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Thursday, 12 May 2022

Legislative Council

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THE PRESIDENT (Hon Alanna Clohesy) took the chair at 10.00 am, read prayers and acknowledged country.

HON SUE ELLERY — BIRTHDAY WISHES

Statement by President

THE PRESIDENT (Hon Alanna Clohesy) [10.01 am]: Good morning, members. Members, I have a statement. On behalf of the chamber, I would like to wish the Leader of the House many happy returns!

Members: Hear, hear!

COST OF LIVING

Notice of Motion

Hon Sophia Moermond gave notice that at the next sitting of the house she would move —

That this house acknowledges the incredible rise in the cost of living that has become a burden on everyday Australians, with rising fuel and grocery prices, record inflation, and an increase in transport and business costs and —

- (a) urges the McGowan Labor government to consider all economic levers at its disposal to further ease cost-of-living pressures in Western Australia; and
- (b) also urges the Premier, in his role as Treasurer, to set up an investigation by his department to consider how a universal basic income for all Western Australian residents could ensure that citizens are keeping up with everyday cost-of-living pressures and that no-one in our state is living under the poverty line.

McGOWAN GOVERNMENT — BUDGET SURPLUS AND SERVICE DELIVERY

Motion

HON DR STEVE THOMAS (South West — Leader of the Opposition) [10.04 am] — without notice: I move —

That this house —

- (a) notes the prospective record budget surplus expected to be announced for the 2021–22 financial year in today's budget;
- (b) notes that the current massive revenues coming into the state's coffers are due to high iron ore revenues, the GST floor put in place by the federal coalition government and high state taxes and charges;
- (c) notes the government's inability to deliver services, infrastructure and projects in a cost-efficient and timely manner; and
- (d) calls on the state government to invest its incoming wealth in better service delivery, economic reform, paying down debt and supporting the community to manage cost-of-living rises.

Welcome to budget day, everybody! This should be an interesting day. In my limited time, I would like to make a few pointed comments about this government's management of the economy, the fiscal economy and how it sees itself going forward, and to look a little bit at the past and what the government said it would do versus what it is actually doing.

Let us get a couple of things down straight. Why is the government looking at the biggest boom in Australia's history for any state jurisdiction? Why does it have the biggest surpluses of any state jurisdiction?

A government member interjected.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: The biggest surpluses; we will come to that. Why does it have the biggest surpluses? There is a COVID link, but it is not because the government managed COVID. It is because it got a benefit out of COVID. This is the one jurisdiction that actually got a benefit out of COVID. It made money out of COVID. The world has responded with massive infrastructure stimulus packages, driving up the cost of infrastructure and driving up the cost of steel, thus driving up the price of iron ore. That is what this government has enjoyed.

However, it is not just iron ore that has driven these massive revenues to the state of Western Australia. There has also been a significant increase in GST payments and a significant increase in own-state taxes and charges. This government is making a motza. This government has massive revenues and the question is: what is it doing with it? How is it using the massive revenues it has accidentally stumbled upon, not by strategy, not by planning, and not by management, but simply by the good fortune of high iron ore prices? The government can claim credit for

one part of that. It would be fair to give the government credit for higher taxes and charges; I think that would be reasonable. That would be fair enough, because that is the one part that this government takes as a strategy or policy. Higher taxes and charges; that is the one bit that we can credit the Premier; Treasurer for. The rest of it he just happened to stumble over.

The current boom started before COVID, in 2019. I remind members of my question of February 2019: has the government modelled iron ore prices staying above \$US90 a tonne? Do members remember that question? I have mentioned it a few times in Parliament. The answer that came back from the then Treasurer was that the government had not, because the chances of iron ore staying above \$US90 were, and I quote, “highly unrealistic”. It has not been below \$US90 a tonne very often in the last three years; this is a boom, and it started before COVID. It started at the beginning of February 2019 —

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Happy Thursday!

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: Thank you, President. I do love Thursday!

There are massive revenues. Of course, the government should be thanking the Morrison federal Liberal government for the floor put in place for the GST, which was worth an additional —

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: It was worth an additional unexpected \$1.9 billion over the previous financial year. Let us look at 2021. We had a \$5.8 billion surplus in this state—the biggest surplus ever seen in any state, even in the larger economy states with bigger populations—based entirely on revenue. There was an increase in GST in the year in which we saw the biggest surplus in Australia’s history for any state jurisdiction. The government has a massive amount of revenue.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Leader of the Opposition, rest your vocal cords. Settle.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: Thank you, President, for your protection.

Iron ore has massive revenues. GST is a massive solution. Own taxes and charges are also up something like \$800 million from the previous financial year, which had the biggest surplus. These are massive amounts of revenues and duties. Payroll tax is through the roof. This government has a massive amount of revenue, but it cannot deliver on its promises or its commitments. What is the threat that this government faces? It is the inability to deliver. I will cut the government a bit of slack here because I am generally very friendly towards the members opposite and I like to give them something to hang off with, so let me say this: there are probably some reasonable reasons why the government has been unable to deliver infrastructure. If we look back over the last decade or so, governments have increased their potential spend on infrastructure but they have never been able to deliver the amount. Over the last decade, governments of both persuasions have been able to get between \$5 billion and \$6 billion out the door, but when the McGowan government had this boom, it started to tell everybody that it would spend \$8 billion or \$9 billion on infrastructure. Guess what happened? It could not do it. It could not get the money out the door. Why? It was because it could not find the labour, it did not have the materials, and there is a labour shortage almost across the board. This government in its ambition to get infrastructure out there cannot do so.

Hon Stephen Dawson interjected.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: No; I am cutting the government some slack here. I am saying that with the best of intent, I do not think any government could have delivered \$8 billion or \$9 billion worth of infrastructure. The member’s government should have known that. Treasury should have advised it of that. When the government goes out there and says that it has a massive infrastructure program, it does have a massive infrastructure budget item but it is not actually delivering massive infrastructure. It will take the government years, on top of its current expectations, to deliver this level of infrastructure.

The McGowan government has a problem with delivery. It does not really matter where we look, there are very few projects that will come in on time and on budget. Let us have a look at the keynote Metronet project, which I am sure other members will talk about. Metronet was the \$3 billion project that became a \$6 billion project then a \$7 billion project and is probably heading to be an \$8 billion project. Major projects are blowing out and the government cannot get them out the door. There is no point sticking what I think will be another \$6 billion to \$7 billion surplus into infrastructure. The government cannot build the infrastructure that it already has in its budget. The government is years behind and will take years to catch up.

So what will the government do? It will try to find other ways to put this money aside. What is the government’s other option? It could try to increase staffing, for example, and there has been an increase in staffing. I note that an answer I got back from the Leader of the House this week suggested that the staffing budget is up in the billions of dollars, so the government does have extra staff in place and that is good. But it is limited to how much new

staff it will be able to spend money on because there is a shortage everywhere of not only materials, but also labour. There is a shortage of teachers. There is a shortage of doctors, and there is a shortage of nurses. The government might be able to squirrel a little bit more money into the delivery of services, and that is not necessarily a bad thing, but it is not going to be able to put its budget surplus away.

What of the government's other options? There are two options that I want to talk about. The first one is the need to pay down debt, and I think that is critical. The second one is the option that I think the Premier, who is the Treasurer, is going to take in that he is going to squirrel the money away for his future use, and undermine the financial position of the state of Western Australia. In relation to that, I start by saying this: the current debt levels of Western Australia do not belong to the Treasurer who is the Premier.

Hon Stephen Dawson interjected.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: You make a really good point here, minister. The minister might learn something here. He makes a really good point. How many former ministers or leaders does he think are being sent bills for any of that expenditure? None of them. Does the minister know why? Guess who owns the debt? The people of Western Australia own the debt. So what is the government doing instead of looking after the people of Western Australia? The McGowan government is looking after its own political interests.

Hon Stephen Dawson: That's nonsense.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: I am glad to hear the honourable member say "nonsense" because we are going to look at it in a little bit more detail and I am happy to. What did the McGowan government members while in opposition have to say about their plans for debt?

An opposition member: They had a lot to say!

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: Yes, they had a lot to say. They were vociferous in their criticism, but they also had a plan, honourable members. The members of the Labor Party had a plan, and the plan was enunciated on 11 February 2017, which was about a month before the 2017 election, on this lovely letterhead with a picture of Hon Ben Wyatt sitting on top. This is the shadow Treasurer's media release of 11 February 2017.

Hon Stephen Dawson: Ben who?

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: Hon Ben Wyatt—who? The minister might hear his name a bit more!

Hon Ben Wyatt said that the McGowan government would legislate to establish the debt reduction account. What does this media release say they would do? This is a great line. I will highlight it because I will seek to table this in a bit so that *Hansard* can get this absolutely right. What did Hon Ben Wyatt say in February 2017? I just have to find the right section of it. He said —

The legislation will see 50 per cent of iron ore royalty revenue directed into the new Debt Reduction Account when WA's GST relativity returns above 0.65 and the iron ore price is more than \$US85 per tonne.

That was the promise of the Labor Party in opposition. It promised half of iron ore royalties when the relativity is above 0.65 and the iron ore price is above \$US85. It continues —

"Never again can we have a Government that foolishly assumes that windfall revenues from a short term spike in commodity prices is permanent and forms part of the permanent spend of the Government"

It also says—I just have to find the right line for this one; I will find it in a second.

Several members interjected.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: The government has been lucky in the budget.

Hon Stephen Dawson: You probably can't find it because it doesn't exist.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: No. I will find it directly.

So what did the Labor Party say? It said that it would put 50 per cent of iron ore royalties into the debt reduction account. How much iron ore revenue do members think has gone into the debt reduction account? None! But the government's promise was 50 per cent of iron ore royalties. The 70¢ floor in the GST started in 2019–20, so it has been above 0.65 since then. I am sorry; I am a little disorganised today. I just want to get this right. So with GST at 70¢ and the iron ore price at above \$US85 a tonne—it has barely been under \$US85 a tonne in that period—zero dollars went to the debt reduction account. The Mark McGowan and Ben Wyatt promise —

A government member: Hon Mark McGowan.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: The Hon Mark McGowan promise—thank you—was for 50 per cent of iron ore royalties. In 2019–20 the total iron ore royalty income was about \$7 billion. In 2020–21, it was about \$11 billion, and I would expect it to be about \$10 billion this year. If the Labor government lived up to its promise, the debt reduction account would have had half of \$28 billion run through it—\$14 billion. The government could have paid down \$14 billion of debt, but it is not interested in that. That \$14 billion would have had a significant impact on

general government net debt—it would have potentially paid off a bit over half of it—but that is not what is happening. What is happening? How is the government going to manage these things? It is going to announce today some cost-of-living expenditure, which I welcome—\$400 for every household. That is around a \$450 million commitment—nearly half a billion dollars. I welcome that; that is a good commitment. I welcome it so much that I pretty much announced it a week ago! I announced it again yesterday. I announced it in the opposition pre-budget presentation. I even put in the \$400. I wondered why the Premier had taken a week to get there. The \$400 is actually not bad; we welcome that contribution. That is out of a \$6 billion to \$7 billion surplus so the government could do more, but that is a step in the right direction.

What has this government done with this plethora of wealth? It has hidden the money away for future use. The government has been developing lots of special purpose accounts. There are a whole bunch of new special purpose accounts. The minister will get some more questions on this over the next few weeks. I asked a question during the last sitting week and was told that there is \$19 billion sitting in special purpose accounts. Not many of those accounts get listed in the budget. That is a massive amount. What the government is doing is squirreling this money away. That is why it is the money bin. The government is not even necessarily squirreling it away for the rest of this parliamentary term, because it already has money set aside in infrastructure that it cannot get out the door anyway. What the government is doing is squirreling this money away for its future political benefit, so that in future parliamentary terms it can try to look better than it is. It cannot get infrastructure out—it cannot get it built on time or on budget—but it is still trying to squirrel money away for the future. What is wrong with that? It is this: the debt that sits in this state is debt that is owed by the people of Western Australia.

This government will have the best opportunity in probably a hundred years to have a significant impact on this debt. This is the biggest boom that this country has ever seen. It is a hundred-year boom that this government has got. When will the government pay down debt if it does not do it when the money is rolling in? Even Keynes, for all those lefty economists out there—he was not completely left but also not completely right; he is not as bad as the modern monetary theorists—said in his classic theory that you borrow and spend when you do not have money, but you pay it back when you do. Keynes would roll over in his grave today if he looked at what the McGowan Labor government is doing, because it has thrown his economic policy out the window—it is not paying back debt when it has the greatest opportunity to do so. Let me remind members who paid off the federal Hawke and Keating debt—\$97 billion or \$98 billion of debt. Who paid that off? Was it a Labor government that went back and had to pay that off? No. Debt gets paid off when one has the capacity. This government has the capacity, but it is not interested in paying down the debt while it can. Government members are interested only in their own political futures.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Leader of the Opposition.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: Thank you, President. Government members are interested only in their own political futures. The government has this massive opportunity. It cannot do much with infrastructure, it can do a limited amount with wages and it can offer some cost-of-living relief, which has now been announced and is probably the highlight of the budget today. The government could reform the economy, but I expect to see very little on that, because it has shown no appetite to address major taxes, such as payroll tax, that are through the roof. The government is not going to look at or do any other economic reform. It is going to look a little at providing cost-of-living relief, which is good and which I welcome, and then it is going to try to squirrel away the money in the Premier Mark McGowan Scrooge McDuck Money Bin for future use. In the meantime, he is going to be rolling in it, because he is rolling in cash, President. He will be rolling in even more cash this afternoon!

A member interjected.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: Yes; it is not the first time.

Hon Dan Caddy: Point of order!

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: The member has called a point of order on me before, but it is a reference to him being like that rather than calling him exactly that name. So, like Scrooge McDuck, the Premier will be rolling in the money bin, with \$20 billion worth of surpluses over a five-year period—something no state has seen before or will ever see again.

A government member interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: He is wasting the opportunity to do proper economic reform and manage debt because he thinks he is more important than the economy and people of Western Australia. It is a disgrace!

HON STEPHEN DAWSON (Mining and Pastoral — Minister for Emergency Services) [10.25 am]: President, I am not normally here on a Thursday morning. My colleague the Minister for Regional Development is normally here, so I am going to try to channel her today.

Several members interjected.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I listened to that nonsense from the Leader of the Opposition for the last 20 minutes. For goodness sake, he must have been living under a rock for the last two years! We have just been through the biggest pandemic in the history of the world. We have got Western Australia through that—absolutely through that. The government cannot keep the Leader of the Opposition in this place happy. If it spends money, it gets in trouble from him; if it does not spend money, it gets in trouble from him. He is never happy. He never admits that this government has been the best government in a very, very long time.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas mentioned the debt reduction account. When we came to government and found how bad things were and how some of his mates in this room had left the state economy, we had to make some very tough decisions. We had to pay off your debt! As I have said previously, the previous government spent like drunken sailors.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas interjected.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I thought you were going to say something, President, because I could not hear myself because of the interjections from the far side.

The PRESIDENT: Indeed; I could not hear myself, either. Please continue, Minister for Emergency Services.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Thank you, President. We came in and we had been left the worst set of books that any government had been left—by your lot. We hear in the media that the Liberal Party is the only party that can balance the books and keep the economy going. What a load of nonsense! We have shown that it is Labor governments in this state that balance the budgets, not your mob. I will even quote from the Deloitte Access Economics *Business outlook* from March this year. It says —

Western Australia can lay claim to being among the strongest economies in the world ...

WA's hard border was vital to its relative success through the first two years of the pandemic: by keeping out COVID to the greatest extent possible, it avoided much of the adverse impact of lockdowns and other restrictions on jobs and economic activity seen in other states and territories.

That is what the outlook said. That is true, because we managed it properly. We kept the community in this state safe. We kept not just the state economy but also the national economy going. We kept the national economy going for the last couple of years. We have heard from the Leader of the Opposition about the GST floor. It is great; we do get 70¢ in the dollar from the GST, but it is only 70¢. No other state or territory gets less than 70¢ in the dollar. For goodness sake, it is as if we should be thankful to Mr Morrison! We do not get our fair share! It is your mob who keep complaining. We should be happy with 70¢ in the dollar! Iron ore should be treated like everything else and then we would get our fair share, but it is not.

I have a few points that I want to make, after getting that off my chest. As I was saying, the Leader of the Opposition must have been living under a rock for the last two years. I have to say that he is better than most, because his colleague down there, the Leader of the Liberal Party, is hopeless on this stuff. Hon Dr Steve Thomas has at least given credit to the government this morning for the \$400 electricity credit that people will be getting. The leader down the other end would not do the same thing. The Leader of the Opposition said in this place recently that Mark McGowan was leaving future generations, who will not be in an equivalent boom, to pay down the debt that he is refusing to. This is absolute galling, because when the Liberals and Nationals took on government, they took debt from \$3.6 billion onto a path towards \$44 billion!

Hon Dr Steve Thomas interjected.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: That is what you were doing. It was reckless spending. It was not only reckless spending —

The PRESIDENT: Order! Settle. The Minister for Emergency Services.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: We saw not only reckless spending, but also incompetent decision making.

As the Premier has confirmed, the budget will show that net debt will fall again this year. For the first time since 2015, when the Liberal–National government left us on a trajectory to \$44 billion worth of debt, net debt will be under \$30 billion. Before this budget, the McGowan government had already paid down the Liberal–Nationals' debt by \$11 billion by 2017. We have not been able to put as much into debt reduction because we have been paying down the Liberal–Nationals' debt. Absolutely we have! By paying down the Liberal–Nationals' debt, we saved Western Australians more than \$2.5 billion in wasteful interest costs over four years because we have saved the economy money. Absolutely we have! That is the advice of the Under Treasurer, not the honourable Leader of the Opposition, who is a vet, not an economist.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Minister for Emergency Services.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Let me remind the house that the advice of the Under Treasurer is that we have been paying down the Liberals' and Nationals' debt and we have saved Western Australians more than \$2.5 billion in wasteful interest costs over four years. As I was saying, that is the advice of the Under Treasurer, who is an economist, not a vet. This is a saving of about \$950 for each Western Australian.

As we have seen with the Reserve Bank of Australia's recent rise, it is responsible financial management to pay down debt. Given the volatility of international interest rates, reducing the Liberal–National debt burden will shield Western Australia from increasing debt repayments. We know that when debt gets out of control, it can have a huge impact on the budget bottom line. One of the commonwealth's largest spends is paying off the interest on its debt. Its interest costs are expected to rise to almost \$25 billion a year over the next four years. That is more than the annual cost of disability pensions and about three-quarters of the annual cost of the aged-care system and the funding to the states for public hospitals.

Who do we listen to? There are inconsistencies in the Liberal Party. I alluded to that earlier. Do we listen to Hon Dr Steve Thomas or the Leader of the Liberal Party in the other house? They both say different things. I give the Leader of the Opposition credit for acknowledging this morning that the electricity credit is good policy, when he said —

“It is the simplest most obvious way that the premier can put some money back into people's pockets and I would support that. I think that's a good outcome for everybody.”

I congratulate the member for saying that. What did the Leader of the Liberal Party, David Honey, in the other place think? When we announced the \$600 credit, he said in the Legislative Assembly on 14 October 2020 that it was —

a disgraceful waste of a precious resource ... It will do little in the short-term and absolutely nothing in the long-term to help people in this state.

That is chalk and cheese. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition in this place because I think he knows more than the leader in the other place.

On freezing utility costs, Hon Dr Steve Thomas went on in his press conference on 10 May and argued that an electricity credit was better than freezing utility costs, saying —

A \$400 rebate would be cheaper than freezing charges completely ...

...

... and I would support that.

I thank the member for saying that. The Leader of the Liberal Party in the other place had a different view, telling 6PR on 11 May —

There is no excuse to see a single increase in fees and charges.

Again, who do we listen to? Do we listen to Hon Dr Steve Thomas or do we listen to David Honey from the other place, who has had derogatory comments made about him by members on his own side? The fact is that the Liberal and National Parties never froze utility prices when they were in government. In fact, they never even kept them at or below inflation.

Let me turn to a few other things that I want to get on the record this morning. Let us talk about Western Australia's economy. Western Australia's economy is not only the best in the nation, but it is among the best in the world since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Throughout the pandemic, it has been shown that those countries that experienced the best public health outcomes also experienced the best economic outcomes. Earlier I briefly touched on the fact that the Leader of the Opposition might have been living under a rock for the past two years. He was talking about the debt reduction account. We have delivered about \$10 billion worth of measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Western Australia. To date, nearly \$2.3 billion has been spent on frontline services to keep us safe, including hotel quarantine, COVID-19 testing, medical equipment, the vaccine rollout and border controls. Around \$2.7 million has been provided to support Western Australian businesses and households throughout the pandemic, with about \$2.5 million of that already spent. That included industry assistance grants, electricity credits, tax relief, fee waivers and more. We will continue to provide further support as required because we are not through this yet. As much as people on the far side will tell us that we are, we are not. Something like 16 500 cases of COVID were reported today. It is still in the community.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas interjected.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I am not saying that the member said that; I said that people on the far side say COVID is gone, we should get rid of everything and we do not need restrictions anymore. It is out there. Tragically, there were six deaths in Western Australia today. Although the number of people in ICU is still very, very low, which is good, that is thanks to how Western Australians have responded. Under the leadership of this government, they have responded well. The fact that our third-dose vaccination rate is 80 per cent is quite extraordinary, and that is a benefit. The figures show that 27 per cent of those people who are hospitalised have not been vaccinated. I think about only one per cent of Western Australians have not had a vaccine. It shows that if people get a vaccination, they are less likely to get sick. I am not saying that we will all escape it but we are less likely to get sick.

We have spent an extraordinary amount on the COVID-19 response. We have spent almost \$4 million on initiatives to continue the rollout as part of our plan to drive our response and social and economic recovery. That includes hundreds of projects to drive industry development, investing in schools and TAFEs, building community infrastructure and so much more.

The 2021–22 *Government mid-year financial projections statement* included a record \$32.7 billion infrastructure program over the next four years. That high level of investment will provide a pipeline of infrastructure work that will benefit Western Australians long into the future. This includes a record \$10 billion investment in regional infrastructure because the regions deserve their fair share. Let me go through some of our funding commitments from the midyear review. I will not release what is in today’s budget; members will have to wait until two o’clock to hear me speak. I am not giving members any secrets this morning.

The midyear review comprised an additional \$1.3 billion for health and mental health services across the state, funding more beds and doctors and nurses and easing pressure on emergency departments. This increased the total new spend on health and mental health in the 2021–22 budget and midyear review to \$3.2 billion—the largest ever increase. We had \$1.2 billion for priority transport projects, some jointly funded by the commonwealth, including the Midland station, the Victoria Park–Canning level crossing removal and the Byford rail extension as part of the Metronet program of works. Metronet was an election commitment that we made and that we are delivering for the people of Western Australia. We had extra money for the public sector wages policy—\$560 million that came on top of the \$631 million worth of provisions in the 2021–22 budget. We had \$300 million to diversify the Western Australian economy by upgrading common-user infrastructure to support the proposed \$4.5 billion Perdaman project in the Pilbara. We had \$186 million for the Reconnect WA package to attract tourists, international students and visitors and skilled workers through the safe transition plan. We had money for hydrogen hubs and we had money for COVID-19 test isolation payments to support casual workers. We have done extraordinary things.

A few things about the budget this year have been released so far. I am happy to remind members about those. On 9 May, we announced the emergency department package, amounting to \$251.7 million, with 17 initiatives. That included \$18.2 million for real-time data capability; \$3 million for the planning of the State Operations Command Centre; \$55.8 million for registered nurses and 15 emergency department waiting rooms, so they can be staffed 24/7; and \$74.1 million to care for long stay patients for ED resources and beds, including 120 aged-care transition beds. We extended the disability transition care pilot and the long stay patient fund to support individual patient discharge needs. We had funding for additional transitional accommodation program places. We had \$55.2 million for telehealth services that provide patient care outside of EDs. We had infrastructure investments, with an extra 342 new beds opened since September last year in our hospitals. That was part of 530 new beds to be opened by the end of the year. We had medical imaging equipment replacement programs. We had money for stage 1 of the digital medical record keeping in the hospital system; more money for new ICU beds at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital; and more money for the reconfiguration of the mental health services and the Graylands redevelopment. We have announced \$2.5 million for a business case for the proposed comprehensive cancer centre. In the regions, the member for Albany has lobbied for the Albany general dental centre; and the members for Pilbara and Kimberley have all done well. We keep delivering.

HON TJORN SIBMA (North Metropolitan) [10.40 am]: I rise to speak in support of this motion, which is well structured, polite, and focused on economic reality. However, I think it is missing one limb, perhaps not something that is debatable. I have absolutely enjoyed the conduct and the response provided by the Minister for Emergency Services. If I could make a recommendation to the government, in the absence of the Minister for Regional Development, whose exchanges I enjoy, this is an exemplary performance of a government member engaging with the motion. All the points he provided were debatable.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas: Highly debatable.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: They were driven, at least, by some facts and some measure of reality, and a tangible quality that one can wrestle with. That is exceptionally helpful.

To get rich is glorious, and the budget to be brought down at 2.00 pm —

An opposition member interjected.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: I have got my ticket in, and I will still turn up here, because what more could I do with myself on a Thursday morning? There are plenty of other things I could be getting on with, but how could I take myself away from the joy of the company of honourable members in this chamber?

An interesting facet of this motion is obviously that the government is rolling in cash, and that is a wonderful thing for the government and the community, and it could be a wonderful thing for the people of Western Australia into the future if the government seizes the mantle. The government has an extraordinary opportunity within its grasp. I make no categorisation of anyone’s capacity, but the backwards focus in the course of this debate has disappointed me. It is almost axiomatic that the government should seize this opportunity. Take this as an injunction and serious commitment, but this is an opportunity for the government to elevate its performance.

I want to focus on part (d) of the motion. A trigger phrase for me is “economic reform”. I go on about how this is the most used and abused term in the political lexicon, because all change is dressed up as reform, but what is reform? What reforms could the government be undertaking? This is an opportunity to restructure the way the government goes about doing business. The government has addressed this issue, and spoken about reform, particularly in the approvals space—the conduct and performance of regulatory agencies.

A promise of excellent reform was embedded in the amendments to the Environmental Protection Act that the Minister for Emergency Services, as Minister for Environment, brought in and passed in a very professional manner in this chamber about two years ago. Embedded in that was a series of regulatory changes, some of which have faltered. I want to focus on one. I use this as an emblem of how the government overall is not quite getting it right. One of the changes that was brought about was the introduction of user fees for the conduct of environmental impact assessments for proponents. The costing methodology and pricing model was developed in a largely secretive way. There was some post facto consultation, but effectively the determinants and the structure of that model had already been set. We now have a model categorised by the head of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia, Mr Chris Rodwell, as follows —

The fees the state government has begun charging businesses for environmental impact assessments are the highest such fees anywhere in the nation.

I put that to the government in a question yesterday, because I had not seen the schedule of fees, but if that is true, I am concerned by it. If true, it would indicate that the internal costs of undertaking these kinds of regulatory actions are more expensive in the Western Australian jurisdiction compared to the case in other mining and development jurisdictions, particularly Queensland, the Northern Territory and New South Wales. That would suggest to me that the internal costs of the government doing business are in excess of what they should be. That seems to have been tacitly agreed to in the response I received. I asked the day before: what efficiencies had been generated by this change and a range of other changes? The answer I received was that, in the four and a half months since this cost recovery process had been in place, the Department of Water and Environment Regulation has continued to develop a suite of regulatory efficiencies. The department could not name what those efficiencies were, and they are unlikely to emerge. I do not want to target this agency specifically, but I think this is the case across the board in government. There is absolutely no focus on internal business efficiencies. Responsibility for driving these efficiencies rests with cabinet and ministers of the Crown. As a student of government and governments, I will say that undertaking these kinds of reforms and getting more value for money out of agencies is exceptionally difficult in a second term. It is exceptionally difficult to do when, for example in the environment portfolio, we see the third minister appointed in a 15-month period. I have been a bureaucrat, and I know how bureaucracies work. They work to their own interests, unless somebody or something is keeping them honest.

Listening to debate yesterday on the motion introduced by Hon Dan Caddy, it is obvious that the cost of living—people’s salaries and their capacity to keep up with inflation throughout the economy—is a critical bread-and-butter issue. What is a government’s responsibility in this context? The first call on the state government is not to add to that inflationary pressure. One way in which that pressure is increased, albeit not deliberately, is through the processing of government work. The longer the time taken to make decisions, and the more onerous approvals are to obtain, the more likely a project will move from being economic to marginally economic in a six to 12-month period. The bureaucracy will remain consistent and persistent. This is an opportunity to engage in reform, and one way to do that—this is a curtain-raiser to future budget speeches—is to look seriously at the Public Sector Management Act and assess whether we are getting the best bang for buck under that current framework. I would put it to members politely, at least as far as the performance of the senior executive service is concerned, that I am doubtful that that is the case. One suite of measures that could possibly be entertained to drive such efficiencies is twofold—one, to publish SES, particularly directors general level, performance agreements, and, two, to establish what key performance indicators they are being held to. I have referred to the fact that there is a range of KPIs for agencies—as we will see in the budget papers today—but they have to be comprehensively rewritten because the information that is provided has absolutely no bearing on the external economy and society into which they are delivering services.

I do not have much time left. I wish I could have gone more excitedly, as is in keeping with a Thursday, but I think we have got to a point where we are a little worn out. I appreciate we are all waiting for the budget to come down. Members should reflect seriously on this motion because it is a serious motion. With the 20 seconds or so I have left, I will say that with respect to infrastructure delivery, yes, Metronet—I will put it this way—has grown by a magnitude of three or four times its original capital cost, has been delayed by two to three years on each of its projects’ components and has grown in scope, and we do not know when the first element, the Forrestfield–Airport Link, will open.

HON STEVE MARTIN (Agricultural) [10.50 am]: I rise to make a contribution to this excellent motion from the Leader of the Opposition on the prospective record budget surplus for 2021–22. I apologise in advance to members: if my voice gives out I can assure them that I am not unwell, but the lingering effects of COVID-19 have affected my voice. I will soldier on.

I will make some remarks on paragraph (c) of this excellent motion, which notes —

... the government’s inability to deliver services, infrastructure and projects in a cost efficient and timely manner ...

If we google that, one of the things that pops up is a picture of the Geraldton Health Campus. Before I commence my remarks about the delays to the Geraldton hospital project, I would like to congratulate the staff—doctors, nurses and everyone involved—at the Geraldton hospital for continuing to deliver an outstanding service to the people of the midwest throughout the pandemic, and ongoing. They do a wonderful job. They would be dismayed, like the

people of the midwest, at the continuing delays to the upgrades. I heard Hon Stephen Dawson's comments about future spends in the budget. I hope the Geraldton number is not in there again because it has been in there for years and years without any bricks being laid, except paving bricks in the car park of course.

I thought I would give members a history lesson about the various commitments that have been made over time at the Geraldton Health Campus. Both major parties took a commitment to the 2017 election to upgrade the health campus. We know who won. We and the citizens of the midwest assumed that building would commence. They started to get an inkling about what was about to happen from *The Geraldton Guardian* in October 2017. The Premier visited Geraldton with, I think, Hon Darren West. There is a nice picture of them smiling and pointing at the project.

Hon Stephen Dawson: Very photogenic.

Hon STEVE MARTIN: They are very, very photogenic. The hair is a bit over the place, but that is okay! The bad news started to flow. The upgrade would be delayed because a scoping study was needed. That is fine. The Premier reassured the people of the midwest. He said —

We are going to expand it and improve it. People of the midwest can rest assured that the money will go into future budgets.

They probably assumed that would occur in the very near future—2018 or 2019 perhaps, or even 2020. It is still in the budget and nothing much has happened. I flick forward to 10 May 2018. By the way, when I checked back on the government media releases on the Geraldton hospital, I got to 16 media releases before I stopped counting. I thought that would probably get me through my 10 minutes. The media statement from 10 May 2018 states —

- McGowan Government delivers election commitment to create jobs and strengthen quality health care for the Mid-West region
- \$73.3 million for the stage 1 redevelopment of Geraldton Health Campus and a Mid-West mental health service

Comments attributed to the then Minister for Health, Roger Cook, state —

“Current services in the Mid-West are under increasing pressure. This redevelopment is about providing high-quality services to our regional communities and care closer to home.

“This investment will deliver a combination of new build and refurbished infrastructure.

Well, not yet. That was in 2018. I move forward in time to a media release from 4 June 2020 headed “Geraldton health and mental health facilities moving forward”. That is happening very, very slowly. This media statement has been cut-and-pasted so many times that the ink is starting to fade. It states —

- \$73.3 million Geraldton Health Campus redevelopment is one step closer —

One step closer —

... awarded contract for forward works

That was in 2020. It states that a company was awarded a contract—possibly. It continues —

Work is set to commence on the \$73.3 million redevelopment of Geraldton Health Campus with ADCO Constructions Pty Ltd awarded the contract to deliver forward works.

Premier Mark McGowan and Health Minister Roger Cook today turned the sod to mark the start of construction of stage 1 of the redevelopment.

We know what stage 1 turned out to be. It was a car park. The media release states further —

“The start of the forward works means that we are on track with delivering critical infrastructure that will respond to the healthcare needs of local residents.

It is possibly on track. I move forward again to a media statement dated Thursday, 3 June 2021 that states —

- Main works commencing later this year will deliver an expanded emergency department, new intensive care unit and integrated mental health unit

Former health minister Roger Cook outlined what has taken place —

More than 400 additional car parking bays and six motorcycle bays have been delivered, significantly improving access to the hospital, as well as traffic flow into and around the campus.

When a health minister is extolling the virtues of motorcycle bays and car parking bays and traffic flow in a car park at a health campus, we know he has nothing good to tell us. The traffic is flowing beautifully, the car park is working really efficiently, and the health minister is quite proud of it. Again, it is a cut-and-paste. The media release states further —

The next phase of works will include the construction of a redeveloped and expanded emergency department, a new intensive care unit and expanded high dependency unit, an integrated mental health unit, and essential engineering service upgrades.

Not yet. I am nearly there. A media statement on Thursday, 9 September 2021 is headed “Massive funding boost for health in State Budget”. We have been here before. It states that the \$1.3 billion investment includes works and updates at various health campuses, including Geraldton. That was the last budget. We are not there yet.

A member interjected.

Hon STEVE MARTIN: No—bad news on that front for the budget; good news, hopefully, for the people of the midwest. Last week, with a straight face, the new health minister visited Geraldton and said that there would be an extra \$47.4 million for a major hospital upgrade in Geraldton. She looked down the camera and spoke to the people of the midwest and said, “It’s coming, people. We’re about to start the building.” A media release states —

Part of the largest infrastructure program in WA’s history, Stage 2 of the Geraldton Health Campus Redevelopment project includes an expanded —

Here we go again—expanded! It continues —

emergency department, a new intensive care unit co-located with an expanded high dependency unit and essential engineering service upgrades.

Cut-and-paste. Hang on; it gets better —

This is on top of the more than 400 additional car parking bays and a reconfigured main entry, for better patient and visitor flow, already delivered through Stage 1 of the redevelopment.

The health minister was pumping up the tyres, literally, of the cars and the motorbikes that can access that wonderful car park, which so far is the only bit of work that has occurred in five years from this government. I read the media release carefully—it was two-and-a-half pages long—just to check so that we could work out when this might actually start, not finish. We have no idea, and neither does the health minister, when it is about to finish. When would it start? There was not a date. I read carefully, thinking that that could not be right. The government has effectively no idea when it will start. I checked the television news item when the minister was asked the obvious question: minister, when will this start? The answer was: “Well, we’re not sure. We hope it’s this year, we hope it’s before Christmas, but there’s a bit going on in the building sector. It’s hard getting building works done so we can’t actually guarantee a start date.” So, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022—more money, but of course costs have blown out, and they will blow out further, as they do, but the minister could not guarantee a start date. It was extraordinary. I have used up all of my time on that one particular issue.

Obviously we have some issues in the timber sector.

I hope there is an announcement in this afternoon’s budget for the community fund that needs to be spent to repair those communities after the closure of the hardwood logging sector. Parkside Timber closed its mill on Monday this week and 50 people lost their jobs. Those people are looking for jobs. Given today’s job market, they will probably find another one, although they might not find one in Manjimup, Greenbushes or Nannup. They might move to the coast or to the city or find work in the mining sector. I hope those communities receive the funding that they deserve from the state government. Parkside, the company that bought into the timber industry and that was encouraged and welcomed by the forestry minister two short years ago, also received suitable compensation that it so richly deserved after expending approximately \$70 million of its own money to invest in that sector. The company was assured that it was sustainable. Apparently, a couple of years later it is not and the minister has pulled the rug out from under that company.

HON PIERRE YANG (North Metropolitan) [11.00 am]: I begin by quoting what Hon Ayor Makur Chuot said yesterday about the Leader of the Opposition. She said that she was not very impressed. I echo her sentiment today that I am not very impressed by the motion moved by, or the comments of, the Leader of the Opposition. The conservatives have been gaslighting the general public of Western Australia about their economic credentials because they have none. This mob wrecked the state’s finances. Admittedly, the Leader of the Opposition was not in Parliament during that time, so it was not his fault, but it was his party and the National Party that wrecked the state’s finances. I will go back in history to remind members opposite who have been trying to gaslight the whole country and the whole state. The federal Liberal–National government talks about its financial management credentials yet it has doubled and tripled the national debt since 2013, and this mob, back in 2008, inherited the best set of books in Western Australia and then turned it into \$30 billion in state debt. It was \$3 600 000 000 previously. I think Hon Darren West talked about that during the last term of Parliament. I remembered it and I want to remind members opposite of it.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas interjected.

Hon PIERRE YANG: I will not take any interjections from the member who, as I have said, I am not very impressed with. Under Colin Barnett and his National mates, the Liberal–National government squandered 10 years of prosperity between 2008 and 2017. Let us talk about that in detail, shall we? What did the former government do when the iron ore price was high? It bought singing toilets and plastic cows in the regions. Did the former government do anything that was actually beneficial for the people of regional Western Australia? It did nothing beneficial whatsoever. What is good about having a plastic cow on the street? It does not really add anything.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon Jackie Jarvis): Members, Hon Pierre Yang has the floor.

Hon PIERRE YANG: Thank you, Acting President. I shall continue.

Back in 2008, the state debt was \$3.6 billion. What did the former government do? It turned the debt into more than \$30 billion and it was projected to reach \$40 billion. Thank goodness that Mark McGowan and the Labor Party took power in 2017 and saved the day because we came to office with a plan. We came to office with this document—the *WA Labor plan for jobs* for Western Australia. We had a heap of policies. I want to re-emphasise that I helped the Labor Party, in my own time, to translate that document into Mandarin Chinese, so I actually read all 378 pages of this document. Thank goodness that the Mark McGowan government and the Labor Party put out a new WA jobs plan before the 2021 election. That is another set of good policies that will take the state into the future. In stark contrast, before the 2021 election, the Liberal and National Parties could not get their act together. I will quote a few lines from an article by Jacob Kagi titled “WA election: Liberal costings ‘train wreck’ failed to verify estimates, provide analysis of policies”. It states —

In an extraordinary press conference 48 hours from polling day, the WA Liberals insisted the public had every reason to trust their claim that an ambitious and wide policy agenda could be delivered for just a \$1.4 billion addition to state debt.

We cannot trust this mob. Why? It is because when they were saying that all their policies were costed, the very accounting firm that helped them came out and contradicted them. This is what it said —

“The engagement entailed checking the mathematic compilation of the total recurrent and capital expenditure from the cost of each commitment, as provided by the Liberal Party, ...

“The engagement did not include an analysis or calculation of the underlying items that make up each individual commitment.”

Hon Dan Caddy: Was that The Three Stooges press conference?

Hon PIERRE YANG: That is right. I will come to that very soon.

In other words, no-one actually looked at the Liberals’ policies to see whether they could be delivered for the cost that the party had estimated. Where was the Leader of the Opposition? I think that the Liberal Party would have benefited from his acumen if he had been involved in the leadership at that time.

Several members interjected.

Hon PIERRE YANG: I think so. I am glad that the Liberal Party now has someone of the Leader of the Opposition’s calibre to lead them. At least he can get its act together. I am still not very impressed, by the way. Jacob Kagi continued —

That was not the only question left unanswered, in a press conference Labor described as “shambolic” and a “car crash”.

It was a car crash. The Liberal Party’s estimates looked only three years into the future. It was pretty amazing. I remember travelling from home to go to an event on that day as I heard the reporting of the exchanges between the three members of the Liberal Party with the media. In fact, they were coming under attack from the media—not the Labor Party—which looked at the Liberal Party’s credentials and asked fair questions that its members could not answer. Former Treasurer Ben Wyatt said —

“It was like watching the three stooges pass around a ticking time bomb, ...

Sean L’Estrange didn’t want to talk about it, Zak Kirkup didn’t understand it and David Honey threw himself upon it.”

My goodness. Can this mob ever be trusted with the state’s future and the state’s finances? What I will say in the remaining time is that Liberal and National Parties at the federal and state levels have been trying to gaslight the state and the country about their financial credentials. I will go back into history a bit and talk about former Prime Minister John Howard when he was the Treasurer under Malcolm Fraser. What was the interest rate in the late 1970s? It was 15 per cent. It was a lot higher than what he wanted to say to the people when he was the Prime Minister. He could not manage the finances or the budget. He benefited from the economic conditions of the world when he was the Prime Minister of Australia. The problem with the Liberal and National Parties is that they just do not understand finance.

A member interjected.

Hon PIERRE YANG: I cannot change them. I cannot educate them in the next one minute and 20 seconds. I will fail at that. However, I will say that if the Liberal and National Parties fail to plan, they are planning to fail. Time and again during the mining boom, this mob failed to plan for the future, so 100 000 Western Australians were unemployed in 2008. Talk to those people. Talk to their families. They were suffering. How can members opposite take the moral high ground and attack this government! How dare they! How dare they when they wrecked people’s lives back in the day. This motion is nothing more than a piece of paper. Actually, it is not worth the paper it is written on. Shame on members opposite!

I am going to talk about the GST in the remaining 20 seconds. Members opposite talked about the federal Liberal–National government gifting us. I will quote a line from Hon Rick Mazza, a former member of this place, if I can find it, but I may not be able to. He said that WA deserved the GST floor. So we do not have to thank the federal government.

HON PETER COLLIER (North Metropolitan) [11.10 am]: Goodness, I am just going to get over that nonsense! I say at the outset that I find it extraordinary that the member who just spoke got all hot and bothered yesterday and constantly raised points of order because, apparently, Hon Nick Goiran did not stick to the motion. I do not think I heard Hon Pierre Yang say one word about the motion. We just sat here and let him bend our ears. Honestly, there was enough energy from that steam to keep the state going!

I will say a couple of things about this matter. In my reply to the budget speech I am going to talk about this and a few other things that will entertain and fascinate some people. The one thing I will say is that the infatuation that the current government still has with the previous government after five years is extraordinary. If someone works in the process, they work on being the best they can be every single day, and that is all that matters. But that is not the case with these guys; they are still infatuated with the previous government. I will very briefly remind members of when the previous Labor government had balanced books. However, we also had mass teacher shortages; thousands of kids were without a teacher. We ran out of electricity. We had people on trolleys in corridors in our hospitals. We had the great escape at the Supreme Court. The Labor government could not deliver the fundamental services that a government should deliver, but it had balanced books, which is wonderful. But it is absolutely not. The role of a government, particularly a state government, is to provide basic services. Dealing with issues like education, health and crime is fundamental in the delivery of services by a government.

Let us move forward. We have moved forward. I did not give a second thought to the previous Labor government certainly in terms of what we did in education.

A member interjected.

Hon PETER COLLIER: No; I am talking about when we were in government. I spent my whole time working on education. It was a fantastic portfolio. We made our teachers the highest paid teachers in the nation. We put a teacher in front of every classroom in every year that we were in office.

Let us look at today. Is our quality of life any better now under the current Labor government? I take on board the pandemic, but I also take on board these record surpluses, and we are going to see another record surplus today. I say to the government that everything might be peachy with the books, but everything is not peachy out there. I am not talking about the pandemic that everyone has had to endure. The suffering of people under the Labor government has been accentuated over the last few years in particular, but it continues to be accentuated, particularly for the homeless, those who are looking for public housing and the thousands upon thousands of people who are sitting out the front of hospitals day after day because of the extraordinary situation with ambulance ramping. That is an appalling state of affairs.

Today I am going to talk about another cohort of people who tend to get lost. I have mentioned them a few times in this place over the last 12 months. They are called disengaged youth. Unfortunately, we find a lot of disengaged youth in juvenile detention centres. More often than not, they are Aboriginal or come from broken homes or homes where they have been physically, verbally or sexually abused. These kids have low self-esteem, low self-respect and low resilience. They have no support structures at all at home and then they find themselves in a juvenile detention centre. What are we, as a community, doing? What is the Labor government doing and what has it done over the last five years for these kids? I am going to give members some stark statistics today. I will tell them what happened. We did an enormous amount to assist disengaged kids, with a massive investment in curriculum and re-engagement in education schools to ensure that we provided an alternative to juvenile detention. Do not take my word for it. Take the word of the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services, which handed down this report just last month. I urge members, particularly those opposite, while they are beating their chests about the surplus, to read this report. Please take the time to read it.

A member interjected.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Do not be flippant about it, member. Go and read it. I have just said what it is.

Members need to listen to this part —

Our report is critical of the conditions at BHDC —

That is Banksia Hill Detention Centre —

and for many it will be difficult reading. BHDC is not fit for purpose as a youth detention centre. It looks like, and in many respects runs like, an adult prison. Even to the point where there are adult prison officers stationed there to assist in maintaining order and security. More recently, due to staff shortages, these staff have been required just to keep the facility running. Recent critical incidents have also regularly resulted in the deployment of response teams from the Department's Special Operations Group.

There is one particularly compelling interview with one of the young people who was formerly at Banksia Hill outlined at page 19. I do not have time to go through it at the moment, but I urge members to read it. It is absolutely haunting.

It says later in the report —

Considering the preliminary findings of this inspection, the Inspector of Custodial Services (the Inspector) formed a reasonable suspicion that:

1. There was a serious risk to the care or welfare of detainees held in the ISU at BHDC.
2. That detainees were being subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment in the ISU at BHDC.

That is from the Inspector of Custodial Services. That reinforces comments that have been made to me by dozens of parents and people who were formerly at Banksia Hill. Yesterday I asked a question about the number of people at Banksia Hill who had either attempted suicide or self-harmed. Listen to these statistics, members. In 2019, there was a combined total of 147 suicides and self-harm incidents. Last year, there were 351. That is an increase of around 300 per cent. There were two attempted suicides in 2019 and 31 last year. There were zero incidents of serious self-harm in 2019 and six last year. There were 145 incidents of minor self-harm in 2019 and 314 last year. The government might have a great balanced budget, but rather than wasting an exorbitant amount of time focusing on a government that was in power five years ago, I urge it to take its head out of the sand and understand that people out there are really struggling, particularly these vulnerable kids. Their lives are appalling. Most of the kids who go into this institution are harbouring enormous baggage and they come out feeling worse—they want to kill themselves. I am not being emotive. There were 351 incidents just last year.

For goodness sake, use \$50 million or \$100 million, or whatever, out of the \$8 billion surplus to provide some rehabilitation facilities in that centre so that when they come out, they are better placed to deal with a complex society than they were when they went in. If they feel that they want to kill themselves while they are in there, do we think they are going to be resilient when they come out? Of course, they will not be. Do we wonder what will happen to them then? Without a shadow of a doubt, they are going to go into an adult jail within 12 months. The circle of despair is just going to continue for these guys. It is just going to continue. The government could do something. It should stop beating its chest and worrying about us and start doing something about these kids. Hundreds upon hundreds of them are trying to kill themselves on the government's watch. I ask the government to please go into the till and provide some rehabilitation services and programs for these kids so that when they come out, they feel good about themselves, they have been trained, they have a qualification and they have been provided with some sympathy, empathy and support. They could come out actually feeling good about themselves for the first time in their lives and feeling able to make a productive contribution to society, but at the moment they do not. Last year, 351 of these kids wanted to take their own life. The government can beat its chest all it likes, but these kids are suffering.

HON COLIN de GRUSSA (Agricultural — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [11.20 am]: I, too, rise to support this excellent motion on the budget moved by my colleague the Leader of the Opposition. Obviously, it is important to debate these sorts of things on a day like today, when the budget will be handed down. I expect there will be some announcements in the budget that the opposition will agree with, but there will also be some examples of the government not managing to deliver.

I want to reflect on the contribution made by the honourable Minister for Emergency Services when he rose to address this motion. The first word he used was the word “nonsense”. Unfortunately, he was caught up in some nonsense of his own in his contribution when he talked about the nonsense of paying down a debt that never existed. It is quite ridiculous to suggest that the government has paid down \$11 billion of debt that never actually existed. Quite frankly, it is a bit like a home owner who borrows money to buy a house. They have the house valued a couple of years later and it has gone up in value, so they say, “Oh well, I've paid down that increase in value; that's reduced my debt on the home loan.” That is rubbish; it is absolute garbage. It is essentially fraudulent accounting and, as the minister himself said, it is nonsense; absolute nonsense. The government has not paid down debt —

Point of Order

Hon DARREN WEST: I think I just heard the government being accused of fraudulent accounting, and I ask that that be withdrawn.

The ACTING PRESIDENT: The advice I have received is that it was not directed to an individual, but I invite Hon Colin de Grussa to perhaps rethink his phrasing.

Debate Resumed

Hon COLIN de GRUSSA: Thank you, Acting President. I certainly was not directing the word at any individual. However, it is creative, at best, to suggest that the government has paid down a debt that never existed. The issue here is that there is this constant living in the past, and a fictitious past at that, because it is something that never actually happened, and it is nonsense, as the minister himself said. The whole idea that the government has reduced debt by \$11 billion is garbage.

Hon Pierre Yang's contribution was very passionate, and I acknowledge that it is good to see that passion flying across the chamber. We like our Thursdays, when we can all get a bit passionate about these things, but the fact of the matter is that we do not need to go back and look at the past. We need to look forward to the future of this state, but unfortunately this government came to power five years ago, and what happened in our health system? This

will be the government's sixth budget. What happened with ambulance ramping immediately after this government came in? This is the government's sixth budget, and we are seeing a crisis in our health system that started immediately after it came to power. Had it not been for the previous government investing in our health system and building new hospitals, where would we be? Where would we have been in the COVID pandemic if the previous government had not invested in building new hospitals? This government would like to take credit for all those things, but they would not have happened had the previous government not invested in the health system and built new hospitals. Where would we have been? The answer is that, despite the shambolic nature of the health system in this state at the moment, it would have been an absolute disaster without the previous government's very considered investment.

Motion lapsed, pursuant to standing orders.

LIBERAL PARTY — PREFERENCES

Motion

HON DAN CADDY (North Metropolitan) [11.25 am] — without notice: I move, on behalf of Hon Shelley Payne, who is away on urgent parliamentary business —

That the Legislative Council notes Clive Palmer's relentless attacks on Western Australia and condemns the Liberal Party for its preference deal with the United Australia Party.

Today I intend to educate the house on who Clive Palmer is, his interwoven relationship with the Liberal Party, and how that relationship is dangerous for Australia, dangerous for democracy and certainly dangerous for Western Australia. We saw a pathetic response to yesterday's motion when only the final opposition speaker tried to mount a real defence for the Prime Minister, so I am hoping that today we will have a better, more passionate and more on-topic debate. However, I am pretty sure that some members opposite are closer to Clive Palmer than they are to Scott Morrison. Considering the extreme lengths that opposition members went to yesterday to distance themselves from their own Prime Minister, it would not surprise me if they all threw up their hands and said, "We don't know who Clive Palmer is".

On that note, who is this Clive Palmer guy? He would have you believe that he is a Queenslander and a self-made businessman. He is nothing more than a glorified landlord who uses the money he makes, based on some smart advice he received years ago, to try to wreck the country and, even more so, to try to wreck this state. Let us never forget that he tried to sue Western Australia for billions of dollars—that is thousands of dollars for every man, woman and child in Western Australia—and he was backed by the Liberal Party every step of the way. The Liberal Party has been backing him since day one, and it should be ashamed of that. Every Liberal member of every Parliament across this country should hang their heads in shame at the way their party has supported this man. It has supported this man, it has encouraged this man, and it has profited from the actions of this man; Hon Nick Goiran said so himself.

He tried to sue Western Australians. It was just like his university days when he first studied law, then studied journalism, but could not complete a course; he came up short again. He lists litigation as one of his favourite pastimes; he loves litigation. He even loves representing himself, so it is little wonder that he loses nearly every case he takes to court. Let us look at his business ventures. There was a lot of talk in here yesterday about jobs. The Morrison government has an ideological bent for driving down wages in real terms. Clive Palmer—the one-time darling of the Liberal Party and now close ally—went one better. Six hundred people lost their jobs at the Coolum Resort over the time he owned that complex, and then he mothballed it in 2015. That was also the year that he mothballed his plans to replicate the *Titanic*. Then there was his failure to pay entitlements to 800 employees of Queensland Nickel, who lost their jobs when that business went into voluntary administration. He was forced to fork out \$66 million, which was taxpayer-funded anyway, to cover those workers' entitlements. The Townsville community is still reeling from the refinery's collapse.

The stark reality is that he costs states in Australia and Australian taxpayers in so many ways. Financially he is costing the country in general, but he is also costing individuals all over this country a significant amount of money. With regard to job security, the cost is in the hundreds, if not thousands, of jobs. Why is it only Labor who is calling him out? Why is the Liberal Party so silent on Clive Palmer? It is because it has supported him every step of the way. It supported him on his appeal to get the hard border down. It supported him on the hard border in May 2020.

The reckless comments of the Liberal Party's then leadership team in Western Australia were one thing, but the federal Attorney-General, the now disgraced member for Pearce, soon to be replaced by Tracey Roberts, a genuine advocate of the people of Pearce—Tracey Roberts, member for Pearce; it has a beautiful ring to it—joined the commonwealth in the legal proceedings in support of Clive Palmer. Where were members opposite? They were not sticking up for Western Australia, that is for sure. They were backing Clive Palmer all the way. The only voice of reason came from a Liberal from outside Parliament and that was former Premier Barnett. Let me read something, and for Hansard, this is from 16 June 2020. Colin Barnett is, in context, talking about China, but members will understand what I am saying. I quote —

... Colin Barnett warns Australia's relationship with China is at risk of further damage if the Morrison Government backs Clive Palmer's legal bid to pull down WA's hard border.

The former Premier said —

... he would be “very concerned” if the Commonwealth “lined up” with the Queensland-based billionaire, who ... had done “immense” damage

Immense damage is what he said. It continues —

Mr Barnett commended the “hardline” approach of Mark McGowan, his former political adversary, and said most West Australians likely supported the border closure.

The former Liberal leader said he would be very disappointed—his words—if the commonwealth threw its support behind Mr Palmer’s High Court challenge of WA’s border closure.

Yesterday, Hon Nick Goiran argued with one of the other Acting Presidents on more than one occasion so that he did not have to stay on topic. He defied the Acting President rather than defending his federal colleagues. At all costs Hon Nick Goiran avoided defending his federal leader. In a speech on a motion specifically about the federal Liberal government, the greatest legal mind on the opposition’s bench—I think the only one left—could not mount a defence. He could not find the words to say Morrison was good in any way for the Liberal Party. Therefore, it might come as some surprise to members to hear him acknowledging Clive Palmer.

I take members to one of the greatest reads of 2021: the multiple volumes of the transcripts of the conversations of “The Clan”. I am about to read a short excerpt of a conversation with Mathias Cormann, Hon Nick Goiran and Mihael McCoy. For members who do not know who Mr McCoy is—Hon Nick Goiran and Hon Peter Collier know him more affectionately as “The Rev”—he was one of the looser preselections by “The Clan” in the 2021 state election, and, friends, that is saying something. Who can forget the absolute train wreck of a campaign launch that was hijacked—if memory serves me right—by someone dressed up as a giant black cockatoo? But that could have been one of the other campaign launches that went haywire. It had to be shut down by then leader Zak Kirkup, and even I felt sorry for Zak. It had to be shut down because “The Rev” was asked about his extremist hate views—this is not the first time Zak had to shut down one of these for the same reason—against the LGBTQIA+ community and his endorsement of an article labelling the community the “Gaystapo”. What a disgraceful excuse for a human being. This is the sort of candidate “The Clan” preselects. This is the sort of person that “The Clan” wants to see sitting in this Parliament. Back to the —

Point of Order

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: Acting President, the opposition has been lectured repeatedly in the last two days about sticking to the motion before the house. As I now read the motion before the house, it refers specifically to Clive Palmer and the United Australia Party, so I am not sure where the member sees the relevance of this. I just think that given that we have been harangued for 48 hours on relevance, the member might like to adjust his approach back to his original debate.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: If the Leader of the Opposition had just listened, Hon Dan Caddy was just about to say—in fact, he did say—“back to the” before he was rudely interrupted, so he was in fact totally dealing with the motion before us.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon Jackie Jarvis): Members, there is no point of order at this stage.

Debate Resumed

Hon DAN CADDY: Thank you, deputy leader of the government. I was about to say back to the WhatsApp greatest hits because this is really relevant; members opposite may want to listen to this. I will read a bit of the transcript; it is only short. It states —

MATHIAS CORMANN: ... You don’t think he helped us depress Labor’s primary vote?

MIHAEL MCCOY: Oh yes! He knew what he was doing.

...

NICK GOIRAN: Yes I agree we’ve benefited from his splash back ...

Have no doubt, members, that this is a genuine marriage between Palmer United and the Liberal Party, and even the Liberal Party in Western Australia. We should not be surprised at all because it is not the first time “The Clan” has dragged the Liberal Party into a questionable preference deal. I go back to the gift that keeps on giving, and for Hansard this is an article by Peter Law—my friend; some may say my twin—from 20 August 2021. It states —

The WA Liberals decision to enter into a preference swap with Pauline Hanson’s One Nation ahead of the 2017 election, a deal orchestrated in part by Mr Cormann, was widely viewed as a tactical blunder.

That was far from the view within The Clan, even after the arrangement was lampooned in the press.

Hon Nick Goiran said —

“What’s not good about it? If anything I’m surprised we got such a good deal! There’s no downside for us,” ...

Let us also remember that these are the same text messages that the members of “The Clan” used to denigrate women, call them sandwich makers —

Hon Dr Steve Thomas: You didn’t stay on the motion very long.

Hon DAN CADDY: — and that was just women in the Liberal Party. I will get back to it. Yet, they saved the most awful things, my friend, for women in the Labor Party.

Several members interjected.

Hon DAN CADDY: It is disturbing! These are the same messages in which Hon Nick Goiran boasted about stacking branches. I quote —

Tomorrow I’m going to find a branch to stack, this is driving me crazy.

These are the same messages in which they labelled the Leader of the Liberal Party, member for Cottesloe, an embarrassment and finally I have something that I can agree on with “The Clan”!

I come back to the motion, Hon Dr Steve Thomas. If we want real proof about the depth of the connection between the Liberal Party in Western Australia and the Palmer United Australia Party, look no further than at the opposition’s benches at Hon Steve Martin. Members will not believe what I have here. Earlier today, Hon Steve Martin said that he would like to give us a history lesson. Those were his words. He said he even had photos. Touché, honourable member; I have in my hands some fascinating documents taken from Hon Steve Martin’s social media, and I will read them —

Voters in Cuballing, Wickpin and Kulin shires are now in the district of Central Wheatbelt. Rob Forster— Liberal for Central Wheatbelt is an outstanding local candidate.

Vote Liberal locally ...

I have another beauty here and it says —

Out door knocking and hearing about local issues ... with Rob Forster—Liberal for Central Wheatbelt

This one here has the Leader of the Opposition in it; it is a beautiful photo of him. It says, “With regional Liberals Steve Thomas, Shadow Agricultural Minister,” he is out again with this outstanding candidate.

I also have a beautiful photo here with Senator Dean Smith and Rob Forster.

I do not know whether members remember but some time ago there was a show on one of the commercial stations— I do not know which one it was; I do not watch a lot of commercial television—called *Where Are They Now?* It looked at people and looked at where they had gone. Let me tell members where Rob Forster is—the Liberal candidate in the last state election for the Central Wheatbelt, heavily endorsed by Hon Steve Martin and Hon Dr Steve Thomas, Leader of the Opposition. Where is Rob Forster now? I will tell members where he is; he is on the Palmer United Australia Party Senate ticket. That is where he is! We cannot even tell them apart. We cannot spot the difference. That is how it enmeshed the Liberal Party and the Palmer United party are with each other. That is where it is at. Hon Dr Steve Thomas, who are you going to vote for in the Senate? Are you voting for your party or are you voting for Palmer United?

Hon Dr Steve Thomas: I’ll be voting Liberal, thank you very much!

Hon DAN CADDY: I wonder whom Hon Steve Martin will be voting for?

Hon Dr Steve Thomas: He’ll be voting Liberal, too.

Hon DAN CADDY: Do you think he will? I am not so sure.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas: Nobody within the Labor Party has ever shifted parties!

The ACTING PRESIDENT: Order, members! I am having difficulty hearing. Let us just remember that Hansard are offsite and I am sure it is incredibly difficult for them.

Hon DAN CADDY: The question for all these current members of the Liberal Party who were so vehemently behind their man in Central Wheatbelt who is now running for the Palmer United party is: where is your loyalty? Where do you stand?

Hon Dr Steve Thomas: With the Liberal Party, where it has always been.

Hon DAN CADDY: Really? Members opposite are so enmeshed with the Palmer United party I struggle to see the difference. There is so much to talk about here I am going to run out of time.

Let me talk about the \$30 billion compensation claim, just briefly. I mentioned it earlier. Clive Palmer was going to sue Western Australia for \$30 billion. What did the leadership of the Liberal Party do? They questioned that amount; they questioned where that \$30 billion came from. Once again, they were sticking up for Clive Palmer— someone who wanted to wreck this state. As I mentioned before, fortunately when it comes to superior legal minds, they do not get much better than Hon John Quigley, the Attorney General. He tabled in the other place documentary evidence that showed that what Clive Palmer was trying to sue us for actually amounted to more than \$30 billion.

Scott Morrison has once again betrayed this state. He has betrayed the country with the deal that he has done with the Palmer United Australia Party. I am sure we will hear from members opposite, who will say, “Oh, but he didn’t do it in Western Australia.” Western Australia has 10 per cent of the federal seats. I will tell members straight that the only reason Scott Morrison did not do that in Western Australia is because the only person who is hated more in Western Australia than Scott Morrison is Clive Palmer. Liberal state members are completely wrapped up and enmeshed in this deal that Scott Morrison has done with the Palmer United Australia Party. Scott Morrison swore—he promised—that he would not do a deal with Clive, but he did. We saw the federal Attorney-General scurry along and try to explain it by saying, “Oh, but it doesn’t apply to Western Australia.” Pathetic—absolutely pathetic. He has preferenced the Liberal Party and the Liberal Party, importantly, has preferenced the Palmer United Australia Party ahead of Labor in the majority of the states across the country. It is a bit like what we were talking about yesterday in that this dirty deal with Clive Palmer just goes to show that the only job Scott Morrison cares about is his own. He cares more about saving his own job than he does about keeping his word, sticking up for Western Australia or about anyone in Western Australia.

HON DARREN WEST (Agricultural — Parliamentary Secretary) [11.41 am]: I would like to also endorse the motion put forward by Hon Shelley Payne, who unfortunately is unable to be with us today. I am sure the rest of the team will carry the motion on her behalf, and I follow on from the excellent and strong words of Hon Dan Caddy.

How could the Liberal Party do a deal with Clive Palmer? How could it do that? It is electoral poison in Western Australia, and it will go down as such. Just like the Liberal Party’s deal with One Nation went down as electoral poison, this one will as well.

I want to talk a little about the man we are talking about in this motion today. I know that people are quite familiar with him. He is most famous for suing people and for his lawsuits. He sued every Western Australian for \$12 000 a head. Fortunately, he was unsuccessful in that. He then sued the Premier of Western Australia in a bit of a tantrum, because he can afford it and he does not care a jot about Western Australia or its people. That has been totally evident over the last couple of years. For the Liberal Party to do a deal with this person is just reprehensible. I have researched Clive Palmer and will quote from the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, which is a reasonable source. It outlines that he was born in Footscray, Victoria in 1954. He moved to Williamstown but suffered from asthma from the pollution in that area at the time, and then moved to Queensland in 1963. It states —

He studied law and journalism at the University of Queensland but dropped out in 1975 —

He then went into real estate. It continues —

In the early 1980s he claimed to have made some \$40 million ... through his company, GSS Property Sales. In 1984 he established the mining concern Mineralogy, which acquired gold and iron deposits in Western Australia that were formerly owned by American mining interests.

For much of his career, the notoriously cagey Palmer remained largely under the international radar, expanding his empire but attracting attention only in his home country. In 2006 he leased his iron mines to the Chinese-government-owned corporation CITIC Ltd. (formerly CITIC Pacific). The deal, which was initially worth nearly \$3 billion (Australian), included future royalties on any ore produced. Mineralogy further acquired coal mines in 2008 and a nickel and cobalt refinery in 2009. Critics alleged that Palmer’s mines contained only low-grade ores and produced little, if any, actual metal and contended that his public status as a “mining magnate” was tenuous at best. Beginning in 2014, his relationship with CITIC deteriorated, with both parties alleging financial misconduct on the other’s part and initiating a series of lawsuits against each other.

Palmer’s additional business holdings included the association football (soccer) team Gold Coast United FC (2008–12) and Palmersaurus, a theme park filled with animatronic dinosaur replicas that opened in December 2013 at one of his several resort properties; it later closed. Plans to build a replica of the RMS *Titanic* never reached the construction stage. External analysis of his holdings suggested that his own estimates of his wealth were greatly exaggerated.

Even those estimates, though, placed him in a rarefied financial echelon. As his wealth burgeoned, Palmer donated lavishly to conservative political causes. In 1983 he volunteered as campaign director for Australia’s conservative National Party, to which he had belonged since 1974. He became the party’s media spokesman during the 1986 elections —

For those who do not remember the 1986 Queensland election, that election returned the Joh Bjelke-Peterson government—a great combination right there! The entry continues —

and in 1992 he was elected to life membership.

Life membership of the National Party was awarded to Clive Palmer! A lot of people do not realise this, and I certainly did not until I did some research with the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. It continues —

He departed from the National Party in 2012 following disputes with the federal leadership of the Liberal Party (under which the National Party functioned in Queensland).

I note that the National Party's annual report of 2014 still listed Palmer as a life member. The article goes on to detail his Palmer United Party and now United Australia Party days—days in which he significantly contributed to the 2019 federal election win, with \$60 million allegedly spent on advertising encouraging people to vote against Bill Shorten and Labor. I think he played a significant hand in what was a very unexpected loss for Labor after a tumultuous few years under the Liberals. Clive Palmer is back at it again with his new party. Every day, we see millions of dollars spent on advertising against Albanese and a federal Labor government. We now see a preference deal with the Liberal Party. How can members of the Liberal Party look at themselves in the mirror and in conscience think that that is a good thing to do?

We have seen the demise of the Liberal Party in Western Australia over the last decade. Some of us do not mind that that has happened. I think this deal with Clive Palmer across the country is an equal low point to the deal with One Nation. I think it is disgraceful. It needs to be called out, and I am really pleased that this motion is here today. The voting public of Australia deserve to know what cagey backroom deals the Liberals and Clive Palmer are doing together when they swap preferences. I certainly will not be voting for the Liberals at this federal election, not that I have done at any other election. I think that other members of the Australian public, and especially the Western Australian public, who voted Liberal last time will be horrified and shocked that there is a deal with Clive Palmer, because as Hon Dan Caddy said quite correctly, the only person disliked in Western Australia at the moment more than Scott Morrison would be Clive Palmer. I encourage everybody to take that into account when they turn up to their local polling booth over the next two weeks, and especially on election day, and put the Liberals second last and Clive Palmer last, because that is where Clive Palmer puts Western Australia.

HON PIERRE YANG (North Metropolitan) [11.48 am]: I am a bit disappointed that no-one from the opposition would like to seek the call and, like they did yesterday, defend their mates and the dodgy little deal with Clive Palmer, as well as with One Nation, I hasten to add.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas: We are waiting to see whether you say anything intelligent first.

Hon PIERRE YANG: I will continue with the sentiment that I expressed earlier to the Leader of the Opposition during non-government business, when I said that I was not very impressed with his comments. I think I will carry that forward in this private member's business—I am not very impressed by the Leader of the Opposition and his comments. But I shall come back to this motion. We heard a number of points of order throughout yesterday and today, including a few from me, asking members to come back to the motion, so I shall do that.

I find the fact that Clive Palmer was a member of the LNP interesting. In fact, he was a life member of the LNP. What is he doing? He is supporting the Liberal National Party in this coming federal election. It is a blatant fact that he is still carrying his Liberal National Party sentiment. That is where his heart is. He is supporting the Liberal National Party at a federal level. That is fine. We live in a free country. He is free to do that. He is a well-known man. He is a multibillionaire. He can spend more money on candidates than all political parties put together. That is fine as well. We live in a free country. What is not fine is for this man to attack Western Australia. We have heard from Hon Dan Caddy and Hon Darren West about what this man has done to Western Australia. When the Premier of this state made a decision to close the border of Western Australia to the rest of the country, it was done with a lot of consideration and it was done for the benefit of the people of Western Australia. What did the Liberals do? What did Morrison do? What did Christian Porter do? When Clive Palmer launched a legal High Court challenge to WA's hard border, they jumped on the bandwagon. I will quote a few words from *The Australian*, the favourite newspaper of the Liberal Party, which is supporting the Liberal Party non-stop. The article stated —

Mining magnate Clive Palmer has “thanked” Scott Morrison for contributing to his court bid to dismantle Western Australia's hard COVID-19 border and says the ...

Commonwealth —

has played its part in his case, despite the Prime Minister pulling his support.

Mr Morrison wrote to West Australian Premier Mark McGowan at the weekend to end federal co-operation with a High Court bid to remove the hard border, saying he wanted to work with the —

Highly popular —

Labor leader to reach a compromise.

Federal officials —

This is the key —

already testified on Mr Palmer's case in front of the Federal Court last week, presenting facts to show there were alternatives to the border closure.

Mr Palmer on Sunday said the federal contribution to the case would still help determine whether he won his fight to overturn the closure.

We all know the facts and the events that occurred after that. Thank goodness the judiciary made the right decision to support the decision of the WA government and the Premier to close our state's border. I find it difficult to

comprehend that the Prime Minister for New South Wales, Scott Morrison, and his mob had a problem with Western Australia. His mate Clive Palmer had a problem with Western Australia. That is why they are constantly attacking the state and the Western Australian government. Their favourite newspaper, *The Australian*, reported that. Because of this cosy relationship between the two, this is the outcome.

I downloaded a document from the Liberal Party's website. It shows to the rest of the world the Liberal Party's preference deal with Clive Palmer's United Australia Party. In New South Wales, the Liberal Party is recommending people who support the Liberal Party to vote 3 for Clive Palmer's United Australia Party. In Queensland, it is doing this again. The Liberal National Party of Queensland is recommending that its members supporting their party vote 3 for Clive Palmer's United Australia Party. There is a real chance that we will see Clive Palmer returned to federal Parliament as a senator. In South Australia, the Liberal Party is recommending that people vote 4 for the United Australia Party after voting 2 for the National Party and voting 3 for Bob Day, the former senator for Family First a decade ago. I do not think any member would think that those two entities—the National Party in South Australia or Mr Bob Day—would return, so in fact, voting 4 in South Australia will give Clive Palmer a boost to have a senator elected in that state. Things are getting worse. In Tasmania, the Liberal Party is recommending people support Clive Palmer as their number 2 choice, so all surpluses of their vote would go to Clive Palmer. In Victoria as well, people are encouraged to vote 2 for Clive Palmer. The peculiar fact in this document is the Liberal Party's preference suggestion in Western Australia. The United Australia Party is nowhere to be seen in the Liberal Party's first six preference suggestions. I wonder why the Liberal Party would do that.

Members opposite are not denying there is a deal. It seems that they are not denying that because they know that they will be defending the indefensible. At least they put up a fight yesterday but they have given up today. No-one sought the call and probably no-one will.

An article published two days ago titled “Liberals to benefit from UAP preferences in many key seats” states —

Liberal candidates in key seats will benefit from Clive Palmer's preferences, with his United Australia Party recommending voters put the Liberal Party second or third place on their ballot papers in several close contests.

The development, which was evident on several how-to-vote cards collected by the *Herald* and *The Age* as pre-polling opened on Monday, came despite Palmer saying just weeks ago that his party would urge voters to put the major parties “last”.

...

UAP leader Craig Kelly said he had “no discussion whatsoever” with the Liberals.

I find that very peculiar and very interesting. What a coincidence. “Oh, no, we're not talking to each other; we are just going to vote for each other, probably because we were all from the Liberal Party in the past.” The same thing happened in the 2017 election. The Liberal Party in Western Australia shocked and surprised Colin Barnett with its preference deal with One Nation. The Liberal Party does not get it. Dealing with fringe parties is actually hurting the Liberal Party as a mainstream party. The Liberal Party is shifting more and more towards the right. It is missing the centre. It is missing the point. If Robert Menzies knew that his party would turn into this shambolic collective of people from all different facets of the extreme right, he would not have formed the party in the 1940s. The Liberal Party has totally lost the point, and it is a shame.

HON SANDRA CARR (Agricultural) [11.58 am]: I rise to make a brief statement in support of the motion raised by Hon Dan Caddy for Hon Shelley Payne. The point that we really need to understand is that the Liberal Party seems to be suffering from Munchausen syndrome by proxy, as it has been constantly fed toxic and poisonous medicine by the United Australia Party to maintain attention. It is shameful in Western Australia in particular that the Liberal Party is maintaining a close, loving and affectionate relationship with Clive Palmer, yet its members sit in shameful silence during this motion, and indeed well they should because they know that Western Australians do not support Clive Palmer. He is universally disliked in this state. He is not present on any of his slogans. He is not there with his face for all to see. He is hiding behind absurd catcheries around our state and across the city, saying “Freedom, Freedom, Freedom” in one of the most free states in the country and, indeed, the world at the moment. We have enjoyed incredible freedom in Western Australia, and we are all very blessed. I constantly hear that comment from my constituents. Western Australians are not the fools the Liberals would like us to be. We know that the preference deal is designed to ensure that votes flow the Liberals' way. We know that because it happened at the last election. We do not have amnesia; it was only three years ago that Clive Palmer was proudly touting in the media that the goal for the United Australia Party was to ensure that the Labor Party did not get into power. This has been achieved through the collective effort of the United Australian Party. Make no mistake, all those proudly spouting the “Freedom, Freedom, Freedom” slogan—the nonsense slogan—are voting Liberal. It is entirely designed to ensure that Scott Morrison and his Liberals get more votes and attempt to maintain their stranglehold on higher taxes, lower wages—lower wages by design, I might add, although that design is fundamentally flawed—not addressing the cost of living for Australian people, making sure that getting to see a doctor does not get any better, that Medicare is continually eroded, and that aged care remains in crisis. A shameful and embarrassing dodgy deal has been done to harm all Australians. There is no other way to say it.

We also know that that is the case because the UAP accidentally leaked it. It tried to keep the deal quiet, put it off and make sure that no-one knew that those preference deals had been done, and catch us off guard at the last minute once they had sucked a few people into the nonsense catchcry of freedom—the freedom we already enjoy. It is absurd that it was accidentally leaked, but that tells us also that the UAP is slightly incompetent, although “slightly” is probably a bit of an understatement. The party accidentally leaked its own preference deal, and we all saw it. It is not as though we did not know it was coming, but it emphasises for us once again that Clive Palmer, the United Australia Party and the Liberal Party have a really complicated relationship with the truth. They do not like to be transparent or accountable, and they do not like to lay their values and the truth out on the table for people to see.

Western Australians do not want Clive Palmer. We do not want him in our state. We know he does not have our best interests at heart. We know that he does not care about wages, and we know that he does not even care about his own workers. He will not look after them; he will not show up. He will take us to court. He will do whatever he can to entertain himself, it seems, at the expense of everyday Australians. It is disgraceful and shameful and I am not at all surprised that members opposite have absolutely nothing to say on the matter. What could they say—that it is not happening in Western Australia? It is not happening here, because they know that Western Australians do not want it, but it does not matter because it is going to happen across the country. We are talking about a federal election, not a state election. It will impact us all negatively. We are seeking a better future for Australians—no more lies, half-truths, mistruths or lack of accountability, and not being prepared to roll up our sleeves and use a bit of elbow grease to get the job done and look after the country.

A member interjected.

Hon SANDRA CARR: I did indeed say “elbow grease”; thank you for picking that up!

We want someone who is prepared to back us all. I have spent most of my teaching career telling young people that when they are afforded success and opportunities in life, like those that Clive Palmer has, they do not use that to hold the rest of the country’s heads under water. They should reach out their hands and pull people up with them, so that everyone gets to enjoy the same opportunities in life. Clive Palmer has had his opportunity to show us he can do that, and he has chosen the dark side. When the Liberal Party chose to align itself with him, it chose the dark side too. We do not want that for this country. Australia is a country that can do better. There should not be a single person in this country who places any number, other than the absolute last, alongside the United Australia Party. It deserves to disappear into the dark realms of history, and I will be the first one cheering along when that happens come the election.

HON KLARA ANDRIC (South Metropolitan) [12.06 pm]: I, too, take this opportunity to briefly speak on this motion moved earlier today by Hon Dan Caddy on behalf of Hon Shelley Payne. This is a particularly important motion right now as we approach federal election day. Western Australians are making up their minds about who they want to see in government. As members of this chamber are aware, they are choosing between another three years of the Morrison coalition government and a breath of fresh air with an Albanese Labor government. We have been incredibly lucky here in Western Australia not to feel the bite of the many failings of the Morrison government. I thought about listing those failings when speaking today, but there would be far too many for me to have enough time to do so. In order to make sure that I stick to relevance, I will leave out some of the key failings of the Morrison government today. Nevertheless, they are very significant.

As I said, we have been very lucky here in Western Australia under the leadership of Premier Mark McGowan. Because of the Premier’s leadership and the hard border, WA is in the situation it enjoys today. This brings me to the first instance of Scott Morrison siding with Clive Palmer. When Palmer threatened to tear down Western Australia’s hard border during the peak of the pandemic, Scott Morrison sided with him. He put the selfish desires of a narcissistic billionaire over the health and safety of Western Australians—yet another Morrison failure during the pandemic, except this one felt more like an attack than the sloppy nature of his other pandemic failings. He called us cave people. I for one was very happy in my cave. Some people think that we can forgive Morrison for this failure; it was in the past, and he has learnt his lesson—except that he has not. Morrison and his Liberals have signed a preference deal with Clive Palmer for the federal election. This deal is a slap in the face for all Western Australians. Even though the Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, may think that he has outsmarted us by not preferencing the Palmer party here in Western Australia, he did preference Palmer in Victoria and Tasmania, where the United Australia Party is the Liberal Party’s second preference, and in New South Wales and Queensland, where it is the Liberals’ third preference. I would also like to note that the United Australia Party has not preferenced the Liberals in the Senate in any state. Did Morrison think that Western Australians would not find out? We may be cave people but we still have the internet, although, I must say, our internet would be much better if the Liberal government had not stuffed up the national broadband network, too.

Let us now look at a few policies of Clive Palmer’s United Australia Party. Members may have seen some of its advertisements announcing that it is set to spend \$70 million—on election advertising, I might add. It has been spruiking a plan for a maximum three per cent interest rate for all home loans for the next five years. I note that low interest rates have caused the rise in property prices in Australia. Sharing this concern with me is Dr Janine Dixon, a senior research fellow at Victoria University’s Centre of Policy Studies, who told the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 11 April this year that limiting interest rate rises would increase demand, pushing housing prices further higher.

It was also said in that article, “It’s as if there is absolutely no rational thought behind this policy.”

As though the housing crisis was not bad enough, the United Australia Party plans to make it worse. Clive Palmer and his attack on Western Australians had been bad enough before this policy revelation.

Another Palmer policy is to make Australian superannuation funds invest a set proportion of their assets exclusively in Australia. Super fund managers are not stupid. If there are favourable investments to be made in Australia, they would already be making them. Economist Nicki Hutley told *The Sydney Morning Herald* in April this year —

“It basically is just saying everyone could have lower returns for their superannuation. And given we have a problem already with too many people who don’t have enough superannuation, that doesn’t seem to be a rational choice.”

Once again, it is a policy that is completely irrational.

Although I am all for increasing our investment in Australia, I do not think it would be morally right to meddle with people’s retirement savings to do so. If Western Australians want a government that cares about them, Scott Morrison’s coalition simply will not fit the bill. On the other hand, Anthony Albanese chose WA as the place to launch the Labor Party’s campaign, showing his commitment to Western Australians. Unlike the other two parties, he has also consistently backed Premier Mark McGowan and his strong leadership—something that Scott Morrison could never truthfully claim.

HON MARTIN PRITCHARD (North Metropolitan) [12.12 pm]: I will speak briefly because I think Hon Dan Caddy would like to respond to the comments made in debate on this motion about the Liberal Party’s preference deal with the United Australia Party, which I think is a very good motion. First, I want to ask the Liberal Party as a whole whether a deal has been done, or not. In some 90 per cent of the country the Liberal Party is asking the public to vote for a candidate for the United Australia Party ahead of the Australian Labor Party. It is either a deal or it has looked at the policies that the United Australia Party has in place and has determined that Clive Palmer, Craig Kelly and the United Australia Party’s policies are better than the Labor Party’s policies. If the Liberal Party believes that, it has every right to direct its preferences in that direction. As the previous speaker mentioned, there are a couple of policies one would have to question. One of those relates to home loans. The catchcry of Clive Palmer and his party is, “Save your homes; save your homes”. In my view, it is a moronic approach to a policy. It looks at setting a maximum interest rate on home loans of three per cent. I wonder what would happen with the banking system in this country if inflation got out of hand, because of course it has to borrow money from overseas. If the world inflation rate did get out of hand and we returned to a situation in which the cost of money was eight per cent or nine per cent, heaven forbid, and the banks could charge only three per cent through an instruction by future Prime Minister Craig Kelly, that would see absolute bedlam within this country’s banking system. It is a moronic, very simplistic policy and it would be interesting to see whether the Liberal Party believed that policy was preferable to any policy the Labor Party would put forward in that space.

Superannuation is an important issue for me, having fought very hard to get industry superannuation. I wonder what would happen to people’s savings if all of a sudden, through a legislative requirement, superannuation funds in Australia had to withdraw money from all their overseas investments and had to suddenly invest a trillion dollars in funds in Australia, and whether they would get any returns that would see people’s superannuation grow under those circumstances. I suggest to members that it would probably have a major impact on the account balances of Australians who hold superannuation accounts to look after their retirement. The other issue, of course, is that when managing superannuation fund investment, one tries to spread the risk. Having money invested overseas and in Australia is one of the ways people can spread the risk. Again, by instruction of future Prime Minister Craig Kelly and with the support of the Liberal Party, there may be some impacts on superannuation. The other interesting policy of the United Australia Party is to introduce a 15 per cent iron ore export licence. What effect would that have on the Western Australian economy particularly?

I ask the Liberal Party: is there a deal? If it is a deal and the party is not interested in the policies of the United Australia Party, it should be honest about it and say that it does not care about the policies or the candidates that party has. It would be interesting to think that Clive Palmer personally has visited every candidate around the country under COVID-19 restrictions to vet the sort of candidates who are running for his party. I suggest to members that he has not done so and that the quality of candidates would vary greatly, and probably not be known. It is interesting that the Liberal Party around the country would feel that the quality of the candidates was a guiding force as to why it would direct preferences to the United Australia Party rather than to other parties. The Liberal Party has either done a deal or it believes that the candidates, the quality of the United Australia Party, and the quality of its leader, Clive Palmer, and the things he has done to this state are good reasons to direct preferences to the United Australia Party candidates to get them elected above the Australian Labor Party or other parties that might have more common sense, ambitions and policies.

The issue with Craig Kelly is that he obviously had a long affiliation with the Liberal Party, although he has some dissatisfaction with it at the moment. I am sure that he has lots of friends in the Liberal Party and I wonder whether that relationship has influenced the Liberal Party at the national level to do some sort of deal with him and that is why the Liberal Party believes that it is appropriate to send its preferences to the United Australia Party. However, I do not think any of those things are right. It is a deal that has been done in a way in which, irrespective of the

quality of the leader of that party, irrespective of the parliamentary leader of that party and irrespective of the concerns that if the Liberal Party actually gets some people elected through its preferences, that does not matter; the overall issue is to make sure that Prime Minister Morrison keeps his job. That is the guiding force behind this deal. It is not about whether the United Australia Party is putting up quality candidates at all. I think it would be appropriate for someone in this place to defend the Liberal Party's view, which I believe someone may do, and tell us whether the deal has been done because the Liberal Party truly believes that the United Australia Party is a party worth supporting, whether its candidates are worth supporting or whether it is all about trying to hold on to power no matter the cost to the country and to the Australian public, and certainly no matter the cost to the Western Australian public.

HON DR STEVE THOMAS (South West — Leader of the Opposition) [12.21 pm]: I have very little good to say about Clive Palmer, but I will make a couple of brief comments on behalf of the opposition. First, I make members aware that when the Mineralogy bill came through, the opposition supported what the government intended doing. Second, I looked back to see where Clive Palmer came from. This has been brought up a number of times, including, I think, by the mover of the motion. Clive Palmer was first elected in 2013 to the Queensland seat of Fairfax. There were three candidates left in the final rounds of that election: the ALP candidate; the Liberal–National candidate, Ted O'Brien; and Clive Palmer. The ALP candidate was removed because the ALP came third of those three. The ALP had 20 792 votes to be redistributed, of which 15 677 went to Clive Palmer and 5 115 went to the Liberal–National Party. Do honourable members know why Clive Palmer started his parliamentary career? It is because the Labor Party preferenced him in 2013 in Fairfax. Members should look up the history before they get very pretentious about their position.

Several members interjected.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: You put him into Parliament.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon Steve Martin): Order, members!

HON KYLE MCGINN (Mining and Pastoral — Parliamentary Secretary) [12.22 pm]: What a laugh. I have two minutes and 52 seconds, so I will get to it. There have been a lot of comments about the Liberal and National Parties making this deal. The National Party does not exist in O'Connor and is not running a candidate. I am sorry to the honourable member who is sitting over there to be chucked into it because the National Party is not even participating in the process of actually running for O'Connor, which I think is a pretty obvious statement on where the National Party is at the moment, and in O'Connor especially. The National Party cannot even run a candidate there.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT: Order, members!

Hon KYLE MCGINN: Funnily enough, the candidate the National Party is running in Durack is Ian Blayney, who the National Party took off the Liberals. Let us be honest, the National Party is the real joke at the moment in this chamber.

I will touch on Clive Palmer. I cannot hear anything from the Nationals over there. They are very quiet, as usual. Everyone would be aware that Clive Palmer has been constantly putting the workers at the CITIC Pacific site on edge. He is constantly attacking CITIC Pacific. Honestly, I do not have much love for CITIC Pacific itself, but Clive Palmer puts pressure on with his money and the deals he does. When I was a union official on that site, the amount of stress and tension that put on the workforce was insane. There is only one other person who the Liberal Party supports who is more detrimental to workers in this country, and that is Michaelia Cash. What have Clive Palmer and Michaelia Cash done for Australian workers in this country? They have tried very hard to drive out the maritime workers, even though we are an island nation. I know that Michaelia Cash supported replacing the Australian crews on the MV *Portland* with foreign exploited labour. That is the exact stuff that Clive Palmer would support. When he did not support his workers in Queensland, he was sending out DVDs. I got six *Titanic 2* DVDs that were mailed to the same address while workers did not get their superannuation and annual leave. That is disgrace.

The Liberal Party at the federal level has a real question to ask itself. I know that the National Party does not play much in the federal sphere because it does not have enough members anymore to actually do anything in the federal sphere, but I say to the people of O'Connor to focus on Shaneane Weldon. The Nats are not there and the Liberals support Palmer—what a shame!

Motion lapsed, pursuant to standing orders.

DISALLOWANCE MOTIONS

Discharge of Order

Hon Martin Pritchard reported that the concerns of the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation had been addressed on the following disallowance motions, and on his motions without notice it was resolved —

That the following orders of the day be discharged from the notice paper —

1. Shire of Broome Waste Local Law 2021 — Disallowance.
2. Shire of Carnarvon Public Places and Local Government Property Local Law 2021 — Disallowance.

SENTENCING LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (PERSONS LINKED TO TERRORISM) BILL 2021*Committee*

Resumed from 11 May. The Deputy Chair of Committees (Hon Steve Martin) in the chair; Hon Matthew Swinbourn (Parliamentary Secretary) in charge of the bill.

Clause 10: Section 14 amended —

Progress was reported after the clause had been partly considered.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: To assist the chamber, we are up to clause 10. Members may recall that clauses 9 and 10 deal with the resocialisation programs for prisoners. Clause 9 deals with those programs for what are referred to as schedule 3 prisoners and we are now dealing at clause 10 with the resocialisation programs for other prisoners.

While we are dealing with both these clauses in a cumulative fashion, members will note that at clause 10, the proposal is to insert after section 14(5) of the act new subsection (5A), which states —

The Board must not approve a programme for the purposes of subsection (5) in relation to a prisoner with links to terrorism who is subject to a Commissioner of Police report unless the Board, having regard to the report, is satisfied that the prisoner is suitable for inclusion in the programme.

The matter that really arises with these two clauses is one that intersects with the Sentencing Act as a whole; that is, what will happen in the event that the chairperson, who in this unique scenario is acting as the board, is unavailable or unfit or has a conflict? Will the provisions as they stand in the current act be suitable to allow, for example, the deputy to stand in the chairperson's place? I understood that that was going to be considered overnight.

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: I thank the member for the recap. He is correct; some consideration has been given to the matters that were raised yesterday. I can confirm that, currently, the Sentence Administration Act 2003 does not provide a blanket delegation to allow all the functions of the chairperson of the board to be delegated to another person, essentially due to the special eligibility requirements for the position. For this reason, section 52 of the Interpretation Act 1984 will apply. Section 52 of the Interpretation Act allows for the making of acting appointments when a person is unable to perform the duties of the position for reasons including a conflict of interest, ill health, death or leave. The person appointed to act can do so for the purposes of the whole or part of the functions of the office. However, the person appointed must have the same qualifications as required under the principal act. This is the reason that the deputy chairs of the Prisoners Review Board are not assigned to the position of chair. If something has to happen particularly urgently or unexpectedly, noting that there are very limited circumstances that would require urgent consideration by the chairperson of the board, an urgent request would need to be made to the Governor in Executive Council to make that acting appointment.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: The urgency will not apply, at least not for the community. It might apply for the prisoner. The prisoner might think that things are urgent, but for the safety of the community, we need not be concerned about any urgency because the person would be incarcerated. The only possible decision that would be made about the prisoner by the board, whether that be the chairperson or the acting chairperson, would be whether the person is suitable for inclusion in a resocialisation program. I think that is a useful point of clarification.

Perhaps to round out this issue, have there been circumstances in the past in which the chair has been unavailable or unfit and there has been a necessity to appoint an acting chairperson?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: I cannot give the member a complete answer with every possible occasion when it may have happened, but the advisers recall an occasion when it happened when Robert Cock was the chair and he had fallen ill. A person was appointed as the acting chairperson while he was ill.

Clause put and passed.**Clauses 11 to 15 put and passed.****Clause 16: Part 5 Division 1B inserted —**

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Clause 16 seeks to insert division 1B into part 5 of the Sentence Administration Act 2003. It is the substantive clause in part 2 of the bill before us. We have previously touched on the government's rationale for determining that only the chairperson will make decisions as the board about prisoners with links to terrorism. On what basis did the government form the additional release considerations and are the additional release considerations the same as those that will apply in other Australian jurisdictions? I draw the parliamentary secretary's attention to proposed section 66F.

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: Essentially, I am advised that the working group gave consideration to and were guided by all the other jurisdictions, because we have the benefit of being last. We have not mirrored what they have done obviously, but we have had regard to it. I cannot give the member a direct answer about the single guide for that because it was an iterative process that the working group developed over time. Obviously, it had regard to what the other jurisdictions had done, worked through that and the additional considerations that should be developed, and then came to the conclusion that is reflected in proposed section 66F.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Under subdivision 2, “Early release orders in cases of prisoners with links to terrorism”, there are three categories of prisoners with links to terrorism. We have previously dealt with category 1 and category 2 prisoners, and, specifically, we have identified that currently in Western Australia there are no category 1 or category 2 prisoners, albeit there is one individual who would, if he were to be reimprisoned for any reason, at that point be considered a category 1 prisoner. There is also currently an individual before the courts who may well become a category 2 prisoner in the event that he is incarcerated. The third category of persons who can be considered prisoners with links to terrorism who would be captured by the early release orders outlined in this subdivision are prisoners who are subject to a Commissioner of Police report and the board as constituted by the chairperson alone is satisfied, having regard to the report, have made statements or carried out activities that support or advocate support for terrorist acts. Is there currently an intention by the Commissioner of Police to make such a report about an existing prisoner?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: The member can appreciate the sensitivities around this. I am advised that it is a possibility and that it is under consideration.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Yes, I acknowledge that there are some sensitivities around this, and I certainly would not expect the government to disclose, for example, the name of such an individual at this time. I acknowledge that the parliamentary secretary has indicated that this subject is under consideration. The reason I ask is that we have previously identified that this bill, ultimately, will not come into full operational effect for another approximately three months. I would like to think that the bill will be passed today; I appreciate that after the luncheon adjournment we will have other urgent business to undertake, but I see no reason why we could not knock this off today. That being the case, in around three months’ time, this bill will have full operational effect. At the present time we do not have to be too concerned about urgency with regard to category 1 or 2 prisoners, but I have a mild concern about the third category. If the Commissioner of Police is actively concerned about people—we do not need to know the names of those individuals—because he is presumably of the view that they have made statements or carried out activities that support or advocate terrorist acts and, as such, might be under consideration for imminent release, I think that we would want to make this legislation operational as soon as possible, and maybe even expedite the three-month process. I do not know whether the parliamentary secretary is in a position to provide any further information about that, and I acknowledge that no names can be provided, but I invite any further elaboration, if any can be provided.

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: I am advised that it is a long sentence, so in terms of the immediacy of the necessity, it is not outside the time frames we are dealing with. I am also advised that these matters could still be raised with the board—not as the chairperson, but in its current form—but it would not have the rigour of the system or the presumptions against that are currently contained in the act. Some of that information could be used in any event, but my understanding is that if we get this passed today—in good faith, I hope we do—it could be in place well before it needs to be used.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: That is comforting to hear and I commend those involved in that process. Proposed section 66G(1) provides for the making of early release orders and refers to making early release orders and the introduction of a presumption against an early release order for a prisoner with links to terrorism, unless the board is satisfied that there are exceptional reasons for why the prisoner should be released. I note that proposed section 66G(2) lists factors that the board must consider. Is the parliamentary secretary in a position to indicate to the chamber what is intended to be the type of exceptional reasons for why a prisoner should be released?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: I have an extensive answer that I will read out, and hopefully it will cover the lines of inquiry the member has here.

The exceptional reasonable test is a high legal threshold that a prisoner or young offender with links to terrorism must overcome to be granted early release. What constitutes exceptional reasons will depend on the facts of a particular case. The term is not defined in either the Sentence Administration Act 2003 or the Young Offenders Act 1994. Its meaning has developed through the common law. It is generally understood that a person will need to demonstrate reasons that are unusual, out of the ordinary or an exception to the general run of cases. In the case of persons with links to terrorism, the chairperson of the Prisoners Review Board or the Supervised Release Review Board will have absolute discretion to determine whether exceptional reasons apply in a particular matter. However, the relevant board is guided by the bill’s inclusion of additional release considerations in the case of a prisoner, or release considerations in the case of young offender, that must be considered when making a decision on whether to make an order for early release.

In relation to a prisoner or young person, the board must have regard to, firstly, the degree of risk that the release of the person would appear to present to the personal safety of people in the community or of any individual in the community; the nature and seriousness of statements made or activities carried out in support of terrorist acts; if sentenced for a terrorism offence or subject to an interim or confirmed control order relating to a terrorism offence, any remarks made by the court that are relevant to the risk to the community or individual safety; if the person was released and the nature and seriousness of the statements made or activities carried out in support of terrorist acts; the behaviour of the person whilst subject to the interim or confirmed control order; the behaviour of the person

while in custody; whether the person, whilst in custody, has participated in programs or activities that address the person's risk of committing a terrorism offence; and whether the person is or was associated with one or more persons who have made statements or carried out activities that support or advocate support for terrorist acts, and the nature of the association. In the case of a young offender, the general principles of juvenile justice under section 7 of the Young Offenders Act apply, with the exception of principles provided within subsections 7(h) and (k), which provide that the detention of a young person in custody for an offence should be used as a last resort and is only to be used for as short a time as necessary, and that the offence should be dealt with in a time frame that is appropriate to the young person's sense of time.

In summary, exceptional reasons are obviously a high bar. It has not been dictated what they would necessarily be. We expect, of course, that the chairperson will be guided by the available case law with respect to what those terms have meant in the past. Given the mandatory considerations that are there, if those mandatory considerations are not satisfied, then exceptional reasons will not even come into play because the Parliament will dictate what the board must have regard to.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Parliamentary secretary, the question that arises here is what I would describe as a “but for” test: but for exceptional reasons, the chairperson is not to release one of these people, whom I am going to describe as terrorists. I think the technical term is a person or prisoner with links to terrorism. Therefore, but for exceptional reasons, the chairperson will not allow the terrorist out of jail, and as a principle that seems a sound one. But it is then difficult to contemplate what would possibly be an exceptional reason that would justify the early release of this terrorist. As we have discussed in some earlier clauses, we are the last of the Australian jurisdictions to bring in phase 2 of the reforms. Is there any guidance that can be taken from the other jurisdictions? Have any of them, for example, released one of these persons linked to terrorism for exceptional reasons?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: On the member's question whether there is any guidance from other jurisdictions, we do not have any guidance from other jurisdictions and we do not know how they have dealt with any of the exceptional reasons. The member will appreciate that the nature of these provisions is such that they are not open in the same way that a decision of the court might be in a judgement, whereby we can follow reasonings. If there is information out there from other jurisdictions, we anticipate it would be the barest of information and, indeed, contextualised by numbers and things like that rather than explanations of their reasons and processes. As I indicated before, in the case of our chairperson, it will be within their discretion and no reasons will be published when they exercise that discretion because of the way we are dealing with this particular issue.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: At this time, could the parliamentary secretary confirm the difference between early release for what I would describe as an ordinary prisoner and early release for a person with links to terrorism? On the basis of the dialogue we have already had over the last couple of days, I take it that one of those differences is that an ordinary prisoner's—I use the word loosely—application for early release will be considered by the whole board, whereas the application for early release from a person with links to terrorism will be considered by only the chairperson. With respect to this type of person—that is, one who has links to terrorism—there is a presumption against their release unless there are exceptional reasons, and we just had an exchange on that. But will the remainder of the processes remain the same? For example, once the chairperson or the board makes a decision that an ordinary prisoner is, shall I say, eligible for release, are there any other agents or players in the decision-making process who will then make a final decision as to whether the person is released—for example, the Attorney General or the Governor, or both?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: I am conscious of the time. We have to report progress because the budget speech will follow and rudely interrupt our important work here! I am advised to think about it this way: when the chair receives a Commissioner of Police report about a prisoner, be that for a category 1 or 2 prisoner or the third category that we have identified, the chair will take over the whole process for parole. If they are dealing with a prisoner who has a fixed term, the chair will make the decision on whether that person is eligible or will be paroled. In relation to a lifer linked to terrorism, the chair will again take over that role and make the recommendation to the Attorney General for the decision to be made by the Governor. Therefore, the process for fixed-term prisoners and lifers will remain the same, but, essentially, the rest of the board will have no role with respect to a person once a Commissioner of Police report has been furnished to the chair.

Progress reported and leave granted to sit again at a later stage of the sitting, on motion by Hon Matthew Swinbourn.

[Continued on page 2191.]

Sitting suspended from 1.00 to 2.00 pm

ESTIMATES OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE

Tabling of Budget Papers

Hon Stephen Dawson (Minister for Emergency Services) tabled the budget papers.

[See papers 1270A–D.]

Consideration of Tabled Papers

HON STEPHEN DAWSON (Mining and Pastoral — Minister for Emergency Services) [2.00 pm] — without notice: I move —

That pursuant to standing order 69(1), the Legislative Council take note of tabled papers 1270A–D (2022–23 budget papers) laid upon the table of the house on Thursday, 12 May 2022.

[The Minister for Emergency Services read the following speech.]

INTRODUCTION

President, I am honoured to advise the House of the McGowan Government's sixth Budget.

This is a fair and responsible Budget.

A Budget that helps families through the challenges of today.

And sets up Western Australia for tomorrow.

For a bright future, beyond the pandemic.

For the last two and a half years, we have taken drastic action to respond to the defining challenge of our time—the COVID-19 pandemic.

Today, twenty-six months since the pandemic began, I can stand in this House and definitively say—WA has secured the soft landing our Government set out to achieve.

The soft landing Western Australians deserved.

Across the two years of the pandemic, WA has achieved the best health outcomes, the best social outcomes, and the best economic outcomes in Australia, and potentially the world.

This Budget is evidence that our soft landing has left WA with the best financial outcomes as well.

Financial outcomes that let us boldly invest in the future of our State.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN ECONOMY

The Western Australian economy continues to carry the country.

Our domestic economy grew by 7.2% over the two years of the pandemic, two and a half times the rate of growth of the rest of the nation.

This growth has been underpinned by strong household spending. Annual retail turnover increased by a massive 22.5% between February 2020 and March 2022.

Western Australia's unemployment rate of 3.4% is the lowest in the nation, and our best result since 2008.

More than 1.46 million Western Australians are now employed, which is more than any time in our history, along with the highest ever levels of full-time employment and women in the workforce.

It is clear our WA Jobs Plan is working, with more than 160,000 jobs created since coming to Government.

We pledged to always put WA jobs at the forefront of our economic agenda. That approach has succeeded.

The WA Government's actions in dealing with COVID allowed the mining sector to operate uninterrupted, while our competitors were significantly impacted.

The value of sales achieved by Western Australia's resources sector was a record \$230 billion in 2021, up a massive 30% from the year prior.

Western Australia's goods exports accounted for more than half the value of the entire nation's in 2021, further proof that our State drives the national economy.

While activity has been very strong in the building industry, supported by State and Commonwealth grants, global supply chain bottlenecks and rising input costs are placing significant pressure on this industry and others.

There are also increased cost of living pressures for households, including higher fuel prices and grocery bills.

Pressures we help address in this Budget.

But despite these challenges, our economic outlook is bright with Treasury forecasting our domestic economy will grow by 5.25% this year, our strongest growth in a decade.

STATE FINANCES

Our strong economy has again underpinned our strong financial management.

The uninterrupted operation of the resources sector has allowed it to take advantage of elevated commodity prices, while the strong labour and housing markets have also boosted revenue.

Western Australia is expected to record an operating surplus of \$5.7 billion in this financial year.

The Budget will remain in surplus over the forward estimates period, including a \$1.6 billion surplus in 2022–23, based on cautious and conservative commodity price forecasts.

Net debt is expected to fall below \$30 billion this financial year, our third consecutive year of debt reduction and the lowest level of net debt since 2015.

Despite committing more than \$11.2 billion in responding to COVID-19 and investing a record \$33.9 billion in infrastructure in this Budget, net debt is now almost \$14 billion lower than projected when we came to office.

This is a remarkable achievement.

Our declining debt levels are in stark contrast to the financial management around the rest of the country, where debt levels are skyrocketing.

The Commonwealth Government alone is projected to quintuple debt, that is, a five-fold increase since 2013.

This WA Labor Government is the only Government in Australia delivering consecutive surpluses and paying down debt.

Indeed, we have responsibly allocated part of this year's surplus to retire \$1.2 billion of existing borrowings, reducing our interest costs by an estimated \$132 million over the next four years.

President, we always want to spend taxpayer money on better services rather than wasteful interest payments.

Across our first four years in Government, we have saved the taxpayer a projected \$2.5 billion in interest costs relative to the forecasts in the 2016–17 *Pre-election Financial Projections Statement*.

At a time of rising interest rates, paying down debt reduces our State's exposure to ongoing rate rises—an exposure that will be keenly felt by the Commonwealth and other States, who are dramatically increasing their debt.

FAIR SHARE OF THE GST

All States and the Commonwealth have benefited from WA's economic performance throughout the pandemic, with billions of dollars in additional revenue flowing eastward, through the GST system and higher company tax collections, right when it was needed most.

While we have provided the most support to the Federation throughout the pandemic, we have also required, and received, far less than our population share of Commonwealth support.

When it comes to the GST, WA will continue to receive way below our per capita share at 70 cents in the dollar, which continues to be, by far, the lowest per capita share in the country.

If not for the reforms we secured, WA would receive just 15.8 cents in the dollar in 2022–23.

Even with the reforms, WA will still provide a subsidy to other States of \$2.5 billion this year, adding to the \$32.4 billion delivered over the last decade.

The political noise from over east over the GST deal hides the truth that no State has been worse off as a result of the GST reforms.

In fact, all States have benefited from the higher royalties generated in Western Australia.

While other Governments will blame the GST deal for their own financial mismanagement, not one would willingly take our baseline share of 70 cents in the dollar, that they say is too generous.

The GST system failed to recognise that the structure of the WA economy and revenue base is different from the rest of the nation.

If WA mining royalties were treated like other sources of revenue, WA would receive closer to its full population share of the national GST pool, and we would not have this endless debate.

Mark my words—the threat to our fair share of the GST is real.

The Government will not stand by and allow our hard fought reform to be destroyed.

HOUSEHOLD ELECTRICITY CREDIT

President, we understand the pressures on households to make ends meet, in an environment of global challenges on everything from supply chains to fuel prices.

In this Budget, the Government is announcing that every household in Western Australia will receive a \$400 Household Electricity Credit on their power bill.

This credit will invest \$445 million into Western Australian households to assist with cost of living pressures.

This follows my Government's \$600 electricity credit delivered in 2020 to support households earlier in the pandemic.

This relief is in addition to free Rapid Antigen Tests we have provided households, the two-zone fare cap for public transport and capped regional airfares.

We have delivered again on our commitment to keep increases in household fees and charges to below inflation, going above and beyond this year, with a 3.8% reduction.

This is the second time our Government has reduced the cost of living since coming to office, and even without our \$400 credit, it will be the third consecutive year we have delivered below-inflation increases in household charges.

It takes a WA Labor Government to ease the cost of living, while still reducing debt.

This is what responsible Budget management can deliver.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

This Budget includes \$1.6 billion to continue our response to the COVID-19 pandemic, increasing the total spend to over \$11.2 billion since the pandemic began.

The \$635 million invested in the purchase and distribution of RATs has helped to limit the spread and ensured our testing systems were not overwhelmed by Omicron. Our Government was the only Government in Australia providing free RATs to households, saving families at least \$150.

The Budget includes a further \$42.5 million to minimise the spread of COVID-19 in schools, including purchasing air purifiers, improving ventilation, providing masks and RATs, and continued enhanced cleaning.

Since the start of the pandemic we have committed almost \$1.7 billion in support for businesses, including more than \$237 million since the Mid-year Review as part of our Safe Transition Plan, and Reconnect WA package, fuelling recovery in sectors such as international tourism, aviation and education as we re-open to the world.

We have also made it easier for impacted WA businesses to access our support packages, which have been amongst the most generous in the nation.

In addition, we have invested more than \$2.1 billion in projects to boost economic activity since the pandemic began to drive industry development, encourage workers to upskill and boost housing supply, primarily through our nation-leading WA Recovery Plan.

INVESTING IN OUR HEALTH SYSTEM

The 2022–23 Budget delivers a record additional \$2.5 billion investment in health and mental health, taking new spending on our health system to a total of \$5.7 billion since the last Budget was handed down, just eight months ago.

In this time, 342 new beds have been added to our hospitals, with an additional 188 beds to be added this year.

In the last two years, the WA Health workforce has increased by 15.6%. This includes an additional 1,456 nursing and 512 medical full-time equivalents—the largest growth in our health workforce on record.

This has eased system pressures and ensured that our health system was equipped to respond to COVID-19.

The Budget includes a \$1.3 billion increase in funding for WA Health, \$995 million for health-related spending in response to COVID-19 and a further \$181 million boost in resourcing for the Mental Health Commission.

While more beds and more nurses are essential in responding to record demand, staffing alone will not fix the systemic issues facing our emergency departments.

Better emergency care can only be achieved by doing things smarter. That's why this Budget includes \$251.7 million to improve ED capacity and address ambulance ramping.

A new Ministerial Taskforce will oversee this important work, which includes:

- \$55.8 million to provide registered nurses—around the clock—in 15 metropolitan and regional Emergency Department waiting rooms;
- \$28.8 million to better triage incoming patients in ambulances to appropriate services, and improve the collection of real-time data to manage system pressures;
- \$20.9 million to provide intensive support for patients with complex needs, who frequently attend EDs;
- \$74.1 million for a number of initiatives to help transition long-stay hospital patients—including the elderly and patients with a disability—into appropriate settings; and
- \$55.2 million for expanded telehealth services, including for regional and remote patients, and home monitoring of COVID-19.

We have also committed \$5.4 million to identify and design system-wide solutions to emergency care, and plan for a State Health Operations Centre to better coordinate emergency services.

We will continue to invest in our hospital workforce, with new initiatives such as the \$8.1 million International Medical Graduates registration project, \$3.5 million to retain neurologists locally and \$3.7 million to establish the Aboriginal Health Practitioners profession in Western Australia.

This Budget includes \$47.3 million to respond to recommendations of the Taskforce into Infant, Child and Adolescent Mental Health. This increase will expand the frontline workforce of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service in rural and remote areas, as well as provide additional peer support workers. It includes \$15.8 million to bolster virtual support services for at-risk children, develop new models of care and further develop our mental health workforce.

This Budget sets Western Australia's health system up for the future, with an additional \$223 million investment in health infrastructure—taking the total infrastructure investment to \$3.4 billion over the next four years.

The intensive care unit at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital will be upgraded and two biplanar imaging units will be installed at a cost of \$24.3 million, while \$44 million has been provided to continue the statewide Medical Equipment and Imaging Replacement Program.

Hospitals throughout the State will continue to be upgraded and expanded, with \$2.5 million for a business case to inform options for the proposed WA Comprehensive Cancer Centre. Planning for the new Women and Babies Hospital is scheduled for completion this year, with enabling works to commence in 2023.

In regional Western Australia, the Government will significantly expand its investment in health services. This includes:

- \$30.1 million to expand regional ambulance services—including new ambulances and an additional 18 paramedics;
- an additional \$49.4 million to deliver the Geraldton Health Campus redevelopment project, bringing the total project cost to \$122.7 million;
- \$5.1 million to continue the WA Country Health Service's Mental Health Emergency Telehealth Service;
- \$13 million to build and operate a new Albany General Dental Clinic; and
- \$10 million to deliver a wide range of specialist services at the Karratha Health Campus and in surrounding sites.

My Government is committed to providing the quality health care Western Australians deserve, right across this State.

With a total investment of nearly \$50 billion across the next four years, no one can question our commitment to delivering a quality public health system.

WA JOBS PLAN—DIVERSIFYING OUR ECONOMY

As we re-open to the world, the WA Government will double down on its commitment to expand and diversify our economy as part of our WA Jobs Plan.

The 2022–23 Budget includes \$1.3 billion in additional investment across a wide range of industries and economic infrastructure projects to create jobs and drive deeper economic diversification. This includes:

- a further \$80 million towards the Investment Attraction Fund to support industry led diversification proposals from new and emerging businesses;
- doubling the Industrial Land Development Fund from \$50 million to \$100 million to unlock private sector investment and spark new growth opportunities in our economy;
- a \$41.2 million package to accelerate WA's international education sector, with a range of initiatives including increased marketing and student incentives;
- \$25 million has been allocated to establish an agricultural research collaboration with the CSIRO and the university sector to leverage funding from the Commonwealth and industry;
- Tourism WA's Destination Marketing budget will receive a \$21.1 million boost, as well as an additional \$30.7 million to secure additional blockbuster and business events, and \$17.7 million for a National Park Tourism Experiences Development Package;
- WA's defence shipbuilding industry will be boosted with upgrades at the Australian Marine Complex to facilitate vessel transfers;
- \$17.1 million has been invested to expand Western Australia's international trade offices for greater export and investment market opportunities for WA businesses, as well as an invest and trade global marketing campaign;
- \$28 million will be invested in diversifying WA's resources base, capitalising on emerging opportunities and industries;

- a further \$39.1 million will be spent on a range of other diversification initiatives, including:
 - a second round of funding to attract business call centres and back office processing to WA;
 - developing our offshore oil and gas decommissioning industry;
 - growing our health and medical life sciences industry;
 - growing our fledgling space industry including autonomous and remote operations technologies; plus
 - strengthening the local capability of our small and medium sized enterprises to compete for State Government work.

This Government knows a diversified economy is a resilient economy that will generate quality WA jobs and opportunity, long into the future.

ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE

WA has always been a trading State. Which means we require the very best in port and transport infrastructure.

Our \$1.3 billion investment in economic diversification includes investments in infrastructure that are critical to expanding existing industries and facilitating the development of new ones, including:

- \$332 million for a major upgrade to expand Geraldton Port;
- \$78 million for Lumsden Point to facilitate the future development of additional cargo facilities and a logistics hub at Port Hedland port;
- \$52 million for the construction of a supply base, and a chemical processing and storage facility to support oil and gas operations in the Browse Basin;
- \$223 million for the Pinjarra Heavy Haulage Deviation;
- \$120 million for the Moorine Rock to Mount Holland Road Upgrades that will support the Covalent lithium mine; and
- \$50 million to expand capacity on the Great Northern Highway between Newman and Port Hedland.

In total, this Budget invests an additional \$2.4 billion in roads and rail infrastructure, jointly funded with the Commonwealth.

Construction of our world-class METRONET public transport system is progressing well, with three projects now delivered and a fourth, the Forrestfield Airport Link, to begin operation later this year. A further \$1 billion has been invested including additional projects in this Budget, comprising:

- additional funding for the Train Control and Signalling project to expand the capacity of our rail network;
- the new Morrison Road Level Crossing Removal and upgraded Canning Bridge Bus Interchange;
- as well as bus replacement services as we undertake a number of major upgrades along the Armadale line.

HOUSING SUPPLY AND TAX REFORM

President, following the massive investment in social housing in last year's Budget, this Budget delivers a range of tax reforms and incentives to further boost housing supply, particularly in the regions and for urban infill areas.

Land tax will be reduced by 50% for new build-to-rent projects, removing investment barriers and supporting the future supply of rental properties.

Off the plan apartment purchases in multi storey dwellings below \$500,000 will receive a 100 per cent rebate of stamp duty until October 2023 to create a pipeline of more affordable homes into the future.

A density bonus will also be offered for multi-storey developments that include a minimum of 5% social housing.

A new Keystart loan product will be offered for medium and high density residential units in METRONET precincts and priority urban infill areas.

In addition, Keystart's income eligibility limits will be permanently increased to \$105,000 for singles and \$155,000 for couples and families, following the introduction and extension of the temporary higher limits in 2019.

Regional housing supply will be supported with \$19.1 million committed to subsidise the development of residential lots in Kalgoorlie and Karratha, while Keystart's property price limits will be increased for the Pilbara to assist households in gaining access to finance.

There is considerable demand for housing right across our State, and indeed the nation. By thinking outside the box, we can assist in boosting our housing supply and housing choice to ensure more Western Australians have an affordable roof over their heads.

ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE

Last year's Budget included a massive \$750 million allocation to take action on climate change.

This Budget builds on that down payment with a further \$500 million allocated to our Climate Action Fund.

In addition, \$59.3 million will go towards our Clean Energy Car Fund, providing \$3,500 rebates for up to 10,000 cars with a purchase price below \$70,000 to encourage greater uptake of electric vehicles in WA.

Grants of up to 50% will also be available for not for profits, small and medium sized businesses and local governments to install workplace recharging infrastructure, plus funding for a trial of recharging infrastructure at train stations.

After announcing the longest electric vehicle highway in last year's Budget stretching from Kununurra to Esperance, recharging stations will be added across four locations to connect our network to South Australia.

President, just a few months ago, WA was separated from South Australia by a hard border. Soon, you'll be able to make the trip in an electric car.

In line with some other States, a distance-based road user charge for electric vehicles will commence from 1 July 2027 as fuel excise revenues are expected to decline.

This Budget provides \$31 million to help reduce emissions across a range of sectors, including agriculture, heavy industry and transport, identifying further opportunities for carbon sequestration and carbon farming.

We will invest \$61.8 million to upgrade the ageing electrical and water infrastructure on Rottnest Island, allowing us to deliver 75% of the Island's power from renewable sources of energy.

As part of our Plan for Our Parks initiative, \$19.9 million has been committed for the implementation of joint management arrangements with the Traditional Owners of the proposed Matuwa Kurrara Kurrara National Park and the Lake Carnegie Nature Reserve.

This Budget also includes an additional \$30 million to deliver the Industry and Community Development Program, as part of the Native Forest Just Transition Plan, to assist regional communities to transition to new industries when native forest logging ends in 2024.

Climate change will be one of our dramatic challenges in the years ahead. In order to guarantee our State's prosperity for future generations, we have to meet that challenge, head on.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The WA Government believes in providing our children with the best opportunities for a quality education. This Budget includes an additional \$505 million for Education and Training in WA, with:

- \$189.5 million towards providing WA children with 15 hours per week of preschool programs following signing of the National Preschool Reform Agreement;
- \$31.9 million to increase the Educational Adjustment allocation, providing additional funding to schools with students in the lowest 15% of the NAPLAN reading assessment, providing more support for students and schools where it is needed most;
- \$50.7 million for the construction of additional permanent accommodation for the Harrisdale, Anne Hamersley and Caversham Valley primary schools, as well as \$39.1 million for Stage 2 of Alkimos College;
- \$36.2 million to increase permanent accommodation, and provide a new education support facility for high needs students, and an off-site early childhood facility at Brabham Primary School;
- and \$2.5 million for a new Year 1 phonics initiative to assess and support the development of students' phonics skills.

The WA Government is proud to have slashed TAFE fees by up to 72%, making training more affordable. This Budget continues this commitment with a further \$38.4 million to keep TAFE fees low.

The Budget also commits \$14.3 million to a range of programs being delivered by the Building and Construction Industry Training Board to encourage more workers into the sector.

SAFE, STRONG AND FAIR COMMUNITIES

President, the WA Government is committed to enabling local and regional communities to thrive. The Budget includes:

- \$114 million for a Child Protection Reform Package and supporting services, to support vulnerable children and their families and steer at-risk children away from the justice system, including 36 additional child protection workers, increased spending on early intervention and Aboriginal family support services, and expanding Target 120 across nine additional locations;

- \$94.8 million to index funding for services delivered by community service organisations such as for homelessness, mental health, family and domestic violence, and care for children at risk of harm;
- \$78.5 million to support growth in the number of participants in the National Disability Insurance Scheme;
- \$63.9 million to the Department of Communities to meet its commissioning plan priorities for delivery of out-of-home care, homelessness, and family and domestic violence services;
- \$40.4 million for a package of Kimberley Youth and Community Justice initiatives. The cross-agency package includes a \$15 million provision for an on-country residential youth diversionary facility, initiatives to better engage youth and improve school attendance, and expanding the Target 120 family support program across the region;
- \$25.1 million to address critical safety and security issues at the Banksia Hill Detention Centre;
- \$34.4 million to build and operate a Family and Domestic Violence Hub in Armadale, establish an Enhanced FDV Response Team capability and continue the Kimberley FDV grants program for local community service providers; and
- \$19.7 million will be spent to deliver the Perth Aboriginal Short Stay Accommodation facility to provide temporary housing for up to 100 Aboriginal people travelling to Perth.

This Budget also includes measures to enhance the vibrancy of the CBD with \$49 million of additional funding allocated to the ECU Inner City Campus, an additional \$16 million for the redevelopment of the Perth Cultural Centre, \$7 million to rejuvenate Yagan Square, and a further \$5 million recently announced to activate the CBD.

Our emergency services will be boosted with \$12.5 million for the Department of Fire and Emergency Services to lease and fit out new aviation and maintenance facilities at Jandakot Airport and \$11 million for a Large Air Tanker to be based in WA during the bushfire season.

INVESTING IN REGIONAL WA

President, the Government understands the massive contribution made by regional Western Australia to our great State.

We continue to invest in regional WA through Royalties for Regions with \$4.2 billion allocated to the program over the next four years, plus billions more invested in regional service delivery and a massive \$12 billion investment in regional infrastructure projects.

Of that remarkable regional infrastructure investment, only 8% is funded by Royalties for Regions, showing our deep commitment to improving the lives of regional Western Australians, and the economic opportunities on offer.

We continue our record spend on regional roads, with \$5.6 billion committed over the next four years.

In this Budget, we have committed to in-source Main Roads' road maintenance program, bringing in-house more than 660 employees over the next four years, of which 490 will be based in the regions. This will not only generate savings to the taxpayer, but also provide an ongoing economic boost to regional towns across WA.

This Budget also includes funding of \$555 million to upgrade and seal Tanami Road and Outback Way, both of which are vital links between western and central Australia and will see total investment of \$1 billion to 2028–29, as well as delivering a further \$175 million uplift in funding for the Regional Road Safety Program that we know saves lives on our roads.

We have committed \$48.6 million to enable the State to leverage Commonwealth and industry co-funding for the expansion of mobile broadband and other digital connectivity solutions in regional, rural and remote areas.

\$30.4 million will be invested in a new District Support Facility to accommodate additional police officers in Broome, with a further \$3.4 million to expand leased police facilities in Kununurra.

This is in addition to the hundreds of millions of dollars already mentioned in regional health, community services and economic diversification.

REMOTE COMMUNITIES

President, this Budget also allocates \$350 million to establish a new Remote Communities Fund, for the regularisation and upgrade of water and electricity services, and new and refurbished housing in remote Aboriginal communities.

While the current Commonwealth Government talks about Closing the Gap Initiatives for Aboriginal people, it has cut hundreds of millions of dollars in key services, widening the gap in living standards.

All Australians deserve these fundamental services and we call on the next Federal Government to match this important commitment.

ADDITIONAL MEASURES

President, this Budget also includes funding for a range of essential and moral imperatives:

- an additional \$400 million committed to the Digital Capability Fund to improve digital service delivery across government and mitigate operational risks with 23 ICT projects funded in this Budget;
- a further \$185 million has been allocated to the National Redress Scheme and Civil Litigation for Survivors of Institutional Child Sexual Abuse Account to meet forecast payments;
- \$130 million has been allocated to remediate aluminium composite panel cladding across government buildings; and \$97.9 million has been committed for increased payments under the Criminal Injuries Compensation Act, given a concerted effort by the Department of Justice to reduce processing times and clear the backlog of claims.

CONCLUSION

President, there is a lot in this Budget. This is the result of strong financial management, for six consecutive Budgets.

At its core, the Budget ensures that Western Australians, who have given so much over the past two years, see the fruits of their labours.

People who despite facing the uncertainty, challenges and heartbreak of a once in a century pandemic, ensured WA had the best health, social, economic and financial outcomes in the world.

In this Budget, we deliver:

- genuine cost of living relief;
- record investment in our public health system;
- concrete action in addressing climate change;
- a substantial reduction in State debt;
- and targeted tax relief.

Not to mention genuine progress in the ongoing endeavour of diversifying the WA economy.

This Budget helps families, workers and small businesses through the challenges of today and sets up WA for tomorrow.

For an even stronger future, beyond the pandemic.

President, I commend the Budget to the House.

Consideration of the papers made an order of the day for the next sitting, on motion by **Hon Pierre Yang**.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2022

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by **Hon Sue Ellery (Leader of the House)**, read a first time.

Second Reading

HON SUE ELLERY (South Metropolitan — Leader of the House) [2.40 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

Almost two years ago to the day, in May 2020, the government introduced a bill that brought critical reforms to the Western Australian planning system at a time of great need. At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Planning and Development Amendment Bill 2020 progressed important reforms that the McGowan government considered integral to underpin a broad package of economic responses and recovery measures. The first phase of reforms focused on cutting unnecessary red tape, supporting small businesses, improving community consultation and providing greater consistency across state and local governments. We also created a new process to support projects of state and regional significance. The fundamental aim of these reforms was to protect jobs and get people back to work through a more flexible, responsive and contemporary planning system. The Minister for Planning said in the Legislative Assembly on Wednesday, 20 May 2020 —

The pandemic has created an economic shock that will be with us for a long time to come. Every jurisdiction in Australia is seeking to rebuild economic stability and create greater investor confidence. Although direct investment by government will play a key part in our economic recovery, we must all do more to facilitate private sector investment in our economy.

Planning reform is an enabler of better investment outcomes, together with community outcomes.

The bill we are considering now seeks a temporary extension to one of the key initiatives of the Planning and Development Amendment Act 2020. This will bring considerable economic and employment benefits to the state.

It reflects that the economic shocks of COVID-19 are still with us and are bringing different challenges. Economic activity within the state has been very strong, in particular with a very heated construction market. This level of activity together with the limited movement of people around the world has created strains on our labour supply for the current construction market. Supply chain shocks have created significant lags in the delivery of products for construction activity and significant cost escalation of building materials has seen the deferral of many projects. We also have an increased level of demand for new housing stock that cannot just be fulfilled by the usual house and land packages. Mixed-use and multi-unit developments will be integral to increasing housing supply and diversity to ensure that we have enough homes to house our community. These more complex projects will be facilitated by this significant pathway. We do not want to stall in our economic recovery. We want to make sure that we have a pipeline of work in construction well into the future. We want certainty for investors and landowners. We cannot have existing approvals lapse. For example, in a January 2022 report titled *Delivering housing supply and affordability for Western Australians*, the Property Council of Australia noted that 35 per cent of the existing apartment development supply is currently on hold, with an additional \$2.2 billion in the pre-development stage also on hold. This means that approximately 10 000 apartments are impacted as a result of escalation of costs, and labour and material shortages.

The purpose of the 2022 amendments is broadly threefold: to extend the time frame in which new development applications can be submitted within the part 17 state development assessment unit system to 5.00 pm on 29 December 2023, the last working day of the year; enable the Western Australian Planning Commission to extend the time frame by which existing development approvals must be substantially commenced; and clarify and tidy up existing ambiguities in part 17.

It is important to note that the significant development pathway received bipartisan support of the Parliament, and amendments were moved by opposition parties to reduce the threshold to ensure that more projects fell into that pathway. Despite some of the claims at the time, it is also important to note that the pathway has not been a free-for-all. It has been a measured and thorough process that has not delivered extreme outcomes.

To go into more detail, part 17 of the Planning and Development Act 2005 established an alternative assessment pathway for development applications, giving the WAPC the ability to determine major proposals of economic and social importance to the state. The pathway was designed to generate jobs and investment to bolster the state economy, and to encourage major development projects with an estimated value of \$20 million or more in the metropolitan region or \$5 million or more in regional areas. It has prioritised the importance of pre-lodgement discussions, design review and coordinated agency referrals and assessments. Each proposal is subject to consideration by the State Design Review Panel; public consultation; referral to regulatory agencies and local government; and a public meeting at which the application is determined. The WAPC was chosen to be the determining authority for significant developments because it is the pre-eminent decision-maker in the state's planning system. The new pathway has worked well, with proposals having proper and thorough consideration. The part 17 pathway enables the WAPC to consider broader economic and public benefits when it determines a development proposal, but it must still have regard to all submissions and advice received during consultation and give full consideration to the purpose and intent of the local planning scheme; ensure orderly and proper planning and preservation of amenity of the locality; have regard to the need to facilitate development responding to economic effects of COVID-19; and have regard to relevant state planning policies and any other relevant WAPC policies.

The WAPC is also bound by the provisions of the Environmental Protection Act 1986. The benefits of the pathway include a centralised coordination of the authorities applications are referred to, like the Environmental Protection Authority, to ensure referrals are responded to in the time frame allocated; a robust, rigorous process that provides for public participation both during the assessment and at the point of determination; greater flexibility, including the ability to consider strategic non-planning matters that are in the broader public interest; and greater certainty for proponents who obtain approval through the pathway, ensuring the approval will not be impacted by other approval regimes such as building permits and road access without special authorisation.

The part 17 pathway was available from July 2020 and closed in early January 2022. It attracted approximately 100 inquiries and a total of 50 formally submitted applications during that time. It should be noted that some proponents chose not to proceed with the part 17 pathway and chose instead to proceed down the existing development assessment panels process. This option will continue to be a choice available to proponents. Of these 50 proposals, the WAPC, supported by the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage, has approved 17 significant developments. Six projects are complete or under construction, including the State Football Centre in Queens Park, a wharf extension at Henderson and an LNG plant in Mt Magnet. The 33 remaining applications submitted before the assessment pathway closed are undergoing assessment.

Another key part of the bill is to allow for the extension of the window in which construction can commence for projects that have already received approval under part 17. This extension is already available to projects that have been approved through other pathways such as DAPs and council approvals. As we have noted, many projects have been deferred due to the very heated construction market. This bill will allow proponents to seek one extension to the commencement date, similar to what has happened elsewhere.

As was outlined in the debate on the original bill in 2020, the part 17 process was to be replaced in time by the special matters development assessment panel. Earlier this year, the state government sought feedback from the community and key stakeholders on the special matters DAP. The mechanism proposed received a lot of feedback, and given that this will be the permanent pathway, we are determined to get this reform right. We will be undertaking further work in refinement to ensure that community and industry views are addressed. The special matters DAP was to become operational at the end of this year; this will now be deferred to ensure that the policy settings are appropriate and address community and stakeholder feedback.

The McGowan government's planning reform agenda has already brought significant improvements to Western Australia's planning system through considered legislative, regulatory and policy change. Although more will be done, we have made considerable steps forward in establishing a responsive, transparent and inclusive system, and now is not the time to take backward steps. Although prudent economic management has seen the state navigate the worst aspects of the pandemic over the past two years, ongoing uncertainties, both domestically and internationally, mean it is premature to say that the economic impacts of COVID-19 are over. Matters have arisen that were not foreseen in 2020, such as labour shortages, supply chain issues and cost escalations. Therefore, there is still a need to support and facilitate development and investment in response to the economic effects of the pandemic. The extension of the part 17 pathway is proposed to end on 29 December 2023, the last working day of the year.

Pursuant to standing order 126(1), I advise that this bill is not a uniform legislation bill. It does not ratify or give effect to an intergovernmental or multilateral agreement to which the government of the state is a party; nor does this bill, by reason of its subject matter, introduce a uniform scheme or uniform laws throughout the commonwealth.

I commend the bill to the house and I table the explanatory memorandum.

[See paper [1271](#).]

DUTIES AMENDMENT BILL 2022

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by **Hon Stephen Dawson (Minister for Emergency Services)**, read a first time.

Second Reading

HON STEPHEN DAWSON (Mining and Pastoral — Minister for Emergency Services) [2.52 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

The bill seeks to amend the Duties Act 2008 to introduce the recently announced tax simplification measures relating to transfer duty that will be reported in the 2022–23 budget. These measures will reduce the tax burden for some taxpayers and simplify tax administration. A key measure in the bill is the reduction of the general rate of duty to the equivalent of the residential rate of duty. Currently, transfers of residential property receive a concessional rate of duty. The general rate applies to transfers of non-residential property such as commercial property, vacant land not used for residential dwellings and business assets. Aligning the general rate with the residential rate will effectively apply the residential rate to all dutiable transactions, not just those involving residential property.

No taxpayers will be worse off under this proposal. It is estimated that 3 000 to 5 000 transactions a year will be assessed with the lower rate of duty under this change. It will benefit taxpayers who transfer non-residential property valued at more than \$200 000. The maximum benefit to a taxpayer will be \$2 800 for transactions valued at \$725 000 or more. The measure will reduce recordkeeping obligations and other administrative burdens on licensed settlement agents and conveyancers who self-assess more than 80 per cent of all transactions. Purchasers will no longer be required to complete an application for the residential rate of duty for each lodgement or self-assessment involving residential property. The measure will also reduce administrative overheads for RevenueWA. A reassessment and refund of duty will no longer be required when a taxpayer purchases vacant land, pays duty at the general rate and later enters into a residential building contract.

The concessional transfer duty scale for transfers of owner-occupied homes and business property valued at less than \$200 000 will be adjusted as a result of aligning the general and residential rates of duty. The concessional scale currently provides no benefit to transfers of owner-occupied homes when the dutiable value of the property exceeds \$116 000. Instead, the residential rate provides a greater benefit for these properties. This is a consequence of the concession being designed to provide a benefit for eligible dutiable transactions valued below \$200 000 when compared with the current general rate rather than the residential rate. The amendments in the bill will ensure that once the general and residential rates are aligned, the concession will apply to all eligible dutiable transactions valued at less than \$200 000. The changes to the general and concessional rates of duty for transactions valued at less than \$200 000 will take effect from 1 July 2022.

The bill will abolish duty on transactions for mining tenements that are prospecting licences unless they include other dutiable property. This will simplify the process of transferring prospecting licences and reduce the administration costs of assessing these transactions, which raise minimal revenue. This measure will take effect from 1 July 2022.

The bill will also introduce two new vehicle licence duty exemptions. The first exemption from vehicle licence duty will apply if a vehicle is returned to the seller for a refund of the purchase price or a replacement vehicle, or if the agreement to purchase the vehicle is cancelled before the purchaser takes possession of the vehicle. This measure will address the situation in which a person returns a faulty vehicle and must pay duty a second time when they acquire a replacement vehicle.

The second exemption will apply to the grant of a vehicle licence for a new vehicle acquired by a dealer for use as a “service demonstrator vehicle”. A service demonstrator vehicle is a vehicle loaned by the dealer without charge, or for a nominal charge, to customers who are having their vehicle serviced or repaired at the dealership. The purpose of the loan is to entice the customer into upgrading their vehicle after experiencing the features of the service demonstrator vehicle. These vehicles do not currently qualify for the existing “demonstrator” exemption because they are not acquired solely for demonstration purposes. Introducing this exemption will reduce the number of disputes about the issue, more accurately reflect industry practices and resolve some of the administrative difficulties with auditing dealer exemptions.

The final measure in the bill exempts Family Court orders made following a marriage or de facto relationship breakdown. This means that nominal duty will apply only when property is transferred under the order if the eligibility criteria are met, rather than on the order itself. This measure will simplify administration by allowing Family Court orders to be self-assessed by settlement agents or conveyancers through Revenue Online.

The vehicle licence duty exemptions and the exemption for Family Court orders will commence on the day after the act receives the royal assent.

Pursuant to standing order 126(1), I advise that this bill is not a uniform legislation bill. It does not ratify or give effect to an intergovernmental or multilateral agreement to which the government of the state is a party; nor does this bill, by reason of its subject matter, introduce a uniform scheme or uniform laws throughout the commonwealth.

I commend the bill to the house and table an explanatory memorandum.

[See paper 1272.]

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

SENTENCING LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (PERSONS LINKED TO TERRORISM) BILL 2021

Committee

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting. The Deputy Chair of Committees (Hon Steve Martin) in the chair; Hon Matthew Swinbourn (Parliamentary Secretary) in charge of the bill.

Clause 16: Part 5 Division 1B inserted —

Committee was interrupted after the clause had been partly considered.

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: Before we proceed further on clause 16, members may recall that yesterday Hon Nick Goiran raised an issue about the reference in the bill that the board is constituted by the chairperson and asked us to undertake a little bit of work. We have done that. I now table a document that deals with the provision in the bill in which the board is constituted by the chair alone. In doing so, I note that there are other provisions in the bill that refer to the board as constituted by the chair alone that we have not included in this list, but they are only additional provisions that come up as a consequence of the provisions referred to in this document.

[See paper [1273](#).]

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Parliamentary secretary, thank you for that information. While we wait for the document to be distributed, just prior to the interval and the interruption for other urgent parliamentary business, we were considering the issue of the board recommending the release of an ordinary prisoner contrasted with the circumstances under this legislation whereby the chairperson alone would recommend a person’s release. The parliamentary secretary provided a response to that. Do I take it, then, that in either case—whether it is what I refer to as an ordinary prison or a prisoner with links to terrorism—a report will be made by the board, whether it is the full board or the board constituted by the chairperson alone, and that report will be provided to the Attorney General for his or her consideration?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: Yes, it is with regard to the lifers, which I think is the non-technical term used. I am sure they have another term, but it is the lifers.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Clause 16 will insert a number of what I describe as new section 66 provisions. Reference to some of those new section 66 provisions will appear in section 12 of the amended Sentence Administration Act 2003. That will be seen specifically in what will be amended section 12(4) of the Sentence Administration Act 2003. It is best to look at the blue bill there. Therefore, will there be any difference between the treatment of an ordinary prisoner for release and a prisoner with links to terrorism insofar as a report going to the Attorney General? All the lifers, as the parliamentary secretary described them, who are ordinary prisoners will be are subject to a report

that goes to the Attorney General and that will be the case for persons with links to terrorism. The parliamentary secretary already indicated that that will be the same. Would there be any other circumstance other than for the lifers in which a report would go to the Attorney General?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: Yes, in relation to lifers for resocialisation programs. It is for release and for resocialisation programs for lifers.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Will that be the case irrespective of the category of prisoner, whether they are ordinary, as I have described them, or a prisoner with links to terrorism?

Hon Matthew Swinbourn: Yes.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: I take it that even though the chairperson might conclude that there are exceptional reasons that facilitate the early release of this person with links to terrorism, the Attorney General of the day will still have what might be described as a veto on that decision, in the sense that they will still have the final determining say on whether the person with links to terrorism will ultimately be released or not.

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: Yes, member.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: In other Australian jurisdictions, are there any specific grounds on which a prisoner with links to terrorism can be granted early release that are not included in the bill before us?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: I think the member's question was about whether other jurisdictions have any grounds for early release that we do not have here. I am advised that in the first instance all other jurisdictions have a version of the exceptional reasons provision that we have and they are consistent with the principles that were agreed by COAG back in, I think, 2017. However, it is worth noting—we do not have a cross-jurisdictional analysis in front of us—that each of those jurisdictions may operate slightly differently from the way that we do. I will give the member an example that hopefully will illuminate that point. Most jurisdictions do not have a role for their Attorney General in making the final decision on lifers, like the role for our Attorney General that we discussed earlier. The other jurisdictions do not have such a provision. Their boards, however constituted, would make that final decision; it is not in the hands of a politician.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: I must say that on that I much prefer the Western Australian model. The reason I give for that is that we have a situation in which only one person—that is, the chairperson—will have the say and the capacity. Otherwise, but for the Western Australian safeguard, if I can call it that—being the Attorney General of the day—it would be one person, the chairperson, albeit an eminent individual with great experience and qualifications, who could release what I would describe as a known terrorist into the community. If that is the model other states have chosen to use, I far prefer the extra safeguard of an extra set of eyes getting to determine these things.

On that point, would the Attorney General of the day have access to all the information that the chairperson had when determining whether exceptional reasons existed?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: The direct answer to the member's question is yes, but I will take him to the provisions that deal with that in the bill if it is of any assistance to him. I take him to clause 26, which is on page 23 of the bill, and proposed section 119B, "Protection of Commissioner of Police reports containing terrorist intelligence information". Proposed subsection (2) states —

The Board must take all reasonable steps to maintain the confidentiality of a Commissioner of Police report that the Board is satisfied contains terrorist information ...

It has all those things there. Then, critically, I take the member to proposed subsection (3), which says —

Despite subsection (2), the Board may give the report to —

- (a) the Attorney General; or
- (b) a court; or
- (c) a person to whom the Board authorises disclosure.

An important additional rider is in proposed subsection (4), which states —

Before giving a report under subsection (3)(b) or (c), the Board must, in writing, notify the Commissioner of Police of the Board's intention to give the report.

That is obviously so the police commissioner is aware that additional information will be disclosed to the Attorney General, a court or a person to whom the board authorises disclosure.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: With the parliamentary secretary's indulgence, I propose to ask this question now while we are on this clause rather than waiting until clause 26. I thank the parliamentary secretary for drawing to our attention that the bill says that the board "may" give the report to the Attorney General; it appears that it is not mandatory. It would be quite outrageous if the Attorney General of the day called for such a report and the board or chairperson refused to provide it. I can imagine that whoever is the Attorney General of the day would say that is fine, in which case the person would not be released. We would have to think that common sense would prevail. But

is there any possibility that the Attorney General might not be aware of the existence of a report? The board may give the report to the Attorney General, but I take it that there would be no doubt in the mind of the Attorney General that a Commissioner of Police report would exist. But remember that I was referring to all information, not just the report. I am just keen to make sure that the decision-maker, who is the chairperson, might have the Commissioner of Police report and, let us say, 10 other pieces of information. Is there any danger that the Attorney General would not have access to those other pieces of information?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: I think one of the first issues the member raised was whether the Attorney General might not be made aware by the chair of the existence of the report. I think what would be telling is that putting aside the fact that the chair of the Prisoners Review Board is a person of high eminence and standing—I am not casting anything on that—the material provided to the Attorney in those circumstances would be chair-alone material because the rest of the board is not involved. Therefore, on the face of it, it is apparent that this involves one of these decisions that this bill contemplates. If there were any shenanigans of that kind, it would be very apparent to the Attorney General that he or she is not being furnished with all the information.

The member's follow-up question was about the other information being provided and whether there was any risk associated with it. The answer to that is no because, essentially, the practice now is that the Attorney General gets the complete file of information and what happens in practice, I am told, is that there is to-ing and fro-ing sometimes with these people, so additional information is sought by the Attorney General of the day. Given the very serious nature of these instances, there is no reason to think that that practice is not going to continue, because, as the member identified in the response earlier, this is an additional set of eyes. It would be alarming that an Attorney General of the state would be just rubberstamping these things and not giving them full consideration. Of course, it only involves life; it does not involve other matters of fixed-term prisoners in which the Attorney General does not have a role at all.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: That is good. If the existing practice applying to ordinary prisoners will continue in this instance—in other words, all the relevant information and the file is provided ordinarily by way of custom and practice—that is highly satisfactory.

My final question on clause 16 is: are there any other circumstances at present where the board has to consider whether exceptional reasons exist?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: I am advised that it is the no body, no parole provisions that the board has to consider. We do not have the precise reference before us, unfortunately, but I am sure the member will recall those provisions. There is an exceptional reasons test. It is worded slightly differently.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: The reason I ask that is if there is such a provision—which clearly there is, albeit it is a fairly recent provision—and if any decisions have already been made by the board as a whole with regard to those types of exceptional reasons, it is reasonable to infer that those types of exceptional reasons that the board has already decided existed in cases A or B will influence in some respect the mind of the chairperson when they are making a decision on the exceptional reasons for persons linked with terrorism. Have any of those exceptional reasons decisions been made by the board as a whole under the no body, no parole legislation?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: Member, I must correct myself because I said that we do not have the no body, no parole provisions before us, but in fact we do, because it is part of the Sentence Administration Act. I was thinking of the bill that was passed that amended that act. The question is really whether there is any precedent for the no body, no parole provisions, and I am essentially advised that there is not. I take the member to section 66B(1) of the Sentence Administration Act. I will just give the member a chance to get it in front of him. It states —

The Board must not make a release decision, or take release action, in relation to a relevant prisoner in custody for a homicide offence or homicide related offence unless the Board is satisfied that —

- (a) the prisoner has cooperated with a member of the Police Force in the identification of the location, or last known location, of the remains of the victim of the homicide offence; or
- (b) a member of the Police Force knows the location of the remains of the victim of the homicide offence.

It is a specific exception provision. It does not really relate to the exceptional reasons that are referred to in the other act. I am also advised there are no exceptional reasons-type provisions that are comparable with the ones that we have here. I hope that is of assistance to the member.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Perhaps to round it out, it is useful to recognise, in accordance with the advice that the parliamentary secretary has been provided, that we are going into uncharted waters. There is no precedent or precedent value in any of the other decisions that have been made in that respect, albeit I acknowledge that the parliamentary secretary did indicate yesterday that the chairperson will obviously need to still be guided by the common-law definition of “exceptional” reason.

It would be of some assistance to the chamber if the parliamentary secretary could indicate whether an exceptional reason that might justify the chairperson agreeing to the early release of an individual who was linked to terrorism might be if that person had a terminal illness, again recognising, as we already have discussed, the safeguard that

the Attorney General of the day will have the final say. I am trying to get some understanding of what an exceptional reason might possibly be. That seems to be one of the highest reasons that I can think of off the cuff. Does the government intend that that type of scenario will be contemplated, or will the government say that not even a terminal illness would satisfy it that that is an exceptional reason?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: The danger with the term “exceptional” is that it is so unique. The problem in the first place is the term. The term “exceptional” is so rare that it is hard to narrow down what it might be. It is a species of things that is in itself exceptional. The member mentioned terminal illness. There is not a yes or no answer. It could possibly be an exceptional reason, but all the circumstances would have to be taken into consideration. For example, a person who has been convicted of terrorism offences—a terrorist, for want of a better word—might have served their term and be eligible for release, and the chairperson has considered all the matters, and the issue of terminal illness comes up. If, for example, that terrorist was still connected with a terrorist network, the fact that they have a terminal illness will have no significant bearing on whether they are released—they will not be, because they still present a risk, and risk is the determining factor.

Hon Nick Goiran: They might present a higher risk.

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: That is right, because they might be inclined to do any number of things. The member gave the example of terminal illness. I know that the member is straining to find those exceptional reasons. It is hard to think of this, but terrorists also have families and people who are dependent on them, and sometimes an injustice served on them is also an injustice served on someone else, and that might create a circumstance that is exceptional. Again, the key issue is risk, because even if there was an exceptional reason, it could still be refused.

I was looking back over my notes and saw that the member had said, “but for an exceptional reason”, and I added the word “but for an ‘accepted’ exceptional reason”. The exceptional reason must be accepted. Terminal illness could be an exceptional reason, but it would still be up to the chairperson to exercise the discretion. It is not mandatory that they accept the exceptional reason. There is still that assurance. As we know, parole and resocialisation and all those things are not rights; they are privileges. A prisoner is not automatically entitled to release. The court sets the term of imprisonment, and the executive can release a prisoner early. All prisoners have to earn the entitlement to early release regardless of their circumstances. It is a privilege. Having said that, within the broader context, there is still the issue of liberty and those sorts of matters. Within the realms of all things that are possible, if we are too rigid, we will potentially create the circumstance that a further injustice will occur.

I suppose that, speaking very broadly, the purpose of this exceptional reason is to potentially avoid another injustice. It is hard to imagine, of course, given the potentially very serious offending that may have occurred, but the member is a lawyer who has represented people and he knows that a lot of complexities go into that.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 17 to 23 put and passed.

Clause 24: Section 115A amended —

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Clause 24 deals with a list of decisions that have been made by the Prisoners Review Board. I have not yet had the opportunity to digest that tabled document that sets out the circumstances in which the board is constituted by the chair alone, but in the absence of being corrected, I am going to assume that all the decisions here that are said not to be reviewable are chairperson-alone decisions. The document sets out some four categories of decisions made by the board that are not reviewable and, as I say, I assume they are made by the chairperson alone. The fact that the legislation expressly sets out four types of decisions that are not reviewable suggests that a range of decisions are reviewable. Are all the decisions that will be made by the chairperson alone as a result of this bill before us not reviewable or are some of them reviewable?

The DEPUTY CHAIR: The parliamentary secretary has the call.

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: Thank you, Deputy Chair. I am glad that you are paying attention. Hopefully, I will rephrase the member’s question correctly. His first question was: are the decisions of the chairperson sitting as the board alone reviewable or not reviewable? I understood the member’s question. Essentially, the decisions of the chair constituting the board alone are not reviewable, and that is the specific term used. The normal practice is that when the Prisoners Review Board, for example, makes a decision, that decision is normally reviewable by the chair, but in this instance the chair is making the decision alone. It is odd to use the language “review your own decision”. I am sure the member has read ahead to clause 25 and proposed section 115B, which uses the word “reconsider”. Apparently, that language was picked up from the Young Offenders Act, in which a similar circumstance arises. Effectively, the word “reconsider” could have been “reviewable” but it seems strange for a person to review their own decision when this part of the legislation says that they are not reviewable decisions. Does that make sense to the member? It is a funny way of doing it. Perhaps in some respects it is a drafting issue affected by the decision to have the chair make the decisions alone rather than the board, and then have the chair perform the reviewing functions.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: This might be one of those circumstances in which we have to try to delve into the mind of the entity that is mentioned often but never present. If I understand this correctly, the parliamentary secretary is saying that not only are the decisions that are set out in clause 24 before us decisions of the chairperson alone, but they are not reviewable. That said, under clause 25, all of those same decisions are able to be reconsidered.

Hon Matthew Swinbourn: Yes.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: That is helpful to know, albeit that, in terms of the drafting, that is not apparent when one compares and contrasts clause 24 with clause 25. In particular, from what I can gather, even though four different provisions are set out in clause 24, proposed subsections (a) to (c) certainly seem to deal with three types of provisions that the parliamentary secretary referred to in the tabled document. There are provisions in the bill in which the board is constituted by the chair alone. They are the resocialisation program decisions under proposed sections 13 and 14, and then the early release order decisions under proposed section 67A. I see those references in proposed section 115A(4)(a), (b) and (c). As I say, we are trying to delve into the mind of the entity that is mentioned often but never present. We then have the reference in clause 25 to proposed section 115B(1).

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: I am advised that it covers the same items. The answer is yes.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: That being the case, where is the like provision to deal with proposed section 115A(4)(d)?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: Does the member have the blue bill there?

Hon Nick Goiran: Most of it.

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: What has happened to the rest of it?

I take the member to section 115A of the act, “Board may review decisions about release”, on page 94 of the blue bill. Clause 24 effectively deals with the new circumstances that this bill deals with, which is terrorism-related matters. Proposed section 115A(4) states “For the purposes of this section, the following 10 decisions are not reviewable decisions” and goes through a list. It will essentially create exclusions for what is reviewable.

Section 115A(8) of the act is the review provision and states —

When a request is made, the chairperson of the Board must consider any submissions included in it and review the decision concerned and may —

(a) confirm ...

If we included a subsection (8) in clause 25, it would not do any work, so it has been excluded. If the member looks at proposed section 115B(3), he will see it states —

A request must —

(a) be in writing; and

(b) state the grounds ...

Proposed section 115B(5) states —

When a request is made, the Board, as constituted by the chairperson alone, must consider any submissions included in it and reconsider the decision concerned and may —

(a) confirm, amend or cancel the decision; or

(b) make another decision.

Obviously, it does not include the equivalent paragraph (c). Can the member see what is happening there with the drafting? I know on the face of it, when we look at the bill, it is not apparent why paragraph (d) is not there. But when we look at the actual blue bill, we see that the drafting has picked it up later as relevant to these new provisions.

Hon Nick Goiran: Yes, I agree.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 25: Section 115B inserted —

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Having determined that these decisions are not to be reviewed and instead the types of decisions are to be reconsidered, the government has obviously made a decision that the reconsideration approach is superior to the review approach. Has that approach been taken in the other jurisdictions that invest the decision-making authority in the one person able to review, or do they also create this notion of a reconsideration by the original decision-maker?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: We do not have the information on a comparative level with us at the table. We have given the honourable member the table in which the comparison was done. I am advised that through the development of the bill, the concern was not so much about what the other jurisdictions were doing. It was really about what the current arrangements were with parole decisions, whereby the board made the decision and it was reviewed by the chair, and then how it made sure that a similar process was in place, given the unique circumstances

in which the board was constituted by one individual who would normally be the person who would undertake the review. To address that problem, parliamentary counsel looked to the Young Offenders Act 1994 to see how it was dealt with there.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Yes, I can understand that the decision has been made to be consistent. I think the parliamentary secretary indicated earlier a desirability for it to be consistent with the approach taken under the Young Offenders Act 1994, and that seems reasonable. That said, firstly, will the Attorney General be notified that there is a reconsideration in progress? Secondly, would the Attorney General be advised of the outcome of the reconsideration?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: The advisers are just checking on whether information would be included in an annual report, but I am advised that if we think about normal parole practices, the Attorney General is not advised about any review. In this instance, it indicates that it is in progress or the outcome, so the Attorney General does not have a part in that at any stage. That would not be the normal process. As I say, we are just trying to establish whether there are any annual reporting obligations that would then be delivered to the Attorney General. But in the normal operation of it, no, it is no different from the current arrangement.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: I understand that that is the case with decisions under review, but what about decisions under reconsideration? If there is a reconsideration under the Young Offenders Act, is the Attorney General notified of that reconsideration in progress and the outcome of it?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: If I recall correctly, the member's question was whether there is anything in the Young Offenders Act on the Attorney General being advised about the progress or outcome of a reconsideration. I am advised that, no, there is not.

In relation to annual reporting, the bill amends the annual reporting obligations only to provide for excluded information. The existing annual reporting obligations to the minister are found at section 112 of the Sentence Administration Act. Section 112(d) states —

the number of prisoners who were refused an early release order by the Board or the Governor during the previous financial year;

We can contemplate that within that figure would be those people who may have, as a result of refusal, asked for a review or reconsideration, but it does not prescribe that that level of detail be provided in the annual report; it is just the overall numbers. Someone might have sought early release, had the matter determined and decided not to seek reconsideration of it, but the report will not reflect whether that has happened.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: In that situation, when the chairperson acting alone has rejected one of these applications and the prisoner requests reconsideration but that is also rejected by the chairperson—as the parliamentary secretary has identified, the Attorney General will ordinarily be none the wiser that any of this has occurred—does any other legal avenue remain available to the prisoner such as being able to petition the Attorney General in some way?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: The first part of the question was whether there was any other legal avenue. Internally, no. However, if a person wishes to further appeal the decision of the Supervised Release Review Board or the Prisoners Review Board, the person can apply to the Supreme Court, which, of course, has its original jurisdiction to engage in judicial review, and such a decision can also be appealed to the Court of Appeal and then to the High Court. That is not an appeal as a matter of right. As the member knows, it is, as I said, the inherent jurisdiction of the Supreme Court and High Court to deal with executive actions, which we cannot exclude, because we cannot.

In answer to the second part of the member's question about whether someone could petition, I think was the word he used, or even write to the Attorney General, they certainly can write to the Attorney General but the Attorney General has no power to compel the Prisoners Review Board, however it is constituted, as a chairperson alone or as the board, to undertake those things. That is not the Attorney General's role. The Attorney General's role is only to the lifers who we previously outlined.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: But for the inclusion of clauses 24 and 25, these decisions would be reviewable if we had not passed them. If that were the case, who would do the review?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: I outlined before that in ordinary parole circumstances, the board will make the original decision for early release. If the decision is to refuse, a review of that decision will be made by the chairperson, but there will be no further internal review for that person. The avenues through the Supreme Court and on to the High Court, of course, remain open for judicial review, but nothing in the act provides for those things.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 26 to 28 put and passed.

Clause 29: Act amended —

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Clause 29 brings us to the start of part 3 of the bill, which deals with amendments to the Young Offenders Act 1994. I understand that the government's intention here is to enlarge—essentially mirror—the way in which we deal with what I describe as adult terrorists and to deal with it in the same way with respect

to child terrorists, for the lack of a more eloquent expression. To what extent are we diverging from that? In what way does part 3 of the bill take a different—I am talking here about a substantive approach, not an inconsequential or stylistic way—substantive approach to the way in which we will deal with young offenders with links to terrorism from how we will deal with an adult in those circumstances?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: In the first instance, I think the member's characterisation of the government's attempt to essentially mirror in the Young Offenders Act what was done in the Sentence Administration Act is a proper one. But in terms of the mirroring in the Young Offenders Act, we are using the structure and terminology. I appreciate the member saying that he is interested only in the substantive differences rather than the minor ones, which obviously would apply to the use of terminology. It diverges in that the Young Offenders Act contains, as the member knows, a number of principles that are not contained in the Sentence Administration Act. Other than the two principles that we have previously discussed, the remaining principles in the Young Offenders Act remain relevant to the matters in this bill, so we have not excluded them in their entirety. There is a difference in the definition of "category 1 prisoner" and it relates to the time. In the Sentence Administration Act, it is 10 years, which we spent some time talking about, but in the Young Offenders Act, it is only four years. If the member recalls, the commonwealth control orders apply only from the age of 14 years onwards, so the four years therefore relates to the age of 14 up to the moment they turn 18. I do not know whether that is substantive; obviously, it exists because it is structural.

The other difference—again, it is just because of the structure—is that we did not need to do the work that we had to do under clauses 24 and 25 because the reconsideration provisions are already in the Young Offenders Act. There was no need to do anything significant on those matters because that structure already exists in the Young Offenders Act. The chair—I think it has a different name, but I cannot recall it—already does the function of reconsidering their own decisions. Those are what we say are the major divergences and significant differences.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: I have one further question that I think is most conveniently dealt with now at the start of part 3. The parliamentary secretary might recall that when we were considering clause 1 of the bill, I asked what the government was doing about the agreement that there be a further three phases to deliver nationally consistent support and treatment referral frameworks. That would seem to be particularly important if there were to be what I have referred to as a child terrorist. Might the parliamentary secretary be in a position to give any further information at his disposal on that point?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: We did seek some further advice from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and it has been able to confirm for us that the third phase does not relate to parole or bail; it relates to the establishment of fixated threat assessment centres in each jurisdiction to deliver nationally consistent support and treatment referral frameworks. In Western Australia, a limited FTAC capability was established in 2018 by the WA Police Force and the Department of Health in partnership. The FTAC has been fully operational since early 2020. The FTAC models are accepted as best practice in the management of fixated individuals. There has recently been a recommendation that FTAC capability and models of practice be developed in each state and territory. I hope that gives the member some further context.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 30 to 35 put and passed.

Clause 36: Part 8 Division 2A inserted —

Hon NICK GOIRAN: As we move to clause 36, which is the substantive provision in part 3 and, if you like, is a close cousin to clause 16 when we dealt with the substantive provision in the Sentence Administration Act 2003, much of what we discussed already in clause 16 could easily apply to clause 36. I have one question under this clause. I note one degree of risk when considering release is set out under section 5A(a) of the Sentence Administration Act, which reads —

the degree of risk (having regard to any likelihood of the prisoner committing an offence when subject to an early release order and the likely nature and seriousness of any such offence) that the release of the prisoner would appear to present to the personal safety of people in the community or of any individual in the community;

A crucial release consideration in the Sentence Administration Act is that consideration be given to the degree of risk. Is a similar release consideration made under the Young Offenders Act, particularly as we are dealing here with a person with links to terrorism?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: Member, we are trying to get some more information from the registrar, but there are a couple of points we need to make about this. The Young Offenders Act deals with release in a different structural way from the Sentence Administration Act. Generally, risk is assessed differently for young people than it is for adults, notwithstanding that the people we are talking about could present a very significant and serious risk to the community. I take the member to section 133 of the Young Offenders Act, which provides that a supervised release order can be made only if the following requirements are met: the offender consents to the making of the order; the earliest release day has been released; the Supervised Release Review Board has considered any statement

received from a victim of the offence in respect of which the detainee is in custody; there is a responsible adult present, or the board considers that there is sufficient reason for it to make the order, even though a responsible adult is not present; and the offender is not in custody under any other order or serving any other custodial sentence, or the requirements for releasing the offender from custody under that other order or sentence are satisfied.

That has to be read in conjunction with the additional requirements under proposed section 150A, which provides the release considerations.

Hon Nick Goiran: And the six sub-items that are listed there.

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: Yes, paragraphs (a), (b), (c), (d), (e) and (f). Those will have to be taken into consideration.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: I agree with the parliamentary secretary; that is how this is structured. Comparing and contrasting the six matters referred to at proposed section 150A, the release considerations, with how we are dealing with that earlier in the bill under the Sentence Administration Act, I specifically ask the parliamentary secretary and the advisers to turn back to page 10 of the bill. There we can see the additional release considerations that we have already approved under the Sentence Administration Act, and there are seven additional release considerations. However, under proposed section 150A on page 36, there are only six release considerations. They are virtually word-for-word identical; the one that is missing is proposed section 66F(a), which provides for the degree of risk, having regard to any likelihood of the prisoner committing a terrorism offence if subject to an early release order and the likely nature and seriousness of any such offence, that the release of the prisoner would appear to present to the personal safety of people in the community, or of any individual in the community. It seems a little odd that that is the one provision that seems to be missing, when everything else has been mirrored.

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: There is a difference here but I am advised that it is just structured differently. I take the honourable member to proposed section 150C, “Making supervised release orders”, on page 37 of the bill.

Hon Nick Goiran: Is it proposed section 150C(2)(a)?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: Yes. Proposed section 150C states —

- (1) The Board must not order the release of an offender with links to terrorism unless the Board is satisfied that there are exceptional reasons why the offender should be released.

We have covered that. It continues —

- (2) The Board must, in making any decision for the purposes of subsection (1) —
 - (a) regard the personal safety of people in the community or of any individual in the community as the paramount consideration; and
 - (b) apply the general principles of juvenile justice in section 7, other than the principles referred to in paragraphs (h) and (k); and
 - (c) have regard to all of the following —

I will not read them all out. In any event, I think that adds that level the member was talking about.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: I had a feeling that the parliamentary secretary might refer me to proposed section 150C(2)(a). I think the parliamentary secretary will agree with me that proposed section 150C(2)(a) is not the same as proposed section 66F(a). Again, it is not clear why that decision was made. An express decision has been made to essentially mirror proposed sections 66F to 66G and then suddenly remove proposed section 66F(a) and rely on what I would probably describe as at best a shortened version of proposed section 66F(a) in the form of proposed section 150C(2)(a). It was obviously an intentional decision because it really does stand out. Someone has given this some degree of thought and decided that it will be described differently in the Young Offenders Act. It is not an “additional release consideration”, as in the definition under proposed section 66F(a). Instead, we are going to say —

- (2) The Board must, in making any decision for the purposes of subsection (1) —
 - (a) regard the personal safety of people in the community or of any individual in the community as the paramount consideration;

I take it that that paramount consideration will not apply under the Sentence Administration Act? Again, that would mean a decision was made that when the board is considering an adult terrorist, it will not be required to regard the personal safety of people in the community or any individual in the community as the paramount consideration. I find that odd. If there is a terrorist who is an adult and a terrorist who is a child, irrespective of their age, surely we want the board, being the chairperson alone, to regard the personal safety of people in the community or any individual in the community as the paramount consideration. I would think that is an important principle, particularly when we are trying to mirror the two schemes. If that does not appear as a paramount consideration in the Sentence Administration Act, that act that deals with adults will rely on proposed section 66F(a)—that is, the degree of risk that the release of an adult prisoner who is a terrorist will pose to the community. Again, we would want that to be expressly considered with regard to a child.

Hon Matthew Swinbourn: I take the honourable member to section 5(b) of the Sentence Administration Act 2003.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: That is the current act.

Hon Matthew Swinbourn: Yes.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: I refer to section 5B, “Community safety paramount”.

Hon Matthew Swinbourn: That’s right. That is what we were referring to in the Sentence Administration Act.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: If we are saying that the paramount consideration that will be inserted in the Young Offenders Act by this legislation is already mirrored in the existing Sentence Administration Act, why will the Sentence Administration Act have this additional provision under proposed section 66F(a), dealing with the degree of risk, but it will be expressly excluded from the Young Offenders Act?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: I can see the point that the member is making about the two things in relation to proposed section 66F(a), in that the first part of (a) is not contained within proposed section 150C(2). Risk is in the first part, but the paramount community safety stuff is dealt with in both this proposed section and the second part of section 66F(a). It states —

... the release of the prisoner would appear to present to the personal safety of people in the community or of any individual in the community;

I am being told that that has the same effect. It was discussed with—what are we calling that entity that we do not mention by name—the Parliamentary Counsel’s Office as to having that same effect and that in terms of risk in the Young Offenders Act, it is assessed differently through the structure of the act than it is in the Sentence Administration Act. I hope that has answered the member’s question—maybe not to his full satisfaction, I guess. But there are obviously some drafting issues that come when we are trying to mirror the same two things, but different principles continue to apply with young offenders that are not considerations in relation to adults.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 2209.]

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT ACT — SPECIAL PURPOSE ACCOUNTS

399. **Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS to the minister representing the Treasurer:**

I refer to my questions without notice 295 and 346, answered on 7 April and 10 May 2022, on special purpose accounts.

- (1) How many of the Treasurer’s special purpose accounts are listed or referenced by name in today’s budget?
- (2) Why have only five of the Treasurer’s special purpose accounts, currently holding around \$5 billion, given in the answer to question 346, been listed by name in the previous budget?
- (3) What is the current balance of each of the other 19 Treasurer’s special purpose accounts, which must add up to around \$14 billion?
- (4) Why has that \$14 billion sitting in Treasurer’s special purpose accounts been hidden from scrutiny?
- (5) Given the Treasurer’s answer to question without notice 346, which said that the information that I sought would be in today’s budget, on what pages can I find references to each of the 19 missing Treasurer’s special purpose accounts?

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the Leader of the Opposition for some notice of the question. The answer is provided on behalf of the Treasurer.

- (1) Appendix 5, “Special Purpose Accounts”, commencing on page 281 of the 2022–23 budget paper No 3, *Economic and fiscal outlook*, specifically details information on key special purpose accounts and states —

It is not an exhaustive list of all SPAs, but covers major/material SPAs established to achieve priority policy outcomes.

Ten Treasurer’s SPAs are listed in this appendix.

- (2) As outlined in the answer to (1), the SPA index is not an exhaustive list of all SPAs, but covers major/material SPAs established to achieve priority policy outcomes.
- (3) The balance of special purpose accounts varies on a day-to-day basis. As at 30 April 2022, the balance of the 19 accounts was \$17.3 billion.

- (4) Out of the 19 accounts, the holding account accounted for 97 per cent of the balance, \$16.8 billion, at 30 April 2022. The holding account is not disclosed in the budget papers, but it is disclosed on pages 217, 218 and 221 of the 2020–21 *Annual report on state finances*.
- (5) See the answer to (2).

PUBLIC SECTOR NET DEBT

400. Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS to the minister representing the Treasurer:

I refer to today's state budget.

- (1) What was the total public sector net debt at 30 June 2017?
- (2) What was the total public sector net debt at 30 March 2022?
- (3) What is the estimated total public sector net debt at 30 June 2023, 2024, 2025 and 2026?
- (4) What was the interest cost for the total public sector net debt in 2017–18, 2018–19, 2019–20 and 2020–21?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the Leader of the Opposition for some notice of the question. The following answer is provided on behalf of the Treasurer.

- (1)–(2) Net debt is expected to decline for a third consecutive year to \$29.9 billion at 30 June 2022, which is the first time since 2015 that net debt has been below \$30 billion. It is almost \$14 billion lower than the \$43.7 billion projected under the previous Liberal–National government.
- (3) I refer to page 48 of the 2022–23 budget paper No 3.
- (4) The answer is in tabular form and I seek leave to have it incorporated into *Hansard*.

[Leave granted for the following material to be incorporated.]

2017–18	\$1,688 million
2018–19	\$1,756 million
2019–20	\$1,564 million
2020–21	\$1,325 million

LIVE EXPORT — FREMANTLE PORT

401. Hon COLIN de GRUSSA to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Ports:

I refer to the recently announced \$2 million allocation towards investigating the feasibility of relocating livestock shipping from Fremantle port.

- (1) What members of the livestock export industry has the minister consulted with on this proposal?
- (2) Will members of the livestock export industry be involved in developing the scope for the feasibility study?
- (3) In what time frame will the feasibility study be completed?
- (4) Is the state government's commitment towards the feasibility study reflective of a broader policy to support the live export industry into the future?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1)–(4) As part of Westport, work is underway to explore opportunities for the future economic development of Fremantle. As part of this work, up to \$7 million has been allocated towards investigating the potential relocation of non-container trade at Fremantle, including vehicles and livestock. This work will include industry consultation and will be undertaken over the coming year.

WASTE LEVY FEES

402. Hon TJORN SIBMA to the minister representing the Treasurer:

I refer to revenue lost to the state government through the unlawful and systemic avoidance of waste levy fees.

- (1) Following Treasury's consultation with its colleagues at the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation, confirmed by way of an answer provided on 6 April, was any work undertaken to quantify the amount of revenue lost annually?
- (2) If not, why not?
- (3) If yes, what was the result of that work?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) Work is ongoing.

ATTORNEY GENERAL'S EVIDENCE — STATE SOLICITOR ADVICE

403. Hon NICK GOIRAN to the parliamentary secretary representing the Attorney General:

I refer to the answer to my question without notice on 10 May 2022, which stated that the costs to the state of the State Solicitor's possible conflict have not been quantified.

- (1) What was the cause of the conflict?
- (2) When was the Attorney General first informed of it?
- (3) Who informed him?
- (4) Did the Attorney General thereafter seek advice from another solicitor?
- (5) If yes to (4), what was the cost of that advice?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question. I provide the following answer based on information provided to me by the Attorney General.

- (1)–(5) The questions refer to matters that are currently before the court and it would not be appropriate to comment.

COMMUNITIES — EDUCATION AND CARE REGULATORY UNIT — STAFF

404. Hon DONNA FARAGHER to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Community Services:

I refer to the Department of Communities' education and care regulatory unit. Will the minister provide a breakdown, by head count and FTE, of each category of staff currently employed within this unit?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

The answer is in tabular form, so I seek leave to have that incorporated into *Hansard*.

[Leave granted for the following material to be incorporated.]

Job Title	Budgeted FTE	Head Count
Director	1	1
Quality Manager	1	1
Senior Practice Development Officer	1.1	2
Senior Project Officer	1	1
Senior Information Analyst	1	1
Coordinator Administration	1	1
Administration Officer	1	1
Customer Service Officer	1	1
Team Leader Assessments	4	4
Senior Assessment Officer	18	18
Assessment Officer	13.4	15
Coordinator Applications	1	1
Applications Officer	3	3
Investigations Team Leader	1	1
Senior Investigations Officer	3	3
Investigations Officer	2	2
Total	53.5	56

COMMUNITIES — POLICE RAID

405. Hon PETER COLLIER to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Community Services:

I refer to question on notice 679 answered on 11 May 2022, which identified the exact number of documents allegedly leaked by a female Aboriginal officer employed by the Department of Communities whose home was raided by police, and to question on notice 680 answered on 10 May 2022, which stated it was inappropriate to reveal the details of the investigation into the alleged leaking of documents by 13 public officers. Why was it appropriate to answer the question in relation to the female Aboriginal officer whose home was raided by police but not appropriate to provide the same information regarding the 13 public officers under investigation?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

The minister representing the Minister for Police has responded to questions relating to the matters dealt with by WA police. The matter remains under investigation by the department and therefore it would be inappropriate to disclose further information that may compromise the integrity of the process.

POLICE — FIREARM OWNERSHIP

406. Hon JAMES HAYWARD to the minister representing the Minister for Police:

I refer to the purchase of a .50 calibre rifle by the WA Police Force.

- (1) What was the cost of the .50 calibre rifle purchased by WA police on 24 February 2022?
- (2) For what purpose was the .50 calibre rifle purchased?
- (3) Does the WA Police Force have an ongoing need to own a .50 calibre rifle; and, if so, what might it be used for?
- (4) Is the .50 calibre rifle purchased by WA police on 24 February 2022 the same rifle the Minister for Police was photographed with recently?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question. I have seen the question, but I do not have an answer in my folder. If it comes in by the end of question time, I will provide it then.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

407. Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Energy:

I refer to the media statement headed “Renewable hydrogen target to be investigated for Western Australia”, released on Friday, 6 May 2022. Will the government investigate a broader renewable energy target for Western Australia, as every other state and territory Labor government has done?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question. The following information has been provided to me by the Minister for Energy.

Renewable energy targets have been implemented by state and territory governments that are part of the national electricity market, compensating for the lack of targets at a federal level to support the continued uptake of renewable energy and the privatised nature of the NEM electricity supply. Overall, the NEM has higher overall emissions than the south west interconnected system, with 66 per cent of the NEM’s generation output met by coal compared with 38 per cent in the SWIS for the 2020–21 financial year. Further, renewable generation met almost 40 per cent of underlying energy demand in the SWIS in the fourth quarter of 2020–21, compared with around 35 per cent in the NEM. Unlike the NEM, the SWIS is an isolated power system that does not have any backup through an interconnector, so the transition to a high renewable penetration must be carefully managed to keep the lights on. We have been doing this through the energy transformation strategy implemented over the past three years.

CORONAVIRUS — VACCINATIONS — ADVERSE EFFECTS

408. Hon SOPHIA MOERMOND to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Health:

In correspondence late last year, the Western Australian Chief Health Officer reported that the Western Australia Vaccine Safety Advisory Committee had advised that because of the vaccine rollout, there had been a marked increase in patients who had experienced adverse events following immunisation against COVID-19. Dr Robertson went on to say that “some severe and serious adverse effects had not been reported via the appropriate channels”. The minister has also attacked me personally over comments I made on the adverse effects of the COVID-19 immunisation to the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs, calling me alarmist and dangerous.

- (1) Can the minister confirm to the house the true number of patients who have had adverse reactions to the COVID-19 vaccine since the rollout began?
- (2) How can the public have confidence in the figures from the Department of Health when we know that they have been misreported for some time?

- (3) Will the minister apologise and withdraw her comments about me, given that some of the serious concerns I have put forward have now become painfully true?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

- (1)–(2) The referenced correspondence from the Chief Health Officer was a reminder of the reporting requirements for health professionals. Health professionals have a statutory responsibility to report all adverse events following vaccination within 72 hours of diagnosis, as specified in the Public Health Act 2016 and the Public Health Regulations 2017. Adverse events following immunisation are reported to WA Health by health professionals or the public through the Western Australian Vaccine Safety Surveillance System’s online portal.

The correspondence that the member has referred to in her question appears to have been misquoted. According to my notes, the letter reads in part: “The recent national COVID-19 vaccination program rollout has resulted in an increase in awareness of patients who have experienced a potential adverse event following immunisation. The Western Australian Vaccine Safety Advisory Committee has recognised that some severe and serious AEFIs have not been reported via the appropriate channels.” Reasons why the actual number of adverse events following immunisation are not reported include, but are not limited to: clients not seeking medical attention for an adverse reaction; clients not being aware that they should seek medical attention for a reaction; and clients not advising their doctor or doctors that they have received a vaccination within a recent time frame.

- (3) No. COVID-19 vaccinations are safe and save lives. I again reiterate that this type of serious misinformation is concerning and potentially dangerous, and constituents reasonably expect their parliamentary representatives to deal in fact and truth.

CRIMINAL RESPONSIBILITY — MINIMUM AGE

409. Hon Dr BRIAN WALKER to the parliamentary secretary representing the Attorney General:

I refer the parliamentary secretary to previous responses that he has given in the chamber on proposals to raise the age of criminal responsibility to 14 years and the McGowan government’s position on that issue, most notably its response to question without notice 472.

- (1) What time frame, if any, is the Attorney General working to in relation to this matter?
- (2) What, if anything, is stopping the McGowan government from acting unilaterally in this matter and allowing Western Australia to lead the way amongst the various states and territories of the Federation as the first jurisdiction to make such a groundbreaking move?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question. I provide the following response based on the information provided to me by the Attorney General.

- (1)–(2) At the meeting of Attorneys General held on 12 November 2021, all state Attorneys General supported the development of a proposal to increase the minimum age of criminal responsibility from 10 years to 12 years, including with regard to carve outs, timing and discussion of implementation requirements. It was agreed by all Attorneys General that a national approach was needed. Any changes would require resources and careful consideration to ensure that the small number of children who exhibit serious offending at a young age can be properly managed outside the criminal justice system. The WA government already diverts young people away from the criminal justice system when reasonable.

HOMELESSNESS — TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

410. Hon STEVE MARTIN to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Housing:

I refer to an article in *The West* online headed “New Perth homeless camp rises from the ashes of former ‘tent city’”, published on 7 May.

- (1) Were any of the people staying at the camp near McIver station offered temporary accommodation at Boorloo Bidee Mia; and, if yes, how many people have been accommodated; and, if no, why not?
- (2) What other accommodation options are there for regional people forced into homelessness while temporarily in Perth for medical reasons?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1) Daily outreach to the site has identified that the majority of individuals are visiting Perth from remote regional areas. All individuals on site have been offered support and accommodation options, or assisted to return to country should they wish to do so.

- (2) A significant number of accommodation options are provided by the Department of Health for those visiting Perth for medical reasons through the patient assisted travel scheme. Individuals are supported to access a range of commercial accommodation providers depending on their needs. Options are inclusive of hotels; Aboriginal short-stay accommodation, including the Elizabeth Hansen Patient Accommodation and Support Service, Aboriginal Hostels Ltd facilities, Derbal Bidjar Hostel and Allawah Grove Hostel; Cancer Council WA accommodation, including Milroy Lodge and Crawford Lodge; King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women short-stay accommodation, including Agnes Walsh House Lodge; and accommodation for children and their families, including Ronald McDonald House.

In order to support individuals to access the accommodation and appointments, a transport and support service operates between 6.00 am and 10.00 pm weekdays and as pre-arranged on weekends.

STATE FINANCES — DEBT REDUCTION ACCOUNT — IRON ORE ROYALTY REVENUE

411. Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:

I refer to the Labor Party's commitment under the Premier's leadership as opposition leader, detailed in a media release from the then Labor opposition of 11 February 2017, to introduce new laws to see 50 per cent of iron ore royalty revenue directed into the new debt reduction account when WA's GST relativity returned to above 0.65 and the iron ore price was more than \$85 a tonne.

- (1) What was the iron ore royalty revenue in 2019–20 and 2020–21, and what is the estimate for 2021–22?
- (2) What was the average iron ore price in 2019–20 and 2020–21, and what is the estimate for 2021–22?
- (3) Did Western Australia receive GST top-up payments to ensure a floor relativity of 0.70 in 2019–20, 2020–21 and 2021–22?
- (4) What total of iron ore royalties would have been credited to the debt reduction account from 2019–20 to 2021–22 inclusive if the government had actually kept its 2017 promise?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1) Iron ore royalty revenue was \$7.6 billion in 2019–20 and \$11.4 billion in 2020–21, and is projected to be \$10.3 billion in 2021–22.
- (2) The average iron ore price was \$US92.9 a tonne in 2019–20 and \$US154.5 a tonne in 2020–21, and is projected to be \$US139.5 a tonne in 2021–22.
- (3) Yes. The McGowan Labor government's efforts to campaign constructively to the commonwealth won a fairer share of the GST for Western Australia, including calling for a review by the Productivity Commission. This is unlike the previous Liberal–National government, which failed for years to achieve a better GST deal for Western Australia but spent billions on the state's credit card, as if a deal had been done. Even with the reforms to the GST distribution, Western Australia will continue to receive far less GST than its population share.
- (4) The government has delivered on its promise to reduce debt. Net debt under the Liberal and National government was \$43.7 billion. Under this government, net debt is projected to fall below \$30 billion, which will be the first time since 2015.

SHIPPING AND SUPPLY CHAIN TASKFORCE

412. Hon COLIN de GRUSSA to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Ports:

I refer to the Shipping and Supply Chain Taskforce.

- (1) How many submissions were received by the closing date of 30 April 2022?
- (2) Does the government propose to publish all submissions that were submitted; and, if so, when?
- (3) When does the government propose to publish a summary of potential actions and initiatives, in consideration of the submissions and current national and state policy settings?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1)–(3) Twenty-two submissions were received. As the work of the task force continues, a discussion paper will be produced and made available for stakeholder comment.

METRONET PROJECTS — TIME FRAME

413. Hon TJORN SIBMA to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the need for improved transparency.

- (1) Will the government publish online an expected time frame for the delivery of each Metronet project?

- (2) If so, when?
- (3) If not, why not?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1)–(3) Project time frames and milestones are published on the relevant project websites and via regular ministerial media statements.

CHILD PROTECTION — PRIORITY 1 CASES

414. Hon NICK GOIRAN to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Child Protection:

I refer to the minister's response to question without notice 330, which stated that all 17 cases marked as priority 1 for March were commenced within 24 hours.

- (1) Would a caseworker opening a priority 1 file to review the contents without taking direct action to investigate the concern qualify as commencement?
- (2) If no to (1), what qualifies as commencement?
- (3) Who is responsible for investigating priority 1 cases?
- (4) What oversight regime is specifically in place for cases marked as priority 1?
- (5) Further to (4), who undertakes this oversight?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. The primary focus of child protection workers when conducting an investigation is the immediate safety of the child.

- (1)–(2) The actions taken within the first 24 hours for priority 1 matters could include immediate safety planning, notifying the parents, and sighting or interviewing the child. Professional judgement is used in relation to how this occurs so as not to increase the risks to the child. Practice guidelines are also used to determine whether a child safety investigation requires a priority 1 or priority 2 response.
- (3) The child safety team at the relevant district office is responsible for investigating priority 1 cases. Some initial action may be commenced by the crisis care unit if the interaction occurs over a weekend.
- (4)–(5) The team leader overseeing the child safety team is responsible for allocating and ensuring that the priority 1 matter is investigated. These are flagged to the team leader through the Assist client system.

CORONAVIRUS — STATE OF EMERGENCY — EXTENSION

415. Hon DONNA FARAGHER to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:

I ask this question on behalf of Hon Martin Aldridge, who is away on urgent parliamentary business.

I refer to the Premier's public comments on 10 May 2022 in which he claimed that the government's extension to the so-called temporary emergency powers in the Emergency Management Act 2005 are on the basis of advice received from the Chief Health Officer and the State Emergency Coordinator.

- (1) On what date was each advice received by government?
- (2) Please table the advice received.

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

The answer is not in my file. If it comes in before the end of question time, I will give the member an answer.

COMMUNITIES — POLICE RAID

416. Hon PETER COLLIER to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Community Services:

I refer the minister to her response to question without notice 378 on Wednesday, 11 May 2022 on the investigation of 13 public officers employed within the Department of Communities.

- (1) Is the investigation still open with all 13 public officers?
- (2) If no to (1), how many public officers are still under investigation?
- (3) If no to (1), when is it anticipated that all the investigations will be completed?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1)–(3) The matter remains under investigation and therefore it would be inappropriate to disclose further information that may compromise the integrity of the process.

FORREST HIGHWAY — ACCELERATION LANES

417. Hon JAMES HAYWARD to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the non-answer provided to question without notice 237 by the minister.

- (1) Why can the minister not provide an estimate of when the key election commitment of the member for Murray–Wellington to build acceleration lanes will be delivered?
- (2) Why could the minister not respond as to whether smart freeway technology could be considered for Forrest Highway to improve community safety?
- (3) Why did the minister not note that other candidates at the 2021 state election were not opposed to the plan to construct acceleration lanes on the Forrest Highway in the Murray–Wellington electorate?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

The premise of the member's question is rejected.

- (1) As outlined in the answer to the member's previous question, development work is currently underway. It is inherent in this statement that construction time frames are confirmed following this process.
- (2) The premise of the member's question was the election commitment to deliver acceleration lanes at Binningup, Myalup, Harvey and Preston Beach. Smart freeways were not part of the commitment.
- (3) It is due to the work of the member for Murray–Wellington that these projects are being delivered. The minister noted that no other candidate committed to these projects because no other candidate did in fact commit to these projects. It is unclear how the silence of the other candidates is a relevant consideration.

PERDAMAN UREA PROJECT

418. Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT to the minister representing the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs:

I refer to the Perdaman Chemicals Pty Ltd urea project on the Burrup Peninsula.

- (1) Has Perdaman submitted a cultural heritage management plan?
- (2) If yes to (1), could the minister please table a copy of the CHMP?
- (3) If no to (1), when does the minister expect the CHMP to be submitted?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1)–(3) I am advised that the Departments of Planning, Lands and Heritage and Water and Environmental Regulation are assisting Perdaman Chemicals Pty Ltd with its development of a cultural heritage management plan. Once finalised, Perdaman is required to submit the CHMP to DWER as a condition of its project approval by the Environmental Protection Authority. The honourable member will need to direct his question to the Minister for Environment in relation to the tabling of the CHMP.

CORONAVIRUS — BUSINESS ASSISTANCE PACKAGE

419. Hon STEVE MARTIN to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:

I ask this question on behalf of Hon Dr Steve Thomas. I refer to the \$72 million level 2 COVID-19 business assistance package announced on 2 March 2022.

- (1) As at 30 April 2022, how many applications has the government received for support under this package?
- (2) How many of these applications have been fully assessed to date?
- (3) Of the applications that have been assessed, how many have been deemed eligible for support and how many have been deemed ineligible?
- (4) As at 30 April 2022, how much of the \$72 million package has been paid out to Western Australian businesses?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1)–(4) The McGowan government's \$72 million level 2 COVID-19 business assistance package consists of multiple support programs administered by the Small Business Development Corporation, the Department of Finance and VenuesWest. The granular level of information requested in this question is unable to be provided in the limited time available. The honourable member should place the question on notice.

ASSOCIATION OF VOLUNTEER BUSH FIRE BRIGADES (WA) INC — FUNDING

420. Hon COLIN de GRUSSA to the Minister for Emergency Services:

I ask this question on behalf of Hon Martin Aldridge, who is away on urgent parliamentary business.

I refer to the *Annual report 2020–2021* of the Department of Fire and Emergency Services and specifically to the funding provided to affiliated bodies found on page 114.

- (1) Why did the Association of Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades (WA) Inc receive no funding in the reporting period?
- (2) When did funding cease to the association?
- (3) For what reason did funding cease to the association?
- (4) Has funding resumed to the association?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank Hon Martin Aldridge for some notice of the question.

That question was asked yesterday. I saw it yesterday; it is not in my file today. If somebody is watching and they can send it in, if I get it, I will read it out.

CARBON CREDITS

421. Hon TJORN SIBMA to the minister representing the Minister for Finance:

Throughout the 2021–22 financial year to date —

- (1) How many carbon credits were purchased by the Department of Finance and at what overall cost?
- (2) Of the above, what proportion of these units were purchased domestically and how many from foreign markets?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. The following answer has been provided to me by the Minister for Finance.

- (1) There have been 45 000 tonnes of carbon offsets purchased at a cost of \$501 130.
- (2) All credits were purchased from Australian organisations. Of the funds, 67 per cent were used to purchase credits from Western Australian projects. The remaining funds were used to purchase credits from international projects.

COMMUNITIES — REPORT — DR TRACY WESTERMAN

422. Hon NICK GOIRAN to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Child Protection:

I refer to *The West Australian* article of 18 January 2022 titled “Department of Communities plagued by ‘wide scale and endemic racism’ internal reports reveal”, which cites a report written by psychologist and former Western Australian of the Year Dr Tracy Westerman.

- (1) When was the report commissioned?
- (2) When was the report completed?
- (3) When was the report provided to the minister?
- (4) What is the name of the report?
- (5) How many recommendations did the report contain?
- (6) Will the minister table the report?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. I note this was lodged on 15 February, so the answer is current from that date.

- (1) The contract commenced on 30 August 2017.
- (2) The report was completed on 25 October 2019.
- (3) The report was provided to the minister on 25 May 2020.
- (4) The report is titled *Cultural competency audit of child protection staff and foster care and adoption manual*.
- (5) The report contains 49 recommendations.
- (6) The Department of Communities has published the report in its entirety.

Hon Nick Goiran: I asked for it to be tabled.

Hon SUE ELLERY: It has been published.

Hon Nick Goiran: That’s the equivalent as saying that it’s on a website.

Hon SUE ELLERY: It is not the equivalent because I did not say those words.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon Nick Goiran interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Members are not entitled to supplementary questions.

Hon Nick Goiran interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! We do not have supplementary questions in this chamber.

KEYSTART — INTEREST RATES

423. **Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Housing:**

I refer to the Reserve Bank of Australia's recent cash rate increase and the subsequent announcement on 11 May 2022 to increase the Keystart interest rate to 4.76 per cent, effective from 20 May 2022. This rate rise comes at a time when households are experiencing increasing cost-of-living pressures.

- (1) Has the state government considered and/or completed any modelling on the specific financial risks faced by Keystart borrowers, given the RBA commitment to further interest rate rises?
- (2) Will the government commit to review the Keystart interest rate policy to protect low-income Keystart borrowers from excessive interest rate rises and better reflect the RBA cash rate rather than the interest rates set by the four major banks?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1) Keystart actively monitors its loan portfolio and the impact of external factors, including interest rates. Keystart adjusts its interest rate setting to align with the average standard variable interest rate of the four major banks for all new applications. This interest rate policy enables Keystart to offer low-deposit home loans, while managing its lending risk responsibly.

Keystart undertakes responsible lending practices and at the time of assessment an interest rate buffer is applied on top of the prevailing interest rate when assessing customers' ability to service the loan repayments.

Keystart has additionally developed a free *Your financial wellbeing guide to interest rates* to help its customers understand interest rates, prepare them for interest rate increases and support their goal to build equity and refinance with traditional lenders when they are in a position to do so.

- (2) The Department of Communities regularly reviews Keystart policy settings to ensure it delivers government priorities and supports people on low to moderate incomes to achieve home ownership.

CORONAVIRUS — STATE OF EMERGENCY — EXTENSION

Question without Notice 415 — Answer Advice

HON SUE ELLERY (South Metropolitan — Leader of the House) [5.02 pm]: I have an answer to the question that I think was asked by Hon Donna Faragher earlier today on behalf of Hon Martin Aldridge to me representing the Premier.

- (1)–(2) The Premier and health minister regularly meet with the Chief Health Officer and State Emergency Coordinator along with the State Disaster Council, as required, to receive advice and appropriately manage the pandemic in Western Australia. The Chief Health Officer and State Emergency Coordinator have both given clear advice for the continuation of directions issued under sections 67, 70 and 72A of the Emergency Management Act 2005 as part of the day-to-day management of COVID-19. The current baseline measures in place across Western Australia were recommended by the Chief Health Officer and have been applied under directions issued under the Emergency Management Act 2005. The specific health advice related to the current baseline measures is available online, as per normal practice. I now table that advice.

[See paper [1274](#).]

HOMELESSNESS — BOORLOO BIDEE MIA SERVICE

Question without Notice 395 — Answer Advice

HON SUE ELLERY (South Metropolitan — Leader of the House) [5.03 pm]: I would like to provide an answer to Hon Steve Martin's question without notice 394 asked yesterday, which I seek leave to have incorporated into *Hansard*.

[Leave granted for the following material to be incorporated.]

Answer

I thank the Honourable Member for some notice of this question.

- (1)–(4) Boorloo Bidee Mia is the first low barrier homelessness service in Western Australia of its kind offering medium-term accommodation for individuals with high complex needs, many of whom have experienced long-term homelessness.

The referral process is led by a group of service providers and Agencies, working collaboratively to identify appropriate candidates. The referral process differs from a 'walk-in' or 'drop-in' shelter model, as it seeks to provide longer-term accommodation together with individualised, wraparound supports within a culturally supportive environment to aid transition into permanent, stable living arrangements.

Since opening, a total of 62 referrals to BBM have been assessed. Following a referral, eight individuals declined to move into the facility for various reasons, including accepting alternative supported accommodation, choosing to reside with family or returning to country. Only two individuals have been declined since the opening of BBM, as they were deemed a safety risk.

As at 6 May 2022, 51 individuals with high complex needs were residing in 49 of the available 66 rooms at Boorloo Bidee Mia.

As of today, this has increased to 52 individuals. For many, this is the first time that they have been able to sustain accommodation for any length of time.

JOINT SITTING — ELECTION OF SENATOR

Statement by President

THE PRESIDENT (Hon Alanna Clohesy) [5.04 pm]: In reference to the motion passed by this house on Tuesday, 10 May 2022 in respect of the fixing of the day and place for a joint sitting of the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly to fill the Senate vacancy, I advise that I have conferred with the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and have received agreement that the houses will meet in the Legislative Council chamber at 11.00 am on Wednesday, 18 May 2022.

SENTENCING LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (PERSONS LINKED TO TERRORISM) BILL 2021

Committee

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting. The Deputy Chair of Committees (Hon Peter Foster) in the chair; Hon Matthew Swinbourn (Parliamentary Secretary) in charge of the bill.

Clause 36: Part 8 Division 2A inserted —

Committee was interrupted after the clause had been partly considered.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: We are in Committee of the Whole House, but it does make me wonder whether after the recent announcement there are circumstances in which committees will be able to meet when Parliament is in session, but we will deal with that on another occasion. At the moment, we are dealing with clause 36 and the fact that a mirror provision in an earlier clause of the bill appears to be missing; it is not mirrored here and it is not immediately apparent why that provision is not included. I wonder whether any subsequent advice was obtained on this point during the short recess for the taking of questions without notice. I reiterate that clause 36 seeks to insert six specific statutory release considerations that deal with young persons—that is, children who are associated with terrorism—yet in the Sentence Administration Act 2003, there are seven express statutory release considerations, the first of which appears to be missing. I refer to proposed section 66F(a). Earlier, when explaining this, the parliamentary secretary kindly referred us to the fact that clause 36 will insert proposed section 150C(2)(a). The parliamentary secretary also seemed to make the point that it will be a similar provision to what already exists in the Sentence Administration Act—that is, that there is already a paramount consideration principle in the Sentence Administration Act. If we are doing a comparison, it would appear as though that earlier section—I think the parliamentary secretary might have referred me to section 6 of the Sentence Administration Act —

Hon Matthew Swinbourn: It was section 5B

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Thank you. If section 5B is said to be the mirror of proposed section 150C(2)(a), if I understand the argument—that is, those two are said to be mirrors—it means proposed section 66F(a) appears to be missing. I understand the point the parliamentary secretary was making earlier, that proposed 150C(2)(a) could, because it is a paramount consideration, be read at a higher level than proposed section 66F(a). I do not want to quibble about that, but the point still remains that we decided to expressly include proposed section 66F(a), despite the fact that section 5B exists, and now it is not being included. It is not readily apparent why we are doing that and I wonder whether the parliamentary secretary has been able to obtain any further advice on this point.

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: To be honest with the member, I am not going to be able to take it a lot further. The advisers gave it further consideration during the break for question time, and the view generally is that, in effect, the two things will have the same force, notwithstanding that there is obviously significant wording there that is not mirrored in the other provision. But, as I say, I do not think I can take the member further on that drafting. As he has pointed out, the paramount consideration of community safety still remains an important element.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: I will conclude on this point; it is not really a question. I just make the observation that if we follow that through, it would imply that if at clause 16, which we have already passed, we had deleted proposed section 66F(a), nothing would have turned on that. To follow the argument, it would have meant that we could have relied on section 5B of the Sentence Administration Act and, therefore, we did not need proposed section 66F(a). If that is not true, we should have a mirror of proposed section 66F(a), notwithstanding that proposed section 150C(2)(a) will be in place. As I say, I just offer that as an observation. It is not necessarily posed in the form of a question. I appreciate that, even though I find it a significant curiosity, if I can put it that way, ultimately it is not destructive to the bill or to the scheme of the bill. I know that we are both keen to see the passage of the bill occur in the next five or so minutes.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 37 to 40 put and passed.**Clause 41: Act amended —**

Hon NICK GOIRAN: We are now at part 4 of the bill, which deals with the amendments to the Criminal Procedure Act 2004. The parliamentary secretary might recall that during consideration of clause 1, “Short title”, we dealt with a range of issues, including the consultation process that had been undertaken by government. The parliamentary secretary indicated to the chamber that the Director of Public Prosecutions was an individual who had been consulted. I think that might have happened in or around October 2020. In any event, the date is not material, but I recall that the parliamentary secretary indicated that the director had made a specific recommendation dealing with the issue of disclosure. In essence, it was along the lines that there should be a blanket prohibition on disclosure. That was rejected by the working group and, instead, we now have before us part 4. We did ventilate that quite extensively in debate on clause 1, and there is no need for us to do that again. But I note that I had asked government to specifically reconsider—not to be confused with “review”—that particular decision and I wonder whether there has been an opportunity for that to occur.

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: Consideration has been given to that. We are not changing from that position, but I have some information that has been prepared since that earlier discussion to provide to the member. The bill relies upon the use of terrorist intelligence information in order to make decisions about the early release of prisoners and young offenders who are the subject of that information. It also must allow for the review of those decisions by appropriately constituted courts. Consequently, the bill creates legal structures to prevent the inappropriate disclosure of terrorist intelligence information. There are provisions that deal with this in the case of the chair’s decision in the context of early release. Then there are provisions that deal with the situation in legal proceedings.

In the context of legal proceedings, proposed section 119C is relevant. It reflects the policy that we need to protect terrorist intelligence information. Balanced against the need to protect highly sensitive national security information is the offender’s right to a fair hearing, remembering that we are no longer dealing with the matter as a question for decision by the chair. These provisions will ensure that there is a safe mechanism for the potential disclosure to be considered so that affected parties are given the opportunity to make an application to access information that may not be deemed terrorist intelligence information. The wording in proposed section 119C(2) requires the court to dispense with disclosure requirements if it is satisfied that the information is terrorist intelligence information and that no miscarriage of justice will result from its non-disclosure. This is similar to the wording in section 138(3) of the Criminal Procedure Act 2004 relating to the ability of a court to dispense with disclosure requirements in criminal proceedings. Proposed sections 16D(3) and 119C(3) in the bill additionally provide that the Commissioner of Police must be given the opportunity to be heard by or to make oral submissions to the court on the validity of the terrorist intelligence information for the court to consider when determining whether the information is terrorist intelligence information. It is also important to note that proposed sections 16D and 118C in the bill also provide that all disclosures of proceedings are to be heard in private to protect the confidentiality of the terrorist intelligence information. The amendments to the Criminal Procedure Act 2004 are consequential in nature to give effect to the policy enshrined in proposed section 119C. This provides a consistent approach to dealing with this sensitive information across all legal proceedings and creates a balance between the need to protect information that is assessed by a court as sensitive and, in this case, terrorist intelligence information with the need to afford affected parties the right to appeal decisions and have access to information in order to preserve those rights.

Clause put and passed.**Clauses 42 to 45 put and passed.****Title put and passed.***Report*

Bill reported, without amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by **Hon Matthew Swinbourn (Parliamentary Secretary)**, and passed.

FEDERAL ELECTION — KRISTY McSWEENEY*Statement*

HON KLARA ANDRIC (South Metropolitan) [5.17 pm]: With the federal election just nine days away, I was alarmed this week to be informed of some troubling information about the Liberal candidate for Swan, Kristy McSweeney. In my view, these issues go to her integrity, her honesty and her ethics. We know that Ms McSweeney has worked for some suspicious characters in the past, like Tony Abbott and even Senator Michaelia Cash, but it is her career as a self-purported “communications and marketing strategist” that the people of Swan should be most concerned about. I am sure everyone in this chamber can agree that the tobacco industry is a blight on our society that causes immeasurable harm to our health and our economy. However, I have been reliably informed that Kristy McSweeney has made part of her living as a PR consultant to big tobacco. Amongst

other things, I am told that Ms McSweeney was paid to help big tobacco message and sell vaping and liquid nicotine products. I am told that Ms McSweeney helped big tobacco in its messaging to the Therapeutic Goods Administration in attempts to declassify the liquid nicotine used in vaping, and that she has been involved in public relations campaigns for big tobacco in how vaping is sold to the community.

I remind members that the sale of liquid nicotine is illegal in this country. We still do not know what the impacts of e-cigarettes and vapes are on our health. We do, however, know that they are extremely addictive and are being increasingly taken up by children, with 14 per cent of children aged between 12 and 17 years reported to have used e-cigarettes.

Federal health minister Greg Hunt, whom I believe Ms McSweeney also worked for, opposes vaping, saying, according to my notes —

It's absolutely clear that behind the vaping industry is old tobacco ...

And, according to my notes —

... the actual vaping products themselves may have real health risks.

Does Ms McSweeney agree with the federal Liberal government's Minister for Health and Aged Care or with her big tobacco backers? Even in her regular appearances on Sky News *After Dark*, Ms McSweeney can be seen promoting pro-vaping talking points, presumably from big tobacco. What we do not know is what other work Ms McSweeney undertook for big tobacco—that is for Ms McSweeney herself to explain, but I do not expect she will tell the truth, because Ms McSweeney is notorious for being loose with the truth.

It does not stop there. Just last month, when communicating with a constituent via text message to her public campaign number, Ms McSweeney had a troubling exchange. In a conversation about integrity in politics, Ms McSweeney replied to the constituent, according to my notes —

Yes I understand and thank you for the feedback.

Integrity is important to me too — something pure breed Australians live by.

That is right, members—"something pure breed Australians live by". That is what she said. This is an election campaign in which she is a white woman and her opponent is a woman of colour with overseas-born parents. It is unbelievable. When the constituent reacted in shock, a text flew back that it was a mis-type. She texted, according to my notes —

It was supposed to say pure hearted Australians—proud Australians Those are the people that have integrity.

Yes, a common typo, but I am sure Ms McSweeney will deny it. I will bet it was probably an honest mistake by a campaign worker—definitely not racism!

What about the time she sucked up to the right-wing Cory Bernardi on Sky News, saying she could tell the difference between a man and a woman just by looking at them on the street? If that was not strange enough behaviour, she then lied about it to *Out in Perth*, Perth's LGBTI media publication. She responded to its article about her comments by saying, "Here is a direct quote from my interview", except it turns out that what she then went on to recite was never actually said. The post was deleted. Integrity certainly appears to be somewhat lacking in this "pure hearted" Liberal candidate for Swan.

Something else curious about Ms McSweeney is her ability to constantly live in two places at once. She has said on numerous occasions that she is a Swan local through and through. According to Fairfax papers, Swan is her home. "This is where I live", Ms McSweeney said. "Where I have always lived", she added. "Where my family has always lived." She went on to stress, as if to ensure it was in no way uncertain, that she was as Swan as they come. As many members know, Kristy is the daughter of former member for South West Region Hon Robyn McSweeney, who has always lived in Bridgetown, and still does. I understand that is where Kristy actually grew up. In fact, a Liberal Party document claims Kristy moved to Victoria Park when she was a teenager, presumably for university, so there are potentially a couple of years when she did live in Swan, 23 years ago.

But what happened after that? According to her LinkedIn profile—I know Ms McSweeney likes to follow and record people's LinkedIn profiles—in 2004 she went to Canberra to work for the Howard government, and by 2005 she lived in Sydney to study at Macquarie University. From 2006, Kristy worked for Tony Abbott over east. After the 2007 Liberal election loss, she worked in Sydney for another five years. In 2012, she moved to Melbourne to work for the ill-fated Premier of Victoria Ted Baillieu, where I am sure she made a big contribution to his half a term in office. She went on to Andrew Robb in 2014, who was famous for selling the port of Darwin to China, and then went to work for a Chinese company involved in the sale. Then, from 2015, she started her own consultancy, through which we now know she helped big tobacco companies with their public relations. Was this when she moved back to Perth—back to Swan? No. According to Australian Securities and Investments Commission documentation, she resided in Melbourne and the company was based there until at least 2018. Flinders Street station regularly appeared behind her on her Sky News spot. Then, in 2018, it appears that she left Melbourne and headed back to Sydney.

It was not until the end of 2020 that Kristy made her way back here, to take her rightful spot in her political dynasty. Now, I have no problem with people living their lives and travelling about. Many a politician has returned to, or moved to, Perth and made a great contribution. The one thing I have a problem with is that she lied about it. So, surely she lives in Swan now, right? No—wrong again. My sources tell me she now resides in the electorate of Tangney, although she is known to frequent the suburb of Mt Lawley, and may even own a home there. Her true whereabouts we will never know.

President, now more than ever, we need ethical politicians in federal Parliament. But what do we know of the Liberal candidate for Swan? She is someone who will take money from big tobacco to help with its PR and someone who is loose with the truth—at best. But she can tell a man from a woman just by looking at them. And I am sure she is a “pure hearted Australian” and a “proud Australian”.

CORONAVIRUS — VACCINATIONS

Statement

HON SOPHIA MOERMOND (South West) [5.28 pm]: I am pleased, albeit slightly nervous, to once again be back in this place and having contact with some of my lovely and supportive colleagues. Thank you for that. It is a shame, however, that to be here I have had to conform with requirements that I do not agree with. Of all the places where disagreement should be okay, I would have thought it would be in the Parliament. In essence, I am but representing a group of people in this state who feel as I do. My views are reflected in the wider community whether or not members like it. These citizens live in every single one of the electorates represented in this house. They are members’ constituents, as they are mine. I am sure we have all had many emails from a variety of people who have been very vocal about that, so I know that people in the community have sent members emails with their opinions about mandates.

One of the reasons why I am against the continuation of the state of emergency powers and vaccination mandates is that I have not been provided any real data or concrete science by this government that supports what has been done. Maybe it exists; I do not know. This detailed advice seems to be kept hidden from members and from the public by the Premier and his Minister for Health. When I or my colleague Hon Dr Brian Walker have requested further information, we have been ignored. I have to say that being ignored and excluded appears to be part and parcel of being female in crossbench politics; nonetheless, when we are dealing with people who are vaccine hesitant and have concerns around data recording, one of the easiest ways to create compliance is by showing the scientific data that supports the modelling, the mass vaccination and an extension of the emergency powers. Currently, it just looks as though Dan Andrews has gone through his despotic stage and WA has simply answered, “Hold my beer.”

This government needs to be more transparent than ever with the data that backs up its decisions, given the harsh restrictions, economic destruction and family disengagement inflicted on the people of this state in the last two years. Personally, I believe that the lack of science has led to a two-tier society, which has led to many people dealing with adverse events and consequently being ignored by doctors. This is a problem. It is dangerous that the following has occurred: the politicisation of the patient–doctor relationship; the politicisation of scientific research; rapid antigen tests not being rolled out early in the pandemic; people losing their jobs and then being gaslit into being told it was their choice; businesses not getting sufficient employees and the clientele not being required to be vaccinated but the staff are; no real and meaningful public education around health outcomes except the daily 1984 drone-like reiterating of the requirement for vaccination; and the research of other medicinal substances being ridiculed. Never in the history of any type of medicine has it been deemed good practice to say that one solution fits all. Medicine does not work like that ever. Therefore, although I am pleased to take my place here, I will be ensuring that I continue to fight for the views of the many people who have concerns around vaccine mandates, data reporting, privacy and the overall health response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

FEDERAL ELECTION — MEMBERS’ STATEMENTS

Statement

HON TJORN SIBMA (North Metropolitan) [5.32 pm]: In this term, I have tried to establish a practice of making a member’s statement only when I consider them to be strictly necessary. We understand that members’ statements provide an opportunity for some latitude for private members—particularly government private members who do not sit on the front bench—to make contributions to this house in a way that is consistent with their conscience and their calling, but in a manner in which the ordinary proceedings perhaps might not allow. That said, I think there is always a need to exercise that opportunity with some judgement and some discretion. Invariably and quite obviously, we are experiencing heightened political times in the lead-up to the federal election on 21 May. We are obviously in a more heightened environment by virtue of the fact that we are in the pre-polling phase. If I understand correctly, the Australian Electoral Commission reported that one million people—at least until the closing of the polls yesterday—had exercised that choice. I will make the observation that in the exchange of views and in the debate in this house in the last three days, there have been a number of occasions on which reference has been made to that very obvious fact. I would draw the conclusion—I think I am in a sound position to do that—that government

members, as is their right, have used the opportunity to campaign for the election of an Albanese federal government through the mechanisms that this chamber permits. I thought that there was a fine example—not a fine example; an example—of that yesterday in the motion brought to the house by Hon Dan Caddy.

However, the contribution given this evening by Hon Klara Andric is not in keeping with her obvious talent. It is not in keeping with her capacity to undertake independent research that is to the benefit of elevating debate in this chamber and is in the service of the people of Western Australia. The federal Liberal candidate to whom she referred is not a person I know at all well. I have met Kristy McSweeney, the candidate for the federal electorate of Swan, on maybe one or two occasions. The Swan campaign is a mystery to me. I am geographically dislocated from the realities of southern seats campaigning, as members would understand. However, I would just say, as a cautionary note: do not use members' statements as an opportunity to make hit-and-run ambushes on political opponents. Once members start to establish a reputation as someone who is wont to do that, they invite a lot of reciprocity, and a focus and categorisation of themselves as a member. Frankly speaking, I do not think that is the reputation that the honourable member wants to establish so early into her parliamentary career, and I hope it is a long, meaningful and productive one.

I would be very, very cautious about speaking about the previous professional callings of federal election candidates, because that will also invite scrutiny and contemplation of the post-political careers of a number of former federal members. Need I reflect on Hon Stephen Conroy, who is now a lobbyist for big gambling. If big tobacco is a sin, I cannot see how in the Labor movement big gambling is not an equally obnoxious sin.

Frankly, the member should use the opportunity to double-check this evening whether what she has read into the record tonight would stand external scrutiny. I hope not to have to bear witness again to these obnoxious character abuses and ambushes in this chamber, because I consider that to be an abuse of this privilege.

CEO SLEEPOUT

Statement

HON PIERRE YANG (North Metropolitan) [5.37 pm]: I wish to advise the house that on 23 June 2022, I will be participating in the CEO Sleepout on the sixth occasion since I have come to this place. I am also pleased to inform the house that I have heard some interest from the opposition, and also from the crossbench, that I may have company on that occasion, which no doubt will be a great way to finish off the sitting for the first half of this year, because that will be the last day of the estimates hearings in which members of this place will be participating. When we finish on that day, I will go straight to the CEO Sleepout, enjoy a cup of soup, and have a chat with the friends I first met many years ago at the CEO Sleepout, and do my bit to raise awareness of the issue of homelessness.

I do ask, as I have always done, members, and people who are working as we speak, that if they could please donate to the cause, it would be greatly appreciated. In 2021, we raised \$5 389 together as part of my campaign, and I am certainly hopeful that we can match that, if not increase it. I am also pleased to advise the rest of the world that most of that \$5 000 was from members of this place. So thank you very much, members. I look forward to your further support in 2022.

House adjourned at 5.40 pm
