I struggle to see why this Minister for Planning should not be held to account for a fundamental breach of her very own agency. It is a rare position that a minister overrides the WAPC. It was the early part of the Ministry. I think she was a bit power drunk when she went into this and said, "I'll sort them out." Perhaps she got a word from the local member, "Let's get this through." It was gung-ho and we will finish up with something that will put people at risk in the future. Fire and fire issues in Western Australia are significant. We deal with them every day. We have had inquiry after inquiry, trying to lay down a plan and position that makes people safe in Western Australia. That is why we have these policies. This minister is in breach of that. She needs to stand up and be accountable for her decision. I do not understand why she would go against WAPC with the resources it has. Representatives from WAPC went to the site and I would like to hear whether the minister went, but am pretty sure she did not. The

Extract from *Hansard*
[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 14 February 2019]
p411d-428a

Mr Shane Love; Mr Terry Redman; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr David Templeman; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Janine Freeman

Department of Fire and Emergency Services laid out a sound argument for why this was not a good idea based on planning principles. This minister should be condemned for her decision.

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan — Minister for Planning) [3.28 pm]: Again, the member has not outlined the facts and he has been misleading. There was no breach of anything. I have a role as the Minister for Planning to make a decision. The Department of Fire and Emergency Services is an advisory agency of the Western Australian Planning Commission. The WAPC makes recommendations to me. It is up to me to make the final decision and I have to balance all the issues in front of me.

I find it quite odd in this place when members approach ministers all the time to do things that their agencies have advised them not to do. I will not go through the particulars, but if it is not really a wetland, for example, it should not be classified as a wetland. Members question our agencies constantly. All I do is get letters from members of the National Party and the Liberal Party questioning agency advice. My agency has said that a bridge is unsafe; the member for Moore has said that it is safe, and I have worked with him to try to address that. Members want ministers to make commonsense decisions and to balance all the facts in front of them. That is what they and the public want. Ministers have an obligation to think about what is in front of them and the wider considerations to fulfil their role. As the Minister for Planning, my role is to take the advice of all the agencies and get recommendations, but ultimately it is my decision. I have not breached anything. I have not gone beyond my powers at all. I intended to bring commonsense to this job and I hope I have done so—that is, an ability to make decisions for the wider community and understand the situations of the people that we are here to represent. That is why I met with a group of Pickering Brook residents with the member from Kalamunda during the Darling Range by-election. They all sat around. A draft planning framework issued by the member's government stated that Pickering Brook should not be considered for any further housing because there was too much potential risk—that is basically what it said. I know the area. What should we do? Should we let the whole town site disappear? Is that what we should do? The Department of Fire and Emergency Services plays a huge role and provides advice about danger, but the role of government is to mitigate against that danger. That is why we look at new ways to build and clear the land. We make sure that we have perimeter roads—access is very important. A huge number of developments were supported by the member's government that had one access point. I think that is a problem, but I am not going to say that members opposite put lives in danger. That would be a stupid thing to say. But developments approved under the member's government face much higher risks than we are discussing today. They have one access point in and out. Suburbs in my electorate have one access point in and out. When there is a fire, they do not have alternative access. As a result of the Kelmscott–Roleystone bushfires—I know the area very well—a number of things were taken into consideration, such as where we shall build and, when we build, how we protect those homes.

It includes everything—the building regulations, the way that gutters are formed, the type of air conditioning homes have, and the clearance around homes. It includes making sure that everyone is far more alert about cleaning around their homes. As I said, I could point to all the developments that occurred under the member's government that pose significant fire risks, but I will not do that because it will not advance the cause. We are about sustainable development.

With the member for Kalamunda I met with a number of landowners in that area. The Pickering Brook town site has an ageing population. It has one school; it used to have three schools. It has a local shop. They want some potential subdivision—not a wholesale 300 square metre block subdivision, but some potential to grow that community and sustain it and somewhere that the older people in the community can continue to live. Here is a personal example. My mother lives on 10 acres. There is nowhere for her to move to in Roleystone. What should she do? Leave the entire area? We have to look at the town and make sure that the older generation has an opportunity to stay and the younger generation that decides to make that town its home has choices.

The reaction to the Kelmscott–Roleystone bushfires was significant. I applaud the previous government for a lot of the work that it did because it looked at the broader issues. But we have to be sensible about how we move into the future. If I had followed the advice in the draft framework for Pickering Brook, there would have been no further consideration. That is what we have to contend with. Should we say that people have those homes and have to live through it because they are already there, or should we look at sensible development and sustainable communities? I am sorry, but I am into the latter. I will be held to account. I have made a lot of decisions in which I supported the DFES recommendation, particularly when they are not adjacent to existing subdivision, do not have access roads, there are no existing homes and they are completely isolated. Of course I have accepted that advice, but this was a particular situation that was put to us.

Mr Shane Love; Mr Terry Redman; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr David Templeman; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Janine Freeman

This was initiated in 2014. Of 28 submissions, only two were objected to. The Shire of Mundaring knows these issues very well and supported it on the basis that it was consistent with its local planning strategy and it would require a fire management plan at subdivision stage. It was about making sure that it had a sustainable community that supported local business. That is what it did and I took that into consideration. I believe that local governments in the hills, such as Mundaring, Kalamunda, Armadale—to a point—and Serpentine–Jarrahdale, know their communities really well. The shire knew all the landowners really well and it supported it. It also included their volunteers. It is part of their plan. I took all that into consideration.

As I said, I know the risk. I alluded to it during question time. I grew up in Roleystone in a house in a paddock with an orchard across the road. Nowadays, that house would probably not exist because it would not be allowed, but that is where I grew up—in a house in the hills. I remember that I was in the packing shed. I was about 12 years old. I was going to lunch across the road—my uncle Tony was there with my cousins Jed and Rob—because the packing shed was across the road. There was a massive fire behind my parents' house. It was one of those incredible things that I will always remember. My dad got the water sprayer and the tank. I do not want to accuse them so many years on but we think it was the neighbours' picking machine that started the fire. That is why now when there is extreme fire danger, people do not use heavy machinery. It is because of these sorts of situations. My dad had the spraying machine. My cousins and I, with sacks, twigs and branches, put out spot fires in the grass. My dad put out fires on the trees. My neighbours came over with the sprayers. We fought the fire and protected the house, so I know what it is like. My sister has been evacuated many times in recent years. When her kids were young she lived in my bedroom because of the wind direction during the Karragullen bushfires. I know it.

However, I also know that Roleystone wants to be able to continue to subdivide and continue to have an aged-care place, for example. I know that Pickering Brook and Lesmurdie do, too. What should we do? Say that is it and shut up shop and that the communities will have to close? That is the proposition we have. Pickering Brook is a live example. Members can criticise me for commissioning the investigation into that town site, but I think it is safer to have a volume of population with a water infrastructure and the services to be able to combat any potential threat than to leave the houses stranded in the middle of a bushfire area without the appropriate services. People want politicians, members of Parliament and ministers to make commonsense decisions every day of the week.

Mr D.T. Redman: How many times has the minister overruled the advice of the Western Australian Planning Commission in those decisions?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I will get that information for the member.

I am a minister who takes my responsibility seriously. If members do not want ministers to make decisions, just give it to the WAPC. They should amend the Planning and Development Act so that the minister has no role. We were elected to make commonsense decisions. Like I said, every time a Nationals WA member comes to me now—I swear, every time—on any issue when my department has said, “That was too hard”, I will say, “Okay.”

Mr D.T. Redman interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The member cannot have it both ways. The member said that I should take the department's advice every time. Is that what member is saying? Every time the member wants a school bus stop moved, which I make sure we can encourage when we want to have access to —

Mr D.T. Redman interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: No.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members! Excuse me, minister. Hansard will be struggling to record the crux of this debate. Would you please stop interjecting on the minister. Member for Warren–Blackwood, that is fine if you seek permission, but the rest of you, from both sides of the chamber—government and opposition—please do not interject on the minister.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Why is it okay for the member for Warren–Blackwood to approach me on behalf of someone to make sure that I overrule departmental advice, but that cannot happen on other issues? Why is it okay for the member to do that? Why is it okay for the member opposite to come to me and say that the department got a decision wrong and ask me to fix it? Why is that okay?

Ms S. Winton interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It is okay because it is him!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Wanneroo, I call you for the first time. Member for Warren–Blackwood, I call you for the second time.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: How many times has the member for Warren–Blackwood approached a minister to seek an outcome for his constituents that is against existing department advice? How many times has he done that?

Mr D.T. Redman: I've done it.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes. Why is that okay?

Mr D.T. Redman: That's what happens and most people have the professionalism to be able to manage that issue in this chamber.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister, the issue here is that if you are asking for comment, you are going to get it.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Okay.

A hypothetical: why is it okay for members opposite to question Main Roads advice, Public Transport Authority advice about the safety of bus stops and engineering advice about the safety of footbridges? Why is that okay? When they want me to step in against departmental advice to sort out an issue, I have been prepared to do that—and I will continue to do that, because that is the type of minister I am to make sure that we get good outcomes. Members opposite should not come in here and tell me to accept this advice, not to question it and to not apply any commonsense to it—and then when they want something, tell me to question departmental advice; that is, question Main Roads, PTA or Department of Transport advice. The member cannot have it both ways. I outlined why I support this decision, which, as I said, is supported by the Shire of Mundaring.

There are access points and existing homes. The other point members opposite never really address is that there is an existing subdivision. Who approved that? Why is that there?

Ms M.J. Davies: We were told not to interject.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I do not need interjections; it is just a hypothetical question. Why is it there? This issue has been raised with me by lots of members. The previous government supported this subdivision even though there is one access point. It is a major fire safety risk. I could come into this chamber and question every decision made by the former government.

Mr D.T. Redman: Will you take an interjection?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: No. The member had his chance. Members opposite have shown that they want two sets of rules, one for them and another for other people. I am not allowed to apply —

Ms M.J. Davies: You're allowed to question your department. We're questioning your judgement.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I am allowed to make commonsense decisions that I think work for the community, and I will do that for all members. Let us face it; I have gone out of my way for the member for Moore on some of the decisions he has brought to this place more than his colleagues did previously. I have dealt seriously with people on their local matters. Yes, members come to me with an issue, and I take it to my department. What does the department say? The department tells me, "Geez, they have been trying this forever." I say, "Let's try to take a fresh look at it to see if we can sort it out." That is what I do. There cannot be two rules—one whereby local members can come to me and ask me to sort things out against departmental advice and another whereby I have to accept departmental advice. That is the case even though my experience is growing up in the hills. I know the Nationals do not understand working on an orchard on 41 degree days.

Mr V.A. Catania: Yes, I do.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: They do not understand the challenges of sustainable —

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: They do not want to hear about real-life experiences on the land because it embarrasses them. It embarrasses them that my father came to Roleystone, built an orchard from scratch, lived and breathed on the orchard and made our family's entire living as I was growing up from the land.

Mr V.A. Catania: I think the chemicals have got to you on the orchard.

Mr Shane Love; Mr Terry Redman; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr David Templeman; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Janine Freeman

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The member is responding to an amendment to the Premier's Statement. She should be heard and she should be able to do that without constant interruption from members. The other comment I think should be reviewed is what the member for North West Central just said.

Mr V.A. Catania: What was that?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: You know what you said and you should think about that.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members, I did not hear anything that the member for North West Central said. If something has gone wrong, I am sorry, but I did not hear it. Leader of the House, I have supported the minister all afternoon and I will continue to do so. Please, take care to address me.

Debate Resumed

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: They do not want to hear about living in the hills and the hills communities. Let us go through it again, because I know it irks the member for North West Central.

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for North West Central, I call you for the first and second time, which means you are on three calls.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: My father arrived in Western Australia in the 1950s and made a living for himself on an orchard. I grew up working on that orchard every summer. I spent days on the tractor and checking the reticulation. I have been involved in fighting fires in the hills. That makes members opposite uncomfortable because it is probably more experience on the land than they have put together.

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I understand the challenges.

I would like to add that John Day was on radio yesterday.

Ms S.E. Winton: John Day—the big decision-maker.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: He said that he probably would have made the same decision as me.

Several members interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: John Day said yesterday that if he were the minister, having asked a lot more questions and having a lot more information, he quite likely would have made the same decision. Ultimately, that is why we are elected. National Party members—not that they care about the hills communities where a lot of food is produced—obviously want to shut them down. Maybe they want to shut down some of those other communities through the great southern that have a significant fire risk. I am sure a lot of members probably live in areas that have significant bushfire risk adjacent to the properties. Members opposite believe that places like this subdivision should not be developed. Proposals will be put forward for developments around the state that I will make commonsense decisions on, because that is what I am about. Members can sit in this chamber and say this and that, but my commitment to fire safety cannot be questioned. I know the hills and I respect the people who live there. I also know that people who live in that area also have a responsibility for fire safety, and, as members know, they take it seriously. People who choose to live in the hills know they have a responsibility for fire safety. Successive governments have done a lot of work to ensure that people living in the hills understand their responsibilities.

As I said, members opposite cannot have it both ways. Members cannot come to me and ask me to question the department and fix something for them, and then tell me not to question the department. I looked at and I understand the issue. I took into account a number of factors, including the bushfire management plan. I think the Department of Fire and Emergency Services is quite capable of assessing a plan. The idea that somehow DFES is not going to assess a plan properly because of the Minister for Planning is completely false. What the member did today insults the intelligence and integrity of DFES. Of course, DFES will take that plan seriously. A bushfire management plan is a requirement of state planning policy and that is what the shire is working to do. I am sure everyone is working together to ensure that we get a sensible development and a sustainable future for the area.

Division

Amendment put and a division taken, the Deputy Speaker (Ms L.L. Baker) casting her vote with the noes, with the following result —

Extract from *Hansard*
[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 14 February 2019]
p411d-428a

Mr Shane Love; Mr Terry Redman; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr David Templeman; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Janine Freeman

Ayes (4)

Mr V.A. Catania	Ms M.J. Davies	Mr D.T. Redman	Mr R.S. Love (<i>Teller</i>)
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Noes (40)

Ms L.L. Baker	Mr T.J. Healy	Ms L. Mettam	Ms R. Saffioti
Dr A.D. Buti	Mr M. Hughes	Mr S.A. Millman	Ms A. Sanderson
Mr J.N. Carey	Mr W.J. Johnston	Mr Y. Mubarakai	Ms J.J. Shaw
Mrs R.M.J. Clarke	Mr P. Katsambanis	Mr M.P. Murray	Mrs J.M.C. Stojkovski
Mr R.H. Cook	Mr D.J. Kelly	Mrs L.M. O'Malley	Mr D.A. Templeman
Ms J. Farrer	Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup	Mr P. Papalia	Mr P.C. Tinley
Mr M.J. Folkard	Mr F.M. Logan	Mr S.J. Price	Mr R.R. Whitby
Ms J.M. Freeman	Mr M. McGowan	Mr D.T. Punch	Ms S.E. Winton
Ms E. Hamilton	Mr J.E. McGrath	Mrs M.H. Roberts	Mr B.S. Wyatt
Mrs L.M. Harvey	Ms S.F. McGurk	Ms C.M. Rowe	Mr D.R. Michael (<i>Teller</i>)

Pair

Mr P.J. Rundle

Ms M.M. Quirk

Amendment thus negatived.

Consideration Resumed

MR D.T. PUNCH (Bunbury) [3.54 pm]: It is 2019 and it is great to be back and great to be here. I cannot help but thank the electors of Bunbury for enabling me to work with people who inspire me so much. I listened to the previous speaker, the Minister for Planning, talk about her personal story, and I know the approach she brings to her portfolio. This government is about bringing that approach of critically reviewing and analysing issues to its decision-making. Every day, it is a joy to be here in Parliament and a joy to work in my electorate. I thank the electors of Dalyellup and Bunbury city, who brought me to this place. It is an honour to serve them.

We are, of course, at the mid-point of this Parliament—two years in. It is a great opportunity to reflect on what has been achieved and what is ahead, and that is what the Premier's Statement is about—setting out the agenda for the government in the year ahead and also acknowledging how far we have progressed. I would like to thank the Premier for his leadership and his commitment to teamwork over the past two years, and for the commentary he made in his Premier's Statement about government being about more than just meeting election commitments and rolling out projects. It is about thinking about our community, it is about direction and it is about leadership, and that is what our Premier and our cabinet team bring to government. We see evidence of that; certainly in my electorate, I hear about it every day when I doorknock and speak to people and meet people in forums. I will talk a little more about that shortly.

In his Premier's Statement, the Premier outlined a number of key themes, including a stronger economy. From my point of view, that is about jobs, training and diversity of industry. It is about looking down the track at what new industries are facing us, as well as supporting and building resilience into our existing industries. With regard to regional prosperity, again, we are looking specifically at how the benefits of Western Australia as a whole can be developed within our regions. We are looking at the issues of regional economic diversity and quality of life. We recognise that we are a government that is about building one state and one community that is united in building a better Western Australia. It is not about the politics of regions versus metro, or pitting one community against another; it is about working together to build prosperity.

The Premier talked about a healthy, sustainable environment. The environment is the infrastructure that we all depend on. The Premier outlined some of the major agendas for this coming year with regard to climate change policy; the waste strategy, which has been launched; and the transition to new technologies and renewables. There are some major agendas in my electorate—again, in terms of looking at some of the land areas that we need to preserve and enhance into the future.

We also need to focus on the wellbeing of the Aboriginal community. I am often asked by some ill-informed members of my community why we focus on Aboriginal wellbeing. It is about sharing our history, sharing heritage, sharing culture and addressing the disadvantage that has built up over so many years. I am so pleased to see that we are making progress in that area.

Extract from *Hansard*

[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 14 February 2019]

p411d-428a

Mr Shane Love; Mr Terry Redman; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr David Templeman; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Janine Freeman

We also need to focus on having a safer community, which is a responsibility that I heard the member for Churchlands say we had abrogated, but we have not. The government is clearly concerned about having a safer community, and is looking both at the local community level and at some of the major challenges that are affecting us. There is no clearer example of that than the efforts to which the government is going to control, manage and limit the impact of meth within our community and the importation of meth. The government is undertaking a suite of activities to control it.

Finally, the government is working towards a brighter future for our children. That is something governments have to be absolutely committed to. It is about our future as a whole, our future as a community, quality education, quality early childhood support and ensuring that, as far as possible, families can provide a safe environment for children to grow up in.

Then there is our legislative agenda. It is so comprehensive that we will require a further two sitting weeks this year, with 91 bills already introduced into this place and a legislative framework that is wide and diverse. This year is going to challenge us. There are going to be some real challenges for all of us with the proposed legislation around assisted dying. It will challenge us to think about our values on life, the process of dying and death itself, and how we deal with that.

At the other end of the diversity spectrum, we will deal with some longstanding issues that need to be addressed. One that is close to my heart is the police redress scheme. That is the scheme for police officers who have been medically retired due to a work-related injury or illness. There will be tailored *ex gratia*-type payments, and it will be a first in Australia with payments up to \$150 000 that will be assessed by an independent panel. Then we have the approach of our Minister for Environment to addressing the basis for the container deposit scheme and removing the barriers. I remember as a very young person being able to go out and collect bottles and containers, take them down to the local depot and get a little bit of pocket money out of that. We lost all that, and consequentially we lost the ability to manage the recycling of those containers. Addressing the barriers that have prevented a container deposit scheme happening will be a very important piece of legislation.

I contrast that to the opposition. I eagerly awaited the opposition's vision for the year ahead. But before we even started on the Premier's Statement and talked about vision, there was a suspension of standing orders.

Mr M. Hughes: Disgraceful!

Mr D.T. PUNCH: That was a disgraceful act that highlighted to me that the opposition was keener to pursue small political points—pursue its own objectives—than to fundamentally take a bit of time out on the first day of the parliamentary sittings of 2019 to articulate where it thinks we should be heading. It has no vision, and because of that there is a complete lack of strategy and a lot of negativity. Over the past three days we have heard that negativity—in fact, I felt a little bit of my enthusiasm waning under this sea of negativity. There have been a couple of little shining lights every now and again in response to the Premier's Statement, but by and large there has been a pretty negative and defeatist sort of attitude. I saw attempts by the member for Churchlands to inject a bit of life into the opposition with an animated set of statements.

[Quorum formed.]

Mr D.T. PUNCH: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for calling a quorum.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr S.J. Price): Members, keep it down, please.

Mr D.T. PUNCH: I was saying that the opposition has no alternative ideas and no contribution to improving the lives of the people of Western Australia, just criticism, whingeing and moaning.

I did enjoy the member for Cottesloe's foray into life in the 1950s that highlighted to me that there was clearly depth and a passion for history, but I think a more contemporary view was attempted by the member for North West Central when he talked about tourism. He was a little concerned about airfares, and I think we all acknowledge the airfare issue. But I have always thought that local members who live in and understand the regions really have a passion to be pragmatic and find a solution to an issue in the regions. What better solution for the north west with its great tourism product of adventure tourism, drive tourism and getting out there and having a look and experiencing the best of what we have to offer. What did he say? "Can't have any tourism in the bush because you can't fly from your home in Perth and get up there at an acceptable cost." Well, back on 7 November I remember him waxing lyrical about our drive strategy for tourism, and he was complaining at the time that petrol prices were too expensive to drive up there. That meant people needed to fly, but flights were too expensive. He talked about the 20¢ sort of price differential between Monday and Tuesday, and was bemoaning the fact that prices increased on a Wednesday and Thursday. But of course those who live in the regions know

Extract from *Hansard*

[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 14 February 2019]

p411d-428a

Mr Shane Love; Mr Terry Redman; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr David Templeman; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Janine Freeman

there is no price differential between Monday and Tuesday—it is the same throughout. Clearly, the member for North West Central was having a bit of a struggle buying fuel at the local Claremont service station to enable him to drive up north.

I was pretty disappointed with that negativity because he highlighted one small part of the drive strategy brochure that had been put out—a sort of caricature map that highlighted Western Australia as a whole. The member for North West Central clearly thinks that every town in Western Australia should be on there, whereas it is designed to tease people into opening the brochure. If he had opened the brochure, he would have found a section dedicated to exploring Warlu Way, right through the Pilbara—a 12-day wonderland trip of Ningaloo Reef, Karijini and Millstream Chichester National Parks, and outlining the attractions of Karratha, Roebourne and Port Hedland. I know that the member for North West Central is pretty preoccupied with Karratha. It is a fantastic opportunity.

Then there is the heritage coastal drive, to which is devoted another few pages. That takes us up through the wonderland of Shark Bay into Carnarvon, and again into Ningaloo Reef. The member for North West Central could be promoting those tourism opportunities, but instead, like his colleagues, he focuses on the negative, not finding solutions and criticising those who are getting on with the job of putting creative and innovative opportunities together.

I will now talk a little about my electorate, what we have achieved over the past two years and what lies ahead. I keep putting that conversation to my community. Last Saturday we had the first of a series of forums with the community that are essentially a mid-term review. I explained to the community what we are about and what we are achieving, and there was a conversation with the community about how they think we are going and what they see as their hopes for the future. It has been really positive. People in my electorate are responding to our plan for Bunbury, they are engaged with our plan for Bunbury and they are excited by the plan for Bunbury. It is not a list of projects or election commitments, but a strategy to build the infrastructure, diversify our regional economy, build the community sector and improve the quality of life in our community. In fact, my vision for my electorate is very much a place where a person can find a job, build a career, have access to professional development, build a home—not in the figurative sense of building a house, but a home with a family and community connection—and the kids can have a healthy lifestyle and enjoy school in a place they love. What more do we want for a vision for our community right across the board?

As part of that we put in place the Bunbury Development Committee, which has been doing fantastic work under the guidance of Robert Fenwick. It is driving the Bunbury waterfront project that has seen a complete transformation of the Bunbury waterfront area. As we tomorrow officially open the Dolphin Discovery Centre, as we pay tribute to the wonderful statue celebrating our Noongar heritage in the south west—the Wardandi Boodja statue—and as we celebrate the fantastic beachfront parklands that have been developed, I will be thinking about how that has changed the way people think about our city and community, and the sense of pride and confidence in the future that it has developed. More importantly, I will be thinking about the fact that our local Noongar community and our non-Aboriginal community are working together on a journey that takes us forward to the future.

In our suburbs, the development committee has a specific focus on Glen Iris, which has been subject to horrendous traffic management problems and very poor ad hoc past planning. It will address all that. We are commissioning a major traffic study, and the Minister for Transport has already been engaged in looking at some of the short-term solutions we can put in place. We will resolve some of the land-use planning issues so that we can get a coherent framework around the future development of that area as a suburb. We will address the long-term disadvantage that people in the Withers community have experienced. That plan is being rolled out in 2019.

We have major redevelopment works happening at South Bunbury Primary School, Newton Moore Senior High School, which will have a new science, technology, engineering and mathematics centre, and Bunbury Senior High School. I congratulate the new Baptist college opening up in Dalyellup. But it is not just buildings that drive the quality of education in our community; it is what happens inside them. It is about the relationship between the teachers and students and the relationship the teachers have amongst each other as a team, and how they can build a framework and a community that helps to drive and foster that sense of respect for learning. Last year I visited Maidens Park Primary School, Djidi Djidi Aboriginal School and Picton Primary School, which are located in some of the areas where there is some severe disadvantage. I especially want to acknowledge those schools for their achievements in building that sense of community and sense of place for the children in their care, both within the schools and in their connections to the community. They have special relationships with their students and they are achieving amazing outcomes.

Mr Shane Love; Mr Terry Redman; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr David Templeman; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Janine Freeman

From a health point of view, I was very pleased late last year to finally start, with the Minister for Health, the turning of the sod for the step up, step down 10-bed mental health facility. This was promised by the previous government back in 2013. In late 2016, after years of inaction, it was re-announced as an election commitment by the then government, recycling its election commitments. I am very pleased that we have got on with the job, and it is now being built. Mental health is a serious issue in my community. For people suffering anxiety and depression who are not ill enough to be in a hospital, but need care and support, this will be a well-used and overdue facility. We have also seen the announcement of the 19-bed rehabilitation service promised as part of our methamphetamine action plan. That is now operational at Brunswick Junction, providing an important service, and is integrated into a network of pre and after-care support, to enable people to make the best of the rehab journey, so we minimise the risk of people slipping back into an addictive pattern of behaviour on release because of a lack of support services. I particularly want to acknowledge the work of the Breakaway Aboriginal Corporation and Doors Wide Open, who are doing fantastic work in that pre and post-care support from a rehabilitation perspective. Then there is advance planning for a major upgrade of the Bunbury Hospital, in recognition of the population growth in the region, so that the hospital can continue to provide a high level of care both in my electorate and for the region as a whole. It functions as a regional hospital for people living as far away as Augusta, Manjimup and Pemberton. Extensive planning has occurred, and the government has been rigorously preparing a business case. I thank the minister for his continuing interest in the hospital and the health agenda for Bunbury.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr D.T. PUNCH: The Dolphin Discovery Centre is a magnificent addition to our tourism product. It astounded people locally when it was formally opened and made available to the public, and it will provide a year-round interactive experience focusing on not only dolphins, but also the marine biology of the Geographe Bay area. It currently brings in volunteers, as tourists, from overseas who want to spend six weeks at the dolphin centre, and it accounts for around 200 000 visitors a year. It will be a major platform for Bunbury, integrated into the waterfront development. As people come into Bunbury in the future, they will see a city that says, "Wow, this is an interesting place to visit, explore and spend time in."

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup: Bunbury?

Mr D.T. PUNCH: Bunbury—far more interesting than Dawesville. I invite the member for Dawesville to come down and have a look. It might be a case of look and learn about how a city, under a previous Labor government in the 1980s, set about an agenda for transforming itself from an industrial, port-related heartland into a city that is sophisticated, vibrant, intriguing and looking to the future.

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup interjected.

Mr D.T. PUNCH: I am sure that the local leadership down there would be very intrigued to see the cynicism on the member's face. That is what I mean—it is negativity, versus the positivity of this government.

I particularly want to comment on the new-look facilities that are about to go into the Koombana Park area. This is an area of land between the mangroves and the ocean. It is a unique environment, and the lookout will be a fantastic addition to the entry statement that encourages people to stop and stay longer. I also want to pay tribute to the work of sculptors Alex and Nicole Mickle. They have produced a fantastic sculpture at Koombana Park that symbolises the tradition and history of the Noongar people, and it was developed with the Noongar people. It is celebrated by our whole community as a fantastic sculpture. I understand that it has generated immense excitement in the art world, for not only the sculpture itself, but what it represents for heritage and history. It is now tracking over a million views on the artists' own website. It is something that our city will celebrate tomorrow, and that will be an important symbol in the journey of us and the Noongar community, walking and looking into the future together. All these things are changing how our community thinks and feels about itself and the pride it has as the state's second city. That is why I am certainly proud of Bunbury.

Major infrastructure planning is underway for the Bunbury outer ring road, which will absolutely transform the planning opportunities for Bunbury. It will remove the current conflicts between regionally based and local traffic, provide a seamless route for freight to and from the port, and provide an opportunity for expansion of the port itself. It has been awaited for a long time—since the 1990s—and it was a primary project that all four local governments in the great Bunbury area were committed to. The government said, as part of its election commitments, that it would commence the planning for that in the plan for Bunbury. Not only did we commence the planning, but we also negotiated with the commonwealth and achieved the funding. That project is secured and is now going through its final planning stages. It will trigger amazing opportunities for the future of our port.

Extract from *Hansard*

[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 14 February 2019]

p411d-428a

Mr Shane Love; Mr Terry Redman; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr David Templeman; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Janine Freeman

The Premier mentioned Kemerton, Albemarle and the lithium strategy. That, coupled with the amount of industrial land in the greater Bunbury area, means a very bright future for the industries of the future, in export-related manufacture as well as import-related assembly of products. We have land, infrastructure and surplus power, and we will be continuously looking to make sure that we can take advantage of that to drive home industry opportunities for our community over 2019–20.

I turn now to small business. The member for Perth was passionate about small business in his response to the Premier's Statement. Small business has been doing it tough in Bunbury. I talk to small business regularly. I walk up and down the main street and talk to the retailers. I meet with the retailers in forums, and with small businesses in our industrial areas at regular breakfasts, and the feedback I am getting is that there is growing confidence. There have been more visitors to Bunbury than retailers in the central business district can recall for a long time, and I think that is in response to the work that we are doing on the waterfront. The government has supported small businesses directly, with assistance with the development of a collaborative marketing framework, so that our CBD is united around common themes, rather than individual retailers competing. I particularly want to acknowledge here Cheryl Kosiek, Julieanna Frisina, Megan Gianfrancesco and the Bunbury–Geographe Chamber of Commerce. It is amazing what can be achieved when people are positive and collaborative. Unlike the negativity on the other side and the speculation about who will be the next Leader of the Opposition, we see collaboration and positivity.

In the area of the environment, we have already announced the commitment to the Preston to ocean regional park and the Leschenault Regional Park, and I am pleased to see that same sense of collaboration with local governments working on waste as a collective issue. I particularly acknowledge the work of Councillor Murray Cook from the City of Bunbury, and the chair of the Bunbury–Harvey Regional Council. There is some amazing work happening in that space. I am proud of this government's achievements in banning single-use plastic bags and introducing legislation to bring a container deposit scheme into being. I have a lot of sympathy with the comments of the member for Perth about the amount of plastic waste being generated, and what we could be doing to improve that.

Finally, I would like to comment on this government's commitment to local content. We have heard lots of negativity from the other side about the Western Australian Jobs Act 2017, but I can say that, in my electorate, the South West Development Commission has been doing a fantastic job, using the Western Australian Jobs Act as a catalyst for a variety of forums and information sessions with local contractors and suppliers to generate the kinds of linkages necessary to take advantage of major construction contracts flowing from the state.

The pilot of the Western Australian Jobs Act is rolling out with Bunbury Regional Prison, and a significant amount of local content is going into that reconstruction as a consequence. The South West Development Commission has been a catalyst in driving the message locally. It has been doing that through information sharing forums; industry forums where local contractors can meet up with lead contractors and share ideas; alliance building and the identification of local capability; breaking down contracts into manageable portions; and looking at addressing supply chain logistics, which is really enabling people to put the concept of value for money back into the equation rather than it being simply a race to the bottom based on price. Those concepts of local content apply equally to the not-for-profit and community services sector in my electorate. The not-for-profit sector recently banded together to adopt a buy-local strategy. They have worked out an accreditation base for local organisations that is locally managed. It is purchasing locally and having the kinds of relationships that provide the best quality service locally to their clients. They are doing some fantastic work. Again, I would like to acknowledge Forrest Personnel in particular and the Bunbury–Geographe Chamber of Commerce and Industry for the work they are doing.

My electorate has a very bright future. In so many ways I think we are already arriving at the vision that I spoke about earlier for the Bunbury electorate. I always have to remember and remind people that the Bunbury electorate is an electorate that includes two distinct communities: the City of Bunbury and the community of Dalyellup. Both of them are large and have a range of needs that we are systematically working out how to address. When I hear the negativity that flows across from the other side, when I hear all the catcalls and mindless motions to suspend government business, I come back to a sense of what it is that we are achieving in a positive way in our electorates. I am always inspired by the positivity that I hear on this side of the house.

MS J.M. FREEMAN (Mirrabooka) [4.22 pm]: It gives me great pleasure to stand and contribute to the debate in response to the Premier's Statement, which outlined what the Labor government has done and what its plans are for the future. I would like to start in the same way that the Premier did, by respecting and acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we meet, the Wadjak people of the Noongar nation, and their elders past and present. I would like to acknowledge the Premier's passion for a WA that is fair, prosperous and brimming

Mr Shane Love; Mr Terry Redman; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr David Templeman; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Janine Freeman

with opportunity, where parents know that their children will grow up with opportunities beyond those that they had and where the dividends of our prosperity are shared with and felt throughout the community.

I particularly want to note the Premier's commitment to jobs. As I have said in this house before, I again note the appreciation of the community I represent for the government's contribution to the establishment of the Kaleidoscope program, a newcomer workforce participation project that is modelled on the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council. It had a very successful first year and it is looking to the future on the basis of all the programs it ran last year. One of those was the Kaleidoscope mentoring project, which concluded towards the end of last year and in which 13 mentee and mentors paired successfully. Based on the evidence of the Toronto program, which this program is based upon, it is suggested that successful mentees will go on to find jobs within their professions within six to nine months. That is very important, but it is still very much a program based on giving skilled, newly arrived Australians the networks and opportunities that many of us have had the privilege of growing up with in Australia.

We still need to work on helping the long-term unemployed. The unemployment rate in the Mirrabooka and Balga region is still over 20 per cent. Unemployment is still a blight on our community. The fact that many people are still struggling to find ongoing employment results in financial and social consequences.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members, can you keep that conversation down.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: I note that a federal project, done through the Council of the Ageing, has been set up to mentor the long-term employed. I welcome that work, particularly for young people. I welcome that those people have come into the community to work with many of the other services and organisations in our community that work very hard on this issue.

Can I say that one organisation that does not work very hard on this is Jobactive providers, although I do not think it is their fault. I think the federal government has made Jobactive network providers more compliance-focused organisations rather than organisations that assist people. People walk into our office on a weekly basis to complain about Jobactive network providers and how they feel that they are in no way assisting them to help them to find ongoing and fulfilling employment. One particular community member told me that when he told a Jobactive network that he felt that it could do more to help him gain employment, because he had been unemployed for such a long period of time, he was told pointedly that it was not a recruitment agency and that if he wanted that sort of service he should pay a recruitment agency. It is disappointing that the federal government's recent report on Jobactive seems to sing the praises of a Jobactive system that is fundamentally flawed. I welcome the federal Labor Party's announcement that if it is successful in the May election, which has still not been announced but for which we are still waiting with bated breath to be announced, it will make a commitment to both employees and employers to overhaul employment services so they do not result in just a churn of employees into unsuitable jobs for short periods of time with no prospects into the future, and to create a viable and good operation that will connect unemployed Australians with decent and stable jobs. That should be applauded and we should be talking to our community about this positive change that the federal Labor Party wants to introduce in such a vital and important area. It would not be inappropriate for our government to welcome those changes as well, because there is no doubt that our focus on employment must acknowledge that millions of dollars go into Jobactive networks. It needs to serve the community and not itself, although, as I said, I think in many instances it is hamstrung by the way the federal Liberal government has administered the program.

I welcome the Premier's commitment to technical and further education institutes. The Premier promised to improve outcomes for TAFE and high school students. He said —

This will be achieved by ensuring only quality registered training organisations are engaged, adding rigour to senior secondary qualifications, and refocusing the list of qualifications offered to students.

Balga TAFE is a vital part of the Mirrabooka community. It has great facilities, and facilities that need to be built upon. One thing that should be considered in the future is that it faces into the suburb, not out into the broader community. When people drive along Mirrabooka Avenue they see only the back of the Balga TAFE, whereas if they go around the corner they see that the front of Balga TAFE is facing the suburban streets. It seems to me that we need to showcase our great quality institutions to our community and that we should consider it worthy to showcase what great education facilities we have in our TAFE sector.

Members will be aware that the Education and Health Standing Committee presented a report entitled "Putting VET to the test: An assessment of the delivery of Vocational Education and Training in Schools". Page 20 of that report outlined how many registered training organisations delivered vocational education and training courses to years 11 and 12 students. There is a commitment to ensuring that those registered training organisations

are quality organisations that can deliver. We certainly do not want to end up with a situation in which people do courses and do not end up with qualifications. One school told me that some students were not able to graduate because the registered training organisation had not got back the requisite marking and completion of the assessment. That had an impact on a student's capacity to apply for further education. I am aware that that is not uncommon. That whole aspect of registered training organisations needs an overhaul. Again, although this is predominantly a federal issue, I am not sure whether other people are aware of the plethora of private universities that have set themselves up and have consequently taken money from students under HECS and then gone broke. One was situated in Malaga. A number of students who were studying there could not complete their course because it had folded. I think we need to reinvest in our public tertiary institutions and stop this proliferation of small—frankly, quango-type—institutions that offer courses, take taxpayers' money through HECS and do not deliver. We have a really strong system of education. We do not want to undermine that if we intend to use it as an important part of developing our economy. Focusing on quality trainers is very much a part of that.

As a result of the Education and Health Standing Committee report on vocational education and training, Minister Ellery released a press statement in October 2018 saying that the government would investigate the requirement for achieving a Western Australian Certificate of Education to graduate and that it be reconsidered to ensure schools are providing a sustainable future for students. That was a recommendation of the committee. It is very important for committee members to see the hard work that they do result in positive and good changes in the broader environment and in the policy position of government. We were very pleased with that announcement. I understand that the School Curriculum and Standards Authority has started the consultations, and they have been ongoing. Recommendations around other pathways for achieving WACE will be put before the minister.

Such a reconsideration of those pathways is really important for many of the students at Balga Senior High School, as many of them can be quite disadvantaged by the limitations on WACE qualifications that often occur because of their English skills. Although they have the competency to complete things, and teachers want to graduate the students, they are hampered by red tape. One of the teachers spoke to me about a young male student who had finished year 12 but was unable to graduate and receive his WACE because of one test around language competency. He was able to complete everything else. That was hampering his capacity to go on to further education at TAFE, which seemed particularly dire for him.

Our report also recommended that guidance counsellors be considered for high school students, as did the federal Parliament report on transition from schools. That recommendation was dealt with by saying that individual schools had the capacity to do that. I think that some consideration needs to be given for a broader across-the-board educational commitment to guidance counsellors. I say that because I have a great representation of that sort of guidance counselling process that occurs through the Girls Academy at Balga Senior High School. It is a good example of that vital guidance service to young Indigenous women in the community. The Girls Academy has around 950 girls contracted to attend the 16 WA academies, resulting in school attendance rates around seven per cent higher than the all-Indigenous rate. It has been really successful. The academy faces ongoing difficulty with its funding model, as it relies on one-third from the Australian government, one-third from a state or territory government and one-third from the corporate and philanthropic sectors. The Northern Territory, New South Wales and Queensland governments contribute directly to their third of the funding. However, the expectation in Western Australia is that the schools have to contribute that one-third financial component. As members can imagine, the schools where the Girls Academy is operating have many demands on their finances, given the make-up of their schools. It is particularly difficult for some of those schools to meet that financial commitment, despite the fact that they have been operating well and have had great relationships with the Girls Academy.

The Girls Academy was founded in Western Australia in 2004. It has the most academies running in Western Australia. It is really clear that some of the schools cannot meet the financial commitment. The administration of the Girls Academy wants to maintain those longstanding relationships and has endeavoured to keep them going through its own funds, but it is limited in what it can provide. It would be great to see the Western Australian government come on board and give the Girls Academy the same level of support that other states have provided, and frankly is afforded to the boys' program at Clontarf Aboriginal College. I think it would be equitable to see that occur.

One of the graduates from the Balga Girls Academy is a young girl named Shanieka Ryder. I met with her this week. She was chosen out of 2 000 applicants to go to Los Angeles and Sydney to participate in mentoring workshops as part of the Australian Indigenous mentoring experience program. They are the sorts of young people who are produced by the Girls Academy—people who have gained the confidence to put themselves forward and to be role models to other young women in the Aboriginal community.

Extract from *Hansard*

[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 14 February 2019]

p411d-428a

Mr Shane Love; Mr Terry Redman; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr David Templeman; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Janine Freeman

While I am talking about Balga Senior High School, I need to advocate for the school and its facilities. It has a fabulous music performance-based program in which the kids do everything. They set up the stage, and they are responsible for the sound and the performance.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: It is called OLE, Only Love Exists. It is a great collaboration of students and staff. They come out and engage with the community regularly. Unfortunately, unlike many other schools, Balga Senior High School has a really limited performance space. Despite the fact that its P&C does great things like arrange for ball gowns and suits to be donated so students have ball gowns and suits to wear to their ball, the P&C is not in a position to fundraise for performance facilities like Mount Lawley Senior High School did when I was there. I want to put it out there, in the lead-up to a federal election, that funding would be well-used and well-appreciated at Balga Senior High School.

I commend all the schools and parents and citizens associations in the electorate for their good work. I welcome the additional education assistants who will be provided to assist in the classrooms this year. They will be well-utilised and well-appreciated.

I commend to the house that Paint the Town REaD is coming to Western Australia in March, with others, for the seventh National Early Literacy Conference. Paint the Town REaD engages everyone to read, talk, sing, write and draw with their babies from birth make them school ready. A program is run in Mirrabooka and the work it does is great. The Paint the Town REaD book relay has been launched from Perth to the Pacific and it will include 78 communities. A welcome reception for the conference will be held in Parliament on Wednesday, 20 March. We will all be in Parliament at that time. It will be in the Aboriginal People's Gallery during the dinner break and I am sure all members will be welcome to come along and listen to these great people who work really hard in our community to encourage literacy.

I also want to give thanks for and welcome the Herb Graham Recreation Centre upgrade that has commenced. It looks pretty exciting; I have been in there. It was made possible by this government and it is a much-loved facility for performance, community events and basketball. It also has a great multicultural centre. It is usually used for iconic events such as the Mirrabooka Harmony celebration, but this year the Mirrabooka Harmony event will be held at The Square, Mirrabooka. It has strongly come on board to work with the community on a number of issues. The event will also combine with a *Guinness World Records* drumming record attempt for the most nationalities in a drum circle. It is fitting that the cultural hub of Western Australia—Mirrabooka—will be the place where a *Guinness World Records* drumming record for the most nationalities in a drum circle will take place. Come along on 15 March 2019 to see a great record be set. I am really appreciative of how positively The Square has worked with the community. This positivity was on display recently while working with the council and others, including the police and Nyoongar Outreach, to deal with antisocial behaviour in a vacant building just adjacent to The Square's entry. In the local government reforms and in some of the planning reforms we will look at in the future, we need to be able to address vagrant behaviour in vacant buildings. These people were sleeping, fighting and drinking in a building that security from the shops, the police and representatives from the City of Stirling could not go into because it was a private building and frankly, it took a long time for the owners to do anything about it.

The member for Balcatta and some of his ex-colleagues may disagree with me but I think some of the behaviours in the area between the bus shelter and the doors to the Mirrabooka shops would be resolved by getting rid of the town square, which was built with the best of intentions but has resulted in the worst of outcomes. It is really not operating as anything useful in the community. It is just a place where people have to traverse some really poor behaviours. Over the last so many years we have tried to activate it. We might be able to do a drum circle on one day, but that will not activate it. Frankly, it would be better used as parking because that is a really great need in the area at this point.

Regarding Harmony Week, I think all the people in this house need to reject the constant and ongoing fear politics that surround us at the moment, including the constant and horrible catchphrases that lead people to think they are under threat from others and from vulnerable people in the world and within our own community, and the xenophobia that is a blight on our politics, which is based only on gaining power points, not on having good governance, good policies and a good community. Fear politics is the worst politics. It is not based on policies that advance our community. The policies that we need should reflect our history—one of a multicultural nation with a proud Indigenous history that has survived attacks and has a proud history of a growing nation of prosperity. Policies should reflect our contemporary diversity. They should not fall into the fear politics of baseless accusations that just make people feel less safe in their own communities. I commend this government for working positively

Extract from *Hansard*

[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 14 February 2019]

p411d-428a

Mr Shane Love; Mr Terry Redman; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr David Templeman; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Janine Freeman

and collaboratively with all members of our community with the goal of standing up for the whole community, as the Premier said so admirably.

The New Zealand government has announced that its 2019 budget will focus on the wellbeing of the community using the Treasury's living standards framework, with indicators that include social, natural and human capital as well as the usual financial/physical capital. Such moves are not in isolation and I note the broad consensus that is growing in the United States Democratic Party to endorse the "Green New Deal" that focuses on tackling climate change and inequity as the country moves to zero carbon emission in 10 years, if the deal goes ahead. One of the indicators the New Zealand government will focus on is how safe people feel in the community. Safety is also paramount to people in the Mirrabooka electorate. I want to place on record how much admiration I have for the Balga Community Action group, which tackles this issue and works hard to promote the positives of the area. I was pleased to assist with the community safety forum that was held at the end of last year. It contributed to the ongoing conversation around crime prevention in our neighbourhoods.

I give special thanks to Senior Sergeant Neil Morton-Smith, the previous officer in charge of the Mirrabooka Police Station. He has recently moved to another position but I want to put on record how much we appreciate the work he did in the community to make us all feel safer. At forums, he was open and honest with the community about home burglary in the area going down, while car break-ins were going up and the sort of stuff that could be done. The community really felt they had been heard. He will be greatly missed.

Although community members understand that the golden rule is to report crime to police whenever they see something, they are still troubled by the ongoing petty crime of unlicensed motorbikes and begging and stealing at the local shops. They are appreciative of the ongoing critical police presence in Balga and really want to continue to work with them in such a positive way as they have been able to in the past. I will continue to work with the police and the Minister for Police on these important safety issues in our community and I am proud that our government is focused on this.

I am honoured to serve in a government that is focused on the prevention of domestic violence in our communities. I was very saddened that Balga resident Darshika Nilmini Kudaligama was allegedly killed by her husband, and I send my deepest condolences to her family. All violence should be called out and opposed. I was deeply concerned to hear of the death of Louise Allison Langhorn last week as the result of a cowardly assault by a car full of men. I concur with the questions raised in the media about the same anger not being expressed at her and Darshika's death as for the other appalling killings in Melbourne. If someone is not murdered in the inner city, is not a bright young woman with a bright smile, or is not subject to the same violent crime, it does not create the same mass outcry. The violent death of any person in our community is terrible and the continual deaths of women in our community has to be called out. Violence against women is a massive problem. I thank the Balga community for raising this and look forward to working with it to acknowledge that the lives of women in our community should be safe from harm.

I want to congratulate the organisers of the Perth Festival on Boorna Waanginy at Kings Park. I was privileged to hear Doolan Leisha Eatts, Walter Eatts, and other Noongar elders speak as we walked through the trees. Doolan Leisha Eatts and Walter Eatts are elders in the community that I represent. I congratulate them on the release of their current book. They are prolific writers and this new book is an important contribution to the ongoing contemporary knowledge of the frontier wars and that this country was governed by people for 60 000 years before white settlement.

That takes me to the State Coroner's findings on suicides in the Kimberley. We need to realise that the coroner found that the crushing effects of intergenerational trauma have been a part of the litany of tragedy that has occurred in that community. I point people to the Education and Health Standing Committee's report "Learnings from the message stick: The report of the Inquiry into Aboriginal youth suicide in remote areas", which basically stated that Aboriginal culture is the primary protective factor in building resilience in young people, and that programs and services should be culturally appropriate. I thank the community that I work with around these issues—particularly the Wadjak Northside Aboriginal Community Group—for being part of the great work we do in our community to instil a sense of pride in the Indigenous and Aboriginal history of our area.

I thank the house for the opportunity to speak on the Premier's Statement.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr D.R. Michael**.

House adjourned at 4.52 pm

Extract from *Hansard*

[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 14 February 2019]

p411d-428a

Mr Shane Love; Mr Terry Redman; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr David Templeman; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Janine
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