



Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

FORTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION
2024

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 20 June 2024

Legislative Assembly

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THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr S.J. Price) took the chair at 9.00 am, acknowledged country and read prayers.

MALVERN SPRINGS PLAN — ELLENBROOK

Petition

MS J.J. SHAW (Swan Hills — Parliamentary Secretary) [9.01 am]: I have a petition certified by the clerks containing 13 signatures in the following terms —

To the Honourable Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia assembled: We, the undersigned, say that we strongly object to the latest proposed amendment to *Malvern Springs Plan No.6—Lot 9295 Elmridge Parkway, Ellenbrook*. Just like the rejected 2021 application, the new proposal will not deliver the promised Village Centre. The residents of Malvern Springs want this site retained for its originally intended community purpose, and not redeveloped with dense housing. **We will fight to protect the heart of Malvern Springs. We urge relevant planning decision makers to support us and reject unsuitable development at this site.**

[See petition 60.]

Nonconforming Petition

Ms J.J. SHAW: I also have a nonconforming petition containing 244 signatures on the same matter.

CRIME — GERALDTON AND MULLEWA

Petition

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Leader of the Opposition) [9.02 am]: I have an e-petition that has been certified by the clerks containing 257 signatures in the following terms —

To the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We the undersigned say we are deeply concerned at the ongoing level of crime in the Geraldton and Mullewa communities and the Cook Government's failure to respond. The safety and wellbeing of these communities must remain a top priority.

Now we ask the Legislative Assembly to bolster law enforcement in Geraldton and Mullewa, support crime prevention programs and provide support and rehabilitation for at-risk youth.

[See petition 61.]

PAPERS TABLED

Papers were tabled and ordered to lie upon the table of the house.

INVEST AND TRADE WESTERN AUSTRALIA — INDIA MISSION

Statement by Minister for Health

MS A. SANDERSON (Morley — Minister for Health) [9.03 am]: I rise to update the house on my recent Invest and Trade Western Australia mission to India, which took place from 22 February to 2 March 2024. The purpose of this mission was to showcase Western Australia's health and life sciences capabilities and promote health skilling education and employment opportunities in the state. I was joined by 26 Western Australian delegates from the healthcare, health and medical life sciences sectors. The delegation comprised leading public and private hospital service providers, the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency and universities, as well as life science and biotechnology companies. During this mission I undertook 36 engagements across Chennai, Hyderabad, Nashik and Trivandrum, where I met with healthcare and innovation providers, government agencies, skilling agencies, universities and colleges, to progress collaboration opportunities between Western Australia and India. I held a range of ministerial meetings, including engagements with the Chief Minister of Telangana and the state's health and industrial ministers. I also met with the health minister, digital economy minister and special projects minister from the Tamil Nadu government and held symposiums with the Kerala government and Apollo Hospitals to strengthen state-to-state bilateral relationships.

During the mission, a memorandum of understanding was signed between Edith Cowan University and Charkos Global on skilled health worker attraction and education pathways. This MOU paves the way to support Indian nurses through transition courses at ECU and to accredit specialist postgraduate courses for nurses in India

working in paediatrics, mental health and oncology nursing. This will increase the supply of qualified nurses coming to the state. I delivered keynote presentations across the four cities, including two health skilling symposiums, talking directly to Indian nurses in Chennai and Hyderabad who are interested in working in Australia; an Invest and Trade Western Australia event attended by 200 health and healthcare representatives; the Imagine valedictory function with 1 000 innovation biotech representatives in Chennai; the Australian BioAsia reception; and the BioAsia inaugural session with 300 health and life sciences representatives in Hyderabad as well as senior government officials, including Hon Anumula Revanth Reddy, Chief Minister of Telangana.

I delivered four media round tables to showcase the state's healthcare system to help attract experienced and skilled workers to choose Western Australia. Feedback from the mission was extremely positive, with many valuable relationships developed between the delegation and their Indian counterparts. Following my visit, I intend to establish pilot projects to enable the mobility of skilled health workers into Western Australia and, with the support of Invest and Trade Western Australia, explore further opportunities for the Department of Health to work collaboratively with Indian states to mutually share skills. These pilots will need to capitalise on the reforms outlined in the Kruk review, recently adopted by the commonwealth.

PUBLIC SERVICE MEDAL — DR RICK FLETCHER AND MARION HAILES-MacDONALD

Statement by Minister for Regional Development

MR D.T. PUNCH (Bunbury — Minister for Regional Development) [9.06 am]: I am pleased to stand today in recognition of Dr Rick Fletcher, who, after a 40-year career in fisheries, has recently retired from his role as executive director of fisheries and agriculture resource management at the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development. Beginning with the former Department of Fisheries in 1988, Dr Fletcher started his career studying coconut crabs in Vanuatu and went on to become a world-renowned expert on ecosystem frameworks. During his tenure as executive director of research at the fisheries department, Dr Fletcher has without question been instrumental in developing WA's world-leading approach to the sustainable management of our aquatic resources. Under his watch, since 2006, the percentage of Western Australia's aquatic resources not at risk from fishing improved from less than 80 per cent to a figure of roughly 95 per cent, which is a remarkable achievement. Dr Fletcher has exemplified the very best attributes of the public service and I have little doubt his work will continue through the many scientists he has mentored. Dr Fletcher was not able to fly under the radar and exit the public service quietly; he was recognised with a Public Service Medal for his 40-year career in fisheries research in this year's King's Birthday honours list!

I would also like to acknowledge Ms Marion Hailes-MacDonald from the Department of Communities who received a Public Service Medal for her work in disability services. Ms Hailes-MacDonald led the establishment of the Office of Disability within the Department of Communities in 2022 and became its first executive director. This award recognises Ms Hailes-MacDonald for her leadership in the development and improvement of services and supports for people with disability, their families and carers.

I commend both these individuals for their contribution to our wonderful state and I am sure members will join me in applauding them for their achievements and in wishing Dr Fletcher and Ms Hailes-MacDonald all the very best.

ABORIGINAL PASTORAL ACADEMY — EAST KIMBERLEY

Statement by Minister for Regional Development

MR D.T. PUNCH (Bunbury — Minister for Regional Development) [9.09 am]: I rise today to inform the house how the Cook government is supporting better economic and job opportunities for Aboriginal people in the Kimberley. I was delighted to join our dedicated member for Kimberley, Divina D'Anna, in the East Kimberley earlier this month, where we announced an expansion of the Aboriginal Pastoral Academy into the East Kimberley. This program already has a wonderful track record of supporting young Aboriginal people to build career pathways in the West Kimberley, and now we want to replicate that success across the entire region.

This innovative partnership between Nyamba Buru Yawuru, Kimberley Pilbara Cattlemen's Association and the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development has garnered strong industry and community support since its inception. It has grown from a local program offering training and mentoring opportunities at Roebuck Plains station, to a successful initiative offering work placements at five stations across the region. Its first East Kimberley-based pre-employment program supported by Wunan Foundation and Job Pathways is due to start in August at Mistake Creek station on the border of Western Australia and the Northern Territory. The academy has seen 28 graduates employed on Kimberley and Pilbara cattle stations, with the latest class of graduates set to be job-ready in time for the 2025 pastoral season. It is fantastic to see these employment and development opportunities extend into the East Kimberley supporting the next generation of Aboriginal pastoral employees.

While I was in the East Kimberley, I was also lucky enough to join the member for Kimberley on Balangarra country to meet with local Balangarra and Miriuwung-Gajerrong MG Corporation rangers, who have been working with DPIRD on mud crab surveys in the Cambridge Gulf. Mud crabbing has been an important part of Indigenous people's

culture in the Kimberley for thousands of years, so the development of an Aboriginal mud crab fishery holds a lot of potential to create new economic opportunities for the region. This must be done in a sustainable way, so I was pleased to announce additional support from our government for an expansion of the mud crab surveys in the gulf and in the King Sound, along with planned surveys in new locations across the region. It is fantastic to see growing interest from Kimberley Traditional Owners in this resource, with an Aboriginal mud crab fishery having the potential to create new and diversified enterprises across the region.

This is just two examples of regional development initiatives that our government is undertaking in the Kimberley. We are proud of our track record of supporting initiatives that will create genuine employment opportunities and economic outcomes for Indigenous communities in our state's north.

THANK A VOLUNTEER DAY — GRANTS

Statement by Minister for Volunteering

MR D.T. PUNCH (Bunbury — Minister for Volunteering) [9.12 am]: I am pleased to inform the house that the Cook government is calling for community organisations and local government authorities to apply for Thank a Volunteer Day grants to celebrate the contribution of volunteers within the community and highlight International Volunteer Day. Applications are now open with grants of up to \$1 000 available to support activities that celebrate volunteers by holding events or activities to mark International Volunteer Day, which is held on 5 December each year.

The United Nations designate 5 December as International Volunteer Day, and in Western Australia it is proudly known as Thank a Volunteer Day. Western Australia has a strong volunteering culture with more than 1.5 million people generously donating their time and giving back to our communities. Events like these are a great opportunity to recognise and celebrate the incredible contributions of volunteers in WA. Applications opened last week on Thursday 13 June and will close on Thursday 11 July, so I encourage members to get the word out. These grants can be used to host events and activities between Monday, 2 December to Sunday, 8 December 2024 in regional and metropolitan areas. More information can be found on the government of Western Australia's website under "Department of Communities grants program".

Volunteers provide an essential contribution to our communities across the state, and the Cook government is committed to ensuring Western Australian volunteers are recognised and supported. Although the volunteers who provide essential services to our community do not do so for recognition, it is important to acknowledge what a huge positive difference they make. Holding a Thank a Volunteer Day event is one of many ways that organisations can say thank you to those people selflessly donating their time and making our communities better places. In 2023, 72 grants were awarded to organisations so they could celebrate and acknowledge their volunteers, so I encourage people to apply now.

ENERGY — PROJECT SYMPHONY

Statement by Minister for Energy

MR R.R. WHITBY (Baldivis — Minister for Energy) [9.14 am]: Today I would like to update the house on Project Symphony, the state government's pilot of virtual power plant technology. Project Symphony has recently concluded, and the final report highlights the incredible opportunities offered by distributed energy resources. Distributed energy resources are small-scale parts of our energy system such as rooftop solar systems and household batteries. Project Symphony was launched in February 2021 to explore how we might orchestrate these small-scale energy resources in a way that strengthens our energy system.

Rooftop solar is the single largest source of electricity on WA's main electricity grid, with one in three households having solar panels on their roof. We know this number will continue to increase, and we know households will continue investing in household batteries and electric vehicles. This represents a major change to our electricity system relative to decades past, and Project Symphony has helped us to understand the best way embrace these distributed energy resources and maximise their benefits. More than 500 households and businesses participated, and we have been able to demonstrate how a virtual power plant can amplify the benefits of distributed energy resources.

We now have the opportunity to take the lessons learnt and recommendations from Project Symphony to fully integrate distributed energy resources, support energy system security and deliver greater value to households. I congratulate the dedicated staff at Synergy, Western Power, the Australian Energy Market Operator and Energy Policy WA who delivered this groundbreaking project. I also thank the Australian Renewable Energy Agency for its support for Project Symphony. ARENA invested \$8 million through its advancing renewables program and has made the knowledge available to other jurisdictions so they can benefit from WA's leadership in this space.

Project Symphony demonstrates WA's expertise at the cutting edge of the energy transformation. The final report comes just weeks after this Parliament passed our once-in-a-generation reforms to electricity legislation. It is further confirmation that WA is the nation's leader in embracing distributed energy resources. I look forward to keeping this house informed as the Cook government continues its work to ensure distributed energy resources can play their part in our energy transition.

ELECTRIC VEHICLES — VEHICLE-TO-GRID TRIAL*Statement by Minister for Energy*

MR R.R. WHITBY (Baldvis — Minister for Energy) [9.17 am]: I would like to inform the house of an exciting development in Western Australia's adoption of electric vehicles. In late April, I visited Exmouth to launch a new trial of vehicle-to-grid technology to be led by Horizon Power. The 12-month trial will test the potential for EVs to draw power from the grid and then feed it back into the network. The trial will involve four Nissan LEAF EVs, which will be provided to partner organisations in Exmouth. The Shire of Exmouth, Exmouth Chamber of Commerce and Industry, WA Country Health Service and the Gascoyne Development Commission will each receive a Nissan LEAF and will be encouraged to use the vehicles as normal. Horizon Power will test the capability of its management system and deepen its understanding of how energy flow from EV batteries can be incorporated into microgrids.

This trial is the first of its kind in Western Australia. Exmouth was chosen because its energy use fluctuates in line with tourism, peaking during the school holidays. It is being delivered in partnership with local Exmouth contractors, who will install and oversee maintenance of the vehicle-to-grid chargers. Electrifying road transport will help us achieve net zero emissions by 2050, and Horizon Power's vehicle-to-grid trial is an important part of our work to facilitate the uptake of electric vehicles. The Cook Labor government's WA EV Network, Charge Up workplace grants and the zero emission vehicle rebate are all in place to make it easier to own an electric vehicle. These initiatives are part of our strong and sensible climate action. They demonstrate the Cook Labor government's strong commitment to reducing carbon emissions as we work towards net zero by 2050. Vehicle-to-grid technology has the potential to help power homes, reduce power bills and stabilise the electricity grid. I look forward to keeping the house informed as this exciting trial "charges" ahead.

FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES — REGIONS*Statement by Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence*

MS S.E. WINTON (Wanneroo — Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence) [9.19 am]: I rise to update the house on the progress of a number of important initiatives the Cook Labor government is delivering to support regional communities to prevent and respond to family and domestic violence. This government understands that the needs of every victim-survivor of family and domestic violence are unique. This is particularly the case for women and their children who live in regional and remote communities.

The Family and Domestic Violence Taskforce made it clear to government that more targeted and specialist services are required in the regions, and we are committed to working with our sector partners to deliver this. The family and domestic violence one-stop hub model was a proposition made by the sector that our government committed to in 2017, delivered on, and is now expanding. I am proud to announce that a service provider to deliver the Broome hub has been appointed. Family Outreach Service is an arm of Mens Outreach Service Aboriginal Corporation. It is an Aboriginal community-controlled organisation that has partnered with Anglicare WA to co-lead an alliance of specialist wraparound services for victim-survivors from a single location, including advocacy, counselling, legal services and support for children. The Broome hub is a \$16.3 million election commitment and will build on the success of the Mirrabooka and Kalgoorlie hubs. The Broome hub will also provide family and domestic violence outreach services in Derby and Bidyadanga.

I am pleased to advise that expressions of interest have opened for service providers to deliver the Safe at Home program in Kalgoorlie, Port Hedland and Kununurra. Victim-survivors should not be the ones who have to uproot their lives, move out of their homes and away from their support networks. That is why the Safe at Home program provides safety planning, residential security upgrades and wraparound supports to victim-survivors so that they can remain safely in their homes.

Family and domestic violence is a scourge on our community and it is happening in suburbs across the country. I am proud to be part of a government that is committed to delivering for regional communities and is playing its part in stopping family and domestic violence.

FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE — FOUNDATIONS FOR CHANGE*Statement by Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence*

MS S.E. WINTON (Wanneroo — Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence) [9.21 am]: I rise to update the house on another important initiative of the Cook Labor government as part of its ongoing commitment to the prevention of family and domestic violence. Primary prevention work aims to stop violence against women by addressing the underlying societal causes of family and domestic violence. I am proud to advise the house that Foundations for Change, a primary prevention framework, was released last month to guide the state's work to help stop violence against women.

The framework delivers on an important election commitment and provides a structured approach to primary prevention in Western Australia, focused on building workforce capabilities to support evidence-based primary

prevention work. The framework was developed by Preventing Violence Together, which is a collaboration between the Centre for Women's Safety and Wellbeing and Stopping Family Violence. Preventing Violence Together provides workforce support to organisations designing and delivering primary prevention programs. That includes supporting organisations that received funding as part of the \$3 million primary prevention grant scheme we announced in December 2022. To further support that work, the state government has allocated a further \$814 000 to continue funding for Preventing Violence Together.

I wish to extend my thanks to all of the individuals and organisations who contributed their expertise and passion to the framework's development, in particular the Centre for Women's Safety and Wellbeing and Stopping Family Violence for guiding this project to fruition. I give special mention to Dr Katrina Stratton, member for Nedlands, who stepped in at short notice to represent me at the official launch of the framework when I was unwell with COVID.

Earlier this year, a new \$6 million primary prevention grant scheme opened for community organisations to create and implement programs that tackle the drivers of family and domestic violence. Although applications have closed and are being assessed, it is clear that the framework, combined with the funding the government has provided to Preventing Violence Together, will ensure that work in primary prevention is both guided and supported.

AUSTRALIAN EARLY DEVELOPMENT CENSUS LOCAL GOVERNMENT GRANTS

Statement by Minister for Early Childhood Education

MS S.E. WINTON (Wanneroo — Minister for Early Childhood Education) [9.23 am]: The Cook Labor government is committed to working collaboratively across government and with our community to ensure every child has the opportunity to thrive. It was great to announce the recipients for the Australian Early Development Census local government grants program in Karratha with the champion local member up there, the member for Pilbara. The AEDC grants will support local government authorities to deliver further programs that support children and families in the critical stages of development. The grants will support local councils to work in partnership with families, Early Years Networks, Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, schools, early learning providers, playgroups and other locally-based government and non-government organisations to address the developmental needs of young children as identified by the AEDC.

Grants have been awarded to deliver evidence-based, informed initiatives in response to local needs and cultural perspectives that are focused on the AEDC data. The AEDC data provides a whole-of-population measure of children's development across five domains and assists Western Australian communities to understand how their young children are developing. Twelve local councils will share in almost \$900 000 in funding to deliver local initiatives tailored to meet the needs of children and families living in their communities. The twelve local governments are: City of Armadale, City of Fremantle, City of Kalamunda, City of Karratha, City of Kwinana, City of Mandurah, City of Swan, City of Wanneroo, Shire of Broome, Shire of Carnarvon, Shire of Collie and Shire of Harvey.

They will deliver a range of projects, including development of Early Years action plans, delivery of targeted literacy programs and educational programs focused on the AEDC, employment of Early Years Network coordinators, development and expansion of Early Years Networks and delivery of programs specifically targeted at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. The AEDC local government grants program has been made possible through a partnership between The commonwealth government, the Department of Education, Department of Communities and the Western Australian Local Government Association. It is another great example of how the Cook Labor government collaborates with all levels of government and all communities to ensure the best outcomes for the children of Western Australia.

CARNARVON FASCINE

Grievance

MS M. BEARD (North West Central) [9.26 am]: I rise today to address the \$7 million fascine entryway project in Carnarvon. Although the government claims that this project is complete, I am here to express the deep disappointment and frustration of the Carnarvon community with the outcome. The Department of Transport completed this project in March 2024 after a gruelling seven-year wait. The fascine is not only a body of water; it is the heart of our central business district, a vital drawcard for tourism and an essential element of Carnarvon's economic and social fabric.

In April 2017, a major weather event washed Pelican Point into the channel, blocking access to the fascine waterway. This blockage had devastating effects on our community. Each day the fascine remained closed, potential revenue sailed past, severely impacting local businesses and tourism. The community struggled and it became increasingly difficult to attract new families.

The people of Carnarvon waited seven long years for a permanent solution. The \$7 million promise made in 2020 was very much welcomed with hope and relief. The government's chosen remediation has seemingly failed to provide the permanent and robust fix our community desperately needs and expects. Without a permanent solution,

we face a recurring crisis that will continue to devastate our resilient community at a time when it needs support more than ever. The remediation solution chosen by the government is already failing at a rapid rate, causing enormous angst and concern within the community. This is seemingly a failed project that the Shire of Carnarvon has now been left to manage, despite its very small rate base.

The alarming rate of erosion and significant changes occurring at Pelican Point and the surrounding areas demand urgent action from the government. In March 2024, the government announced the completion of the fascine entryway project, agreeing it was a significant win for Carnarvon. The multifaceted \$7 million project included dredging, spit stabilisation and a \$2.1 million pen project for ramp upgrades at the Carnarvon boat harbour. However, the inclusion of 16 floating pens in the harbour is no substitute for year-round access to the fascine and the Carnarvon Yacht Club. The reality on the ground tells a different story, as confirmed by locals with a number of photos.

The dredging campaign relocated over 150 000 cubic metres of material to stabilise the sand spit at the fascine's entrance; however, this effort is already proving inadequate and is deteriorating at a rapid rate. The government noted that this was a very challenging project, and we accept that; however, despite the government's claims of conducting one of WA's most demanding technical investigations of coastal processes, it has still seemingly failed and is not delivering a permanent solution. Despite these studies and the significant time and effort invested by the agency, the solution provided falls well short of what the community requires. Concerns from the community have been raised that works completed are inadequate, with members of the public concerned about boats again being caught up and soon unable to access the fascine waterway and yacht club. It was expected that the technical studies and the marine engineering assessments would have led to a permanent and effective fix. Given the ongoing erosion and the significant changes at Pelican Point, which is rapidly deteriorating, the community is just desperate to understand when and how the government will revisit this project, address the significant issue and work with the shire and community to provide a permanent fix to ensure the long and lasting solution required.

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan — Minister for Transport) [9.30 am]: I thank the member for the grievance. In fact, the last time we had a grievance on this issue was when the Leader of the Opposition raised it on 16 June 2022 as part of a campaign to get the now Liberal Party member for North West Central elected as a Nationals WA member. It is quite ironic, really, is it not, that the National Party did all that work and lost one member just that quickly? There was all that work to get the member elected and she turned her back on the National Party very, very quickly.

I turn to this issue. This is in the seat that the Leader of the Opposition is going for too, is it not? At least he raised the issue first. That can be his campaign strategy: "I raised it first." I have to say that this grievance on the Carnarvon fascine is a bit of a surprise, because I was doing a post-budget presentation when the president of the Shire of Carnarvon thanked me so much for the work on the fascine. He said that the community was very excited. I touched base with the Department of Transport representative, Tony McCann, who is often in the area. He is a very friendly person who works with everybody. I asked him what was happening and he said it was all going okay. He said there had been some slight movement but that had always been expected. Some of that work has been engineered to make sure it withstands the weather elements. Of course, in many instances, the weather is extreme, and, like everywhere, we try to counter the weather conditions.

I want to read a letter I received in April. According to my notes, it reads —

On behalf of our community, I would like to thank you and the marine team and the Department of Transport for their effort that has gone to getting our fascine entrance channel open and navigable with improved channel markers. We all know that this project has taken some time to complete due to the influence of tides, wave and soil action on a low-lying sandy river delta. This unfortunately made planning quite problematic and time-consuming, much to the chagrin of many in our community.

I must also understand the time and effort put in to the project by Tony McCann. Tony's ongoing determination to get the job done, whilst being vilified ...

Anyway, I will not go through the rest of the letter, but it shows we have been working on the issue and I think we have a pretty good outcome. I touched base this morning to make sure it was all going well, and it appears so, so this grievance has come a little bit from left field for me. The other point is that the \$7 million in funding was for a number of things: it was for some dredging and other things like creating 16 new floating boat pens. In August 2022, we opened 16 new floating boat pens at Carnarvon boat harbour, increasing the number of pens and berths available there by 50 per cent and accommodating deeper draught vessels.

If the opposition has a better plan, it should put it forward. I would be happy to hear it, because, again, I hate to say it, we are eight months away from the election. We have done all the geotechnical studies and the science. We have put in 16 new floating boat pens. We have done more than the opposition ever did in government. Again, our feedback so far is that yes, it is challenging, but it is withstanding some of the weather events. As I said, the dredging works commenced under the Minister Assisting the Minister for Transport. I am representing the minister assisting, who, unfortunately, has something else on so is unable to take this grievance, but I was happy to take it

because I have been involved with this issue for a bit. The dredging finished in February. As I said, the feedback is that things are still operating well and the channel is still open. I think this grievance might be jumping the gun a bit and trying to be negative. Like I said, if the opposition has a plan, it should outline it. If the Liberal Party, the National Party—whichever it is; I do not know—or anyone has a better plan, they should put it out there. The opposition says we have not consulted. To be honest, that is all we have done. We have consulted. The Department of Transport representative is there all the time working with the shire and the local community—very much on the ground listening. As I said, if the member for North West Central has a better plan, I am happy to hear it.

Mr R.R. Whitby: She is not good on due diligence. Yesterday, she came in here with a photocopy of a Facebook post. I mean, seriously.

Point of Order

Dr D.J. HONEY: I believe that the grievance was to the Minister for Transport, not the Minister for Environment.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P. Lilburne): I do not think there is a point of order in this matter. The minister has stated publicly that she is attending to this grievance due to the relevant minister's unavailability. Minister, could you please return to your feet and continue with your presentation, thank you.

Debate Resumed

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I said that there seem to be some issues there relating a little bit to the low tide, but the channel is still navigable and some of these issues related to sand movement happening along the coast.

That is my latest information. Like I said, this grievance might be jumping the gun; I do not know. Transport has been on the ground working with the community and the shire. The shire has welcomed this. Maybe things have changed with the shire in the last three weeks, but I have not heard that yet. Like I said, we had Tony there yesterday. I phoned in this morning just to make sure I was completely across what is happening at the fascine. If the member for North West Central has a better plan, she should take it out there. From now on, it is not okay just to criticise. If she wants to be the local member after the next election —

Ms M. Beard: I asked you a question.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: No, the member criticised. I like how she criticises and then says she did not criticise. She did criticise. We are now at the point at which people ask, "What's your plan?" We are at the point now at which even if we develop another plan, it will be too late to implement. What is the member's plan? It is seven or eight months until the election, and now we need to know the opposition's plan. Simply criticising and ignoring the effort that we have made frustrates us. I hate the whole idea of trying to pit the regions versus Perth. We are doing more in regional WA than the Liberal and National Parties ever did.

SOLID WASTE DEPOT — ALEXANDER DRIVE, MIRRABOOKA

Grievance

MS M.J. HAMMAT (Mirrabooka — Parliamentary Secretary) [9.37 am]: My grievance today is to the Minister for Planning. I want to thank him for taking this grievance today. My grievance relates to development application DA24/0287, which is currently before the WA Planning Commission. This development application is for a proposed change of land use for the land situated near the corner of Alexander Drive and Victoria Road in Mirrabooka. I understand that if the development application received by the WA Planning Commission is accepted, it will change the land use at this site and also allow Brajkovich Demolition and Salvage to use the site as a solid waste depot.

Most residents first became aware of the development application as a result of the City of Stirling advertising the proposal for public comment in May. A number of residents received correspondence directly from the City of Stirling advising them of the application and providing advice about how they could make a submission. Since May, a number of residents have contacted me to raise their concerns about the proposal. I have also been contacted by the principal of one of the local schools in the area, St Andrews Grammar School in Dianella, and some of the parents of students at that school. The public consultation period has now closed and I understand that the City of Stirling received 417 public submissions during this period, which demonstrates a significant level of interest about the proposed use of this site. The minister may also be aware that there have been recent media reports about the proposal.

The site is located just north of Reid Highway along Alexander Drive. It is known locally as the "Atlas site", as it was previously occupied by Atlas Brick. I understand that in around 2012, there was an agreement between Atlas Brick and the Western Australian Planning Commission to provide a framework for the coordinated cessation of the activities being undertaken by Atlas on the site. This situation arose as the industrial activities undertaken by Atlas at the site were proving to be incompatible with what is now a residential area. I understand that since Atlas ceased its operations on the site there has been ongoing activity to rehabilitate the site and make it suitable for an alternative use and that the rehabilitation and monitoring continues to this day.

Under the metropolitan region scheme, the site is reserved for parks and recreation, and the work previously undertaken by Atlas at the site was permitted as its activities there predated the implementation of the MRS in 1963. However, the site is now surrounded by homes and in a residential area, which includes schools, aged-care facilities and a childcare centre. The community is concerned that the stated change of use to “Industry — Noxious Solid Waste Depot” will place harmful substances within close proximity to residential areas and put residents and vulnerable people like children and the elderly at risk. Residents have raised a range of concerns with me, including that the proposed solid waste depot would have a detrimental effect on the amenity of the area for residents, that the proposed change of use would be incompatible with the stated land use of parks and recreation under the MRS, and that the separation distances for residents is limited, raising concern that fire, dust, noise and contamination would impact people in their homes. This is particularly a concern for residents to the north of the proposed site where homes are closest to it. Residents are also concerned about the risks arising from dust from the site and the potential for asbestos to be included in the materials handled there. There is a concern about the increased traffic and congestion that would arise and the potential bushfire risk. Residents are also understandably concerned that the value of their properties may be impacted.

I understand that the City of Stirling, having considered the application and received a substantial number of public submissions, does not support the development application. A group of residents in St Andrews estate in Dianella have responded by forming the St Andrews Estate Residents Action Group and working together to oppose the application. I have met with representatives of this group, and I will continue to work with them to provide ongoing support and assistance however I can. I have also met and spoken with a number of other residents who reside in both Mirrabooka and St Andrews estate in Dianella who are concerned about the application.

I want to record my thanks to the minister for providing clarity in terms of the process for this application and for forwarding the concerns of residents on to the WAPC. I would also like to thank the Planning Commission for the consideration of the prospective deputations of residents at the forthcoming meeting. I also note concerned residents from St Andrews estate have recently spoken with Hon Amber Jade Sanderson, member for Morley, as this part of St Andrews estate in Dianella will become part of the Morley electorate at the next election.

I have assisted the residents group with a parliamentary petition that I tabled in the Legislative Assembly yesterday, consisting of 1 443 signatures and 14 nonconforming signatures. I am advised that an additional 250 people have signed a petition since that time that may be tabled at a later stage.

I take this opportunity to recognise and thank the local residents who have formed the action group, particularly Norma D’Souza and the three representatives who have joined me in Parliament today to hear this grievance: Dr Dhruva Ramachandran, Mr Tony Versaci and Ms Esther Coutinho. I wish to thank them all for working so constructively with me and their neighbours, gathering signatures, undertaking research and writing submissions. Their advocacy is a valuable demonstration of what is possible when members of the community come together to work on something that is important to them. It is not just the residents at St Andrews estate who are concerned about this application. A number of residents in both Mirrabooka and Dianella and parents who have children who attend St Andrew’s Grammar School have contacted me to raise concerns.

I raise this grievance on behalf of the many residents in my community and the parents at St Andrew’s Grammar School who are concerned about the development application. Can the minister please outline how this development application will be determined? Given the concerns of residents, what further information and advice is the minister able to provide residents about the proposed solid waste depot outlined in DA24/0287?

MR J.N. CAREY (Perth — Minister for Planning) [9.44 am]: I thank the member for her grievance. I think it is important that I put a sense of history of this site and the process. I have to put on the record that I understand that the development application is yet to be determined by the Western Australian Planning Commission. Although I will make comments in response, I have to put on the record very clearly that the Western Australian Planning Commission is an independent decision-making body, and, as such, as the minister, I do not have jurisdiction in terms of the actual decision. I note for the record that the Liberal Party is heading down a direction of directly intervening in the Planning Commission, as we have seen recently with commentary by the Leader of the Liberal Party in relation to the WAPC consulting on an improvement plan for that precinct. I think that is a dangerous path. It does not surprise me, because the Liberal leader has little understanding of planning policy. The question is: if the planning minister directs the commission, when does it stop and on what issue does it stop? On how many issues would a planning minister direct the Planning Commission? The Leader of the Liberal Party should perhaps become better versed in basic planning and context. This is a bigger and broader issue. Under this government, the reforms that the previous planning minister and I have introduced have strengthened that separation. The minister has oversight but is less involved, unlike the situation on the east coast. Members can imagine what pathway we would go down if the planning minister were directing the commission all the time.

In terms of this particular issue, the opposition and the member for North West Central might learn something from this grievance. The member’s grievance was detailed, researched and considered, as opposed to that of the member for North West Central, who grabs quotes off Facebook and says there is a matter. That is embarrassing. The member for Mirrabooka’s grievance was incredibly well researched and detailed.

As we have acknowledged, the subject site has been occupied by Atlas Brick since 1954 for the purposes of sand extraction and brick manufacturing. Landfill activities have been on the site since 1980. The site is owned in freehold by the WA Planning Commission and is subject to a land transfer deed between the former Minister for Planning, the WAPC and the lessee. The deed stipulates several conditions that the lessee must meet, including filling the site to the pre-excavated level and rehabilitating it so it can ultimately be used for open space purposes, which I think ultimately everyone desires.

The site has been reserved, as the member said, for parks and recreation purposes since the gazettal of the metropolitan region scheme in 1963. Eventually, the site will likely form part of an open space buffer between Mirrabooka and the Malaga industrial area and be used for recreational purposes. The development application involves sorting, segregating and temporary stockpiling of different waste materials that are brought to the site. Material that is deemed acceptable to recycle or unacceptable to bury on the site will be taken offsite, while the remaining material is deposited into landfill. I am not taking a position on this as the Minister for Planning. I am just going through the facts. I am aware that the applicant is seeking to change the current licence with the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation and, of course, requires valid planning approval to do so.

I understand that the intent of the proposal is not to accept asbestos on the site. I appreciate that that was a concern of the community. However, an asbestos management plan has been submitted that details how waste, which may include asbestos, is inspected, how any identified asbestos is dealt with and the subsequent process for offsite disposal of asbestos. That is rightly so.

The subject site, as we know, is reserved for parks and recreation purposes under the metropolitan region scheme and, accordingly, the Western Australian Planning Commission is the determining authority. As the member for Mirrabooka mentioned, the City of Stirling undertook consultation and received a total of 417 submissions, of which 411 objected to the proposal. This consultation informed the city's recommendation to the WAPC advising that it does not support the proposal. As the member indicated, members of the community will be able to make deputations to the WAPC. As the minister, I asked for that to happen to ensure that members of the community have their say.

The Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage is now assessing the proposal, and the matter will be considered by the WAPC's statutory planning committee in due course. In considering the application under the MRS, the WAPC is required to give regard to the purpose for which the land is reserved, the impact on the amenity of the locality and the orderly and proper planning of the locality. The WAPC will have regard to a range of relevant planning matters, including the applicable policy framework, as well as all submissions received. Again, the proposal is also subject to separate environmental approval processes, including relevant licences for landfill premises from the Environmental Protection Authority under the Environmental Protection Act 1986. The meeting at which the matter is to be considered will be open to the public, including via video link, so I encourage those residents to make sure that they make their deputation.

I understand that development applications create community concern, like this one has. We should listen to those concerns and take them seriously. We are never dismissive of community concerns, but there is a clear process to work through with the WA Planning Commission. I want to acknowledge the member's well-considered grievance and her strong advocacy for her local community.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Grievance

MS R.S. STEPHENS (Albany) [9.51 am]: My grievance today is to the Minister for Early Childhood Education. I thank the minister for taking my grievance. Quality early childhood education and care plays a critical role in supporting outcomes in early years development and school readiness. As a mother of two tweens, I know that day care was vital for our working family. I know that it can sometimes be a barrier to families who want to work or study post-children. I was fortunate that my children were able to experience home day care, day care centres and after-school programs. It is so important that children are provided with opportunities to learn and develop, to make friends, to grow their independence and to learn new routines, which then supports them in their transition to school. We also know that the first five years of a child's life are critical for positive life outcomes. It is during this time that they build the foundation for lifelong learning, health and wellbeing.

Nationally, the attraction, development and retention of a high-quality workforce is a significant issue and these challenges have been exacerbated by the impacts of COVID-19. Regional towns are impacted at an even greater level than metropolitan areas. It is also fair to say that regional and remote areas face additional unique challenges. The demand on our early learning services, which are often the backbone of regional and remote communities, has been significantly impacted. In my electorate of Albany, in the great southern region of Western Australia, we have just over 16 early learning and care services, including out-of-school care providers, family day centres and long-day care centres. I am excited that next month the Village Child Care Centre will open with 68 places in the Albany CBD. The Village Child Care Centre received a \$140 000 regional economic development grant towards its project. We have turned the sod on the Bayonet Head early learning centre, which will add 72 new places and is due to open in early 2025. However, when I meet with local providers, they speak to me about the pressures of

staying viable, particularly due to the challenges of attracting and retaining staff. Service providers have told me that finding a qualified workforce is challenging. They tell me how current staff workloads have been impacted by workforce shortages, how workers have not been able to take time to access professional development and how providers also have issues in accessing affordable training to upskill their staff. They also face challenges in accessing suitable accommodation. I also speak to parents who want to return to work but struggle to access continued and stable early learning and care arrangements. They have told me that this means they may not take time off work and therefore have been unable to pursue study or career opportunities.

I welcome the federal government's recent announcement in the 2024–25 federal budget that it has provisioned funding towards a wage increase for the early childhood education and care workforce. I know that the Cook government is committed to supporting and investing in regional and remote towns, so I therefore ask: How is the government supporting early childhood education and care services in regional Western Australia? Can the minister update the house on recent initiatives to attract and retain early childhood educators, and what supports are being provided to regional service providers?

MS S.E. WINTON (Wanneroo — Minister for Child Protection) [9.54 am]: I thank the member for Albany for her grievance on a really important issue that is challenging for early childhood education and care service providers right around the state. I visited the member in Albany and I know that she lives in one of the most special places in Western Australia, which is growing incredibly fast. Quality early childhood education and care services play a critical and important role in a thriving community. When I travel around the state, it is made abundantly clear to me that, as a government, we need to continue to support those services to make sure that they can thrive. I am the first ever Minister for Early Childhood Education. That signifies the Cook government's acknowledgement of the importance of quality early childhood education. It continues to be our major focus to ensure that services right around the state can thrive and support the communities that they service. Importantly, I take this opportunity to highlight some of the investments that the Cook Labor government has made more recently that have been particularly focused on supporting those incredible services that operate in our regions and in towns like Albany.

The member for Albany rightly mentioned that one of the critical issues around workforce is retaining experienced and quality educators in those services. As part of an election commitment, this government committed \$1 million in funding to support and encourage local government authorities to come up with initiatives that will support the attraction and retention of early childhood educators in their towns. Two rounds of grants of about \$500 000 have successfully been provided to a variety of local government authorities. That will allow them to support educators with training and professional development and relocation costs and to run campaigns to attract more people. Importantly, what is significant about these programs is that they are place-based and encourage local communities to come up with their own solutions.

Last month, I announced that \$2.9 million would be provided to three providers—One Tree Community Services, Child Australia and Regional Early Education Development—to allow them to assist in the development of supports for education services in particular regional locations. In the case of Albany, Child Australia received funding for the early childhood education and care support empowering regional services WA coordinated support model program. The member will be happy to know that as part of its program, it will provide supports for services in the great southern, parts of Peel and the south west and wheatbelt regions. REED has also received support through that \$2.9 million investment to deliver its successful REED cluster model to the goldfields, Esperance, the great southern and south west region. Through that investment in those organisations and their models, early childhood education services in Albany will be supported to come up with place-based solutions—things like face-to-face and online training, recruitment, resourcing, mentoring, the development of networks and planning.

When I have gone around the state, it is obvious that in many towns—some of which were mentioned by the member for Albany—many service providers are community-based. They are small and do not have the economies of scale to do some of those things around developing training and recruitment strategies, compliance and other work. That is why providing this investment to services such as REED, One Tree Community Services Inc and Child Australia will allow them to support small service providers so that they can get on with the job they do best—that is, providing quality education programs for young children.

I also very quickly highlight an investment that the Cook Labor government has made over a significant period around training and fee-free TAFE training for a variety of sectors, with a particular focus on the childcare sector. I highlight the difference that it is making. All the service providers I have talked to around the state say that it is making a significant difference in being able to attract and retain people in the sector. In 2021, a diploma of early childhood education and care cost \$10 000; now it is free. A certificate III in early childhood education and care used to cost \$2 500; now it is free. We know through enrolments that those kinds of programs are making a difference and continue to support services in towns like Albany to ensure that they can attract and retain needed staff.

I congratulate the member for Albany for the way that she advocates for her community, particularly in the way that she has highlighted the importance of early childhood education services in her town. We know the benefits for children and that those services are the beating heart of a town. We rely on them so that women can get back into the workforce and contribute to the local economy.

LIVE EXPORT — SHEEP INDUSTRY*Grievance*

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [10.02 am]: I thank the Minister for Regional Development for taking my grievance today about the live sheep export industry. Unlike the criticism from the Minister for Planning about people's preparation, I can ensure the minister that I have lived and breathed the sheep industry all my life and I have certainly lived and breathed the grief that has come about from the federal government's ban on the live sheep export industry.

It has been over a year since my last grievance on live export, and I want to reflect on what the Premier and Minister for Agriculture and Food actually achieved in their supposed resistance during the last year, having overseen the banning of the industry, the massive grief in our regional communities and the \$107 million federal transition package, of which the federal government appears to be paying itself somewhere in the order of \$40 million. I go back to my previous grievance from March 2023, just over a year ago, when I stated —

... that the Premier act immediately to support the live export sheep industry in Western Australia by openly rejecting federal Labor's policy to phase out live sheep exports.

At the time, Mark McGowan was the Premier. He said that he had consistently proved the government's support in this place and the other place several times, but he acknowledged that changes had been made in the live export industry. We asked for an actual demonstration of his support by rejecting the proposed ban publicly and vocally. On 7 March, an article in the ABC online news stated —

The federal government is pushing ahead with its plan to ban live sheep exports, despite fierce resistance from industry and the WA Labor government.

I said that I was yet to see the fierce resistance from the WA Labor government and that I hoped we would see it soon. Then the current Minister for Agriculture and Food in the other house came out in support of the industry. On 14 February, in *Hansard*, she stated —

The McGowan government supports the continuation of the live sheep export industry.

But by March, she quickly faded in her resolve and backed down under the pressure from the Albanese government, and perhaps even from the Premier. As reported by the ABC on 3 March 2023, the minister's stance was that the "farmers need to face a future without live sheep exports". That is a bit of a rundown of my previous grievance.

We have seen two rallies over the last couple of months. A rally in Muchea had a convoy of 3 000 farmers and supply chain people going to Perth, but there was no sign of any Labor Party members or the minister, although a written statement was read out on the back of the truck by Holly from the Livestock Collective saying that the minister could not be there on that day, even though it was only 35 kilometres from Perth, and that she would be going to Canberra in the months ahead. When farmers, livestock agents, freight companies and supporters of regional communities come together in numbers such those which we saw in the metro area and at Muresk, it is a sign that people are digging their heels in and that the governments that are there to represent them are failing in their basic duty to protect them and their livelihoods.

I spoke yesterday about the many rallies and strikes that we have seen pop up during this term of government, most recently from our farmers and people in the live sheep industry. We have a federal minister who banned the industry, snuck into Perth under the cover of darkness and did not even hold a face-to-face meeting with stakeholders; he had a Teams meeting. He then held a press conference and flew back the next morning. It was a 24-hour trip to finish off an industry in Western Australia.

As the minister knows, I have asked many valid questions about this to the Premier. As an example, I asked a question on 20 February this year about the Prime Minister's visit to Perth and whether the Premier had raised the question about the plan to phase-out live exports. The response I received did not even mention live exports. The Premier said it was "federal policy matters" and it was therefore not his problem. He went on to talk about anything besides live exports.

I recently put in a submission to the federal committee that came here with many of the highlights. It talked about how 97 per cent of the live export trade is from Western Australia, the \$700 million wool industry in WA, and the many concerns I have. As I said, the Cook Labor government has been derelict in its duty. As far as I am concerned, the agriculture minister has not achieved anything to improve the scenario for our industry. What will the agriculture minister and Premier do over the next few months? As I said, the ag minister did not turn up to support our farmers in the rallies at either Muchea or Muresk. A statement was read out. Is it too little, too late or can the minister enlighten me on anything that the Premier and agriculture minister have achieved over the last year for our live sheep export industry? What do they expect to achieve in the year ahead?

MR D.T. PUNCH (Bunbury — Minister for Regional Development) [10.09 am]: I thank the member for his grievance. In answer to his question, our government will always back Western Australian farmers and will continue to do what is right for WA into the future. From the start, the Western Australian government has been very clear

and consistent in its support for maintaining the live export trade and I have heard that continuously in answer to the many questions that the member has asked in this place. On 13 July 2023, the Minister for Agriculture and Food, Hon Jackie Jarvis, even stood next to Senator Murray Watt and publicly reiterated that the Cook government does not support the federal government's decision. Since then, the Minister for Agriculture and Food has had numerous meetings with industry and her federal counterpart to communicate our position. We have also provided a strong submission to the live export panel and most recently to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Agriculture at Muresk. I will read that submission into *Hansard*. It is to the chair of the House of Representatives' Standing Committee on Agriculture, Ms Meryl Swanson, MP. It states —

The passage of The Export Control Amendment (Ending Live Sheep Exports by Sea) Bill 2024 (the Bill) will have a significant economic and social impact on Western Australia ...

The position of the WA Government has been consistent from the start—the phase out of live export will negatively impact Western Australian regional communities and the livelihoods of many. We do not support it.

As noted by the Independent Panel consulting on the phase out of live sheep exports by sea ... WA has been Australia's only source of live sheep exports by sea since 2019–20. The WA Government believes current animal welfare measures, including the northern summer live export ban, are sufficient and we continue to support this important export industry.

We do not support the passage of the Bill. If the Bill is to proceed there must be adequate assistance provided to support a sustained transition process for the WA sheep industry. Because WA is effectively isolated from the large eastern state's sheep market, the live export market has played a vital role in the sustainability of the WA sheep industry for nearly 50 years. The financial impacts of ending the trade of live sheep by sea were considered by the Panel who noted in their report that "*early actions by government will be required to moderate the economic and social consequences of the cessation*".

We note that the Bill contains provisions for the Commonwealth to provide grants of financial assistance to assist with preparing for, adapting, or responding to the phasing out of the export of live sheep by sea and makes specific mention of:

- a) assisting sheep producers and sheep supply chain businesses to take up interstate or international market opportunities.
- b) assisting businesses to develop greater sheep processing capacity.
- c) enhancing demand in interstate or international markets for Australian sheep products.
- d) diversifying markets for Australian agriculture and food in the Middle East and North African region.

Whilst recognising the importance of developing new and diversified markets for boxed sheep meat, the immediate priority must be to increase meat processing capacity in WA and support on-farm investment in feedlots and other infrastructure that increases livestock holding capacity whilst awaiting onshore processing.

Several WA abattoirs have expansion plans in place to increase processing and cold storage capacity in the future, however these plans will need to be fast tracked to meet the end date of May 2028 as contained in the bill.

Significant Commonwealth capital investment is required to bolster planned private investment to increase domestic processing capacity and we are disappointed that there is a limited funding pool to provide grants of financial assistance as outlined in the Bill.

Transport routes will also be impacted as all WA abattoirs that process sheep are in regional locations. A transition to more onshore processing will see increased truck movements across regional WA as sheep are moved from farm, to feedlot, to processor. This is a fundamental change from moving large numbers of sheep to a centralised metropolitan port. There will be an ... need to provide common-use truck wash down and driver rest facilities in strategic locations in regional WA. Without this investment livestock transporters will be forced to travel hundreds of extra kilometres on each trip to access truck wash down facilities ...

Of the \$107 million support package announced in the recent Federal Budget, only \$64.6 million has been allocated to actual on-the-ground support for WA farmers, feedlots, transporters, meat processors and communities.

This \$64.6 million allocation must be divided amongst a broad range of programs, as outlined in the recent budget announcement ...

It goes on —

Based on what limited information we have been given it is difficult to see how much actual funding support will be available to increase the onshore sheep holding, transporting and processing capacity in WA.

Industry has also identified the need for increased air freight options to get chilled sheep meat products to overseas markets quickly, in addition to the usual frozen products shipped by sea. Air freight of agricultural produce from WA into international markets is only financially viable in the cargo hold of a passenger plane. Chilled meat products already compete for cargo space with other high value products like ... lobster and avocados on flights out of Perth.

In the interests of time, I go to the summary —

There is little point in allocating ... \$27 million in building new international markets if the WA sheep industry cannot be supported to build the infrastructure it needs to supply those markets or has limited freight options to get to those markets.

We urge the Standing Committee on Agriculture to consider how Division 6A (Assistance in relation to the phasing out of the export of live sheep by sea) of the Bill can be implemented on the currently proposed funding model.

We will always do what's right by WA and continue to advocate for a better deal for our hardworking farmers.

That is a very clear statement of this government's support for the live sheep trade as it currently stands, and the importance of supporting our farmers with the infrastructure to manage a transition if this bill goes through properly and effectively. Minister Jarvis stands up for WA. She is there all the time. She is not shouting on the streets; she is trying to work to get a better deal for WA farmers and will continue to do so in the future.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW APPLICATION BILL 2024

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by **Ms S.E. Winton (Minister for Early Childhood Education)**, and read a first time. Explanatory memorandum presented by the minister.

Second Reading

MS S.E. WINTON (Wanneroo — Minister for Early Childhood Education) [10.17 am]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

Quality early childhood education and care plays a vital role in supporting the learning and development of Australian children in their early years and helps build the foundation for better health, education and employment outcomes in later life. It plays a vital role in supporting families by facilitating their participation in the labour market as well as in training opportunities, access to study, volunteering time to the community, and managing personal and family circumstances when they arise.

In Australia, over 1.4 million children benefit from early childhood education and care services. Of that number, over 126 000 children in Western Australia attend an approved service, including many in regional communities. In 2009, all states and territories agreed to develop a national quality framework, known as the NQF, to ensure a largely uniform regulation of early childhood education and care services. Commencing in 2012, this framework is built around objectives and principles that include ensuring the safety, health and wellbeing of children and improving educational and developmental outcomes; promoting continuous improvement in service provision together with reducing regulatory and administrative burden; the best interests of the child being paramount; and principles of equity, inclusion and diversity with support for the roles of parents and families.

The national quality framework regulates education and care services that are provided to children on a regular basis, including long-day care services, family day care services and outside school hours care services. The NQF consists of the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations and the National Quality Standard. All jurisdictions apply the Education and Care Services National Law, enacted by the Victorian Parliament and adopted by participating jurisdictions. Western Australia has been adopting the national law through the enactment of corresponding legislation to maintain national consistency of the NQF, which means it is implemented later than in other jurisdictions.

In this context, the Education and Care Services National Law Application Bill 2024 will apply the Education and Care Services National Law as a law of Western Australia and repeal WA's current corresponding Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012 and regulations made under that act. Applying the national law in this way will support ongoing improvement in the sector by continuing the operation in WA of the NQF in a way that is more nationally consistent and supports more timely application of future amendments.

I will now expand upon the key aspects of the bill. Part 2 of the bill includes an applied law mechanism. This will provide for the application of amendments to the national law and national regulations in WA. The applied law mechanism to apply the national law will preserve the sovereignty of the Western Australian Parliament and is consistent with the recommendations of the Legislative Council's Standing Committee on Uniform Legislation and Statutes Review for other national schemes operating in WA, such as the Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act 2022, the Fair Trading Amendment Act 2022 and the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Application Act 2024.

The sovereignty of the WA Parliament will be maintained as the bill provides for the tabling of amendments to the national law and national regulations and for either house of Parliament to disallow those amendments following consideration by the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation.

The bill will apply the national law, with modifications, as a law of WA as it is in force on 20 June 2024. This will bring WA into alignment with the other jurisdictions. The bill provides for an amending act, being a Victorian act, that subsequently amends the national law to be laid before each house of Parliament within 18 days after the day on which the amending act receives royal assent in Victoria. An amending act will not become a law in WA until there is consideration by the Parliament and, if necessary, the amending act will be disallowed.

The bill also deals with the application of the national regulations and will apply them with modifications as in force on commencement day. As with an amending act, the bill provides a mechanism for the tabling and disallowance of amending regulations. Moving from a corresponding to an applied law mechanism means that amendments to the national law in Victorian acts prior to 20 June 2024 will apply in WA. These acts are the Victorian Regulatory Legislation Amendment (Reform) Act 2022, the Victorian Early Childhood Legislation Amendment Act 2022 and the Victorian Early Childhood Legislation Amendment (Premises Approval in Principle) Act 2023. Repositioning WA to an applied law framework will reduce the delay between the time that any future amendments to the early childhood education and care national legislation applies in all other jurisdictions and the time that those amendments will apply in WA, ensuring the ongoing safety and wellbeing of children in early childhood education and care settings.

This bill provides an important step towards greater alignment with all other jurisdictions, enhancing the operation of the NQF in WA to provide greater certainty and support for the sector, the regulatory authority and the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority in the continued delivery of high-quality early childhood education and care services.

A review of the bill is to be carried out as soon as practicable after five years to report back to each house of Parliament as an assessment of the changes made by the bill.

Part 3 of the bill will modify the national law as it is to apply in Western Australia to preserve the important and established WA-specific differences in the NQF legislation. The NQF is largely uniform, while still recognising individual jurisdictional differences and the need for local provisions tailored to suit the individual circumstances of one or several jurisdictions, with every effort made to minimise these incidences. Many of the modifications in part 3 replicate current provisions in WA's corresponding legislation, which are subject to parliamentary scrutiny and which are sought to be retained. For example, these modifications will provide for the continued integration of the national law with WA's School Education Act 1999 to enable the delivery of preschool, known as kindergarten in WA, as a program in WA; maintain higher penalties than those in any other jurisdiction for failing to ensure that a child leaves a service in one of the prescribed ways, such as into the care of a parent; include WA's power to take disciplinary action against a person linked to a WA service; include reference to family members in addition to parents in respect of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parenting practices; and include a range of small amendments that will clarify and broaden regulatory powers and, in combination, enhance the WA regulatory authority's administrative and enforcement capability under the NQF.

Uniquely, the bill provides a mechanism to address circumstances in which a provision of an amending act will effect a modification to the national law contained in part 3. If this causes a modification to the national law to not have effect, a regulation may be made as a temporary measure to ensure that the modification to the national law in part 3 will continue to apply. Any such regulation would be for no longer than 12 months after it commenced, so an amendment bill could be drafted and introduced for consideration by the WA Parliament.

Part 4 of the bill provides for the making of regulations by the Governor for matters required or convenient for giving effect to the bill. This includes modifying the national regulations for the purpose of applying them in WA. The current WA regulations include provisions that are unique to WA and therefore not included in the national regulations, such as our swimming pool regulations, which are specific to family day care services and provide a safer environment for WA children. Modifications will be made to preserve WA's established differences from the national regulations.

Part 5 of the bill will repeal the Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012 and subsidiary legislation. It sets out transitional provisions to facilitate the change from the WA corresponding legislation, the Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012 and its subsidiary legislation, to the Education and Care Services National Law application legislation and to preserve existing rights and obligations and administrative processes and proceedings under the new law. For example, the transitional provisions will ensure that existing service approvals continue as if granted under the applied national law. There will also be a limited power to make transitional regulations during the first two years after commencement to deal with any unforeseen matters that may arise.

The national law that will be applied by the bill incorporates amendments approved by the national education ministers and made to the national law, but not yet to the WA law, following the review of the national quality framework that commenced in 2019. The 2019 review sought to refine and modernise the NQF, whilst also considering its ongoing effectiveness and sustainability in light of the evolution of the early childhood education and care sector.

The key changes made to the national law in 2022 and 2023 to give effect to these decisions that will come into effect when the national law is applied in WA include strengthening the safety of children in early childhood education and care services by addressing gaps between the national principles for child-safe organisations and the national quality framework and requiring that all family day care coordinators complete child protection training prior to commencing employment.

It will improve safety and oversight in family day care services by enabling improved access for regulatory authorities to family day care residential-level information on a service's family day care register, which will enable risk-based proactive approaches to regulation and assist in the identification of family day care educators during emergency situations. It will improve oversight and compliance tools for regulatory authorities through minor changes to the process for transfer of services between approved providers; provide that cancellation or refusal of provider approval under the commonwealth Family Assistance Law for lack of fitness and propriety is to be a specific ground for cancellation or refusal of a provider approval under the national law; and confirm that the regulatory authority may administer questions to an applicant for provider approval to assess their fitness and propriety and to undertake an assessment of their knowledge of the NQF.

This bill will update the maximum penalties for offences throughout the national law by increasing those penalties by 14.9 per cent to keep up with the cumulative increase in the consumer price index since the NQF began in 2012; reduce the burden for early childhood education and care services by aligning the definition of a "person with management or control of a service" with the Family Assistance Law definition of a "person with management or control of a provider", to better capture persons exercising significant influence over the operation of a service; and make minor and technical amendments to clarify existing provisions, such as the calculation of family day care coordinator-to-educator ratios.

This bill will give effect to the shared commitment to the continued and enhanced operation of the national quality framework, ensuring that children, families and the early childhood education and care sector that supports them continue to benefit from this important national framework.

I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr P.J. Rundle (Deputy Leader of the Opposition)**.

CONTROL OF VEHICLES (OFF-ROAD AREAS) AMENDMENT BILL 2024

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by **Ms H.M. Beazley (Minister for Local Government)**, and read a first time.

Explanatory memorandum presented by the minister.

Second Reading

MS H.M. BEAZLEY (Victoria Park — Minister for Local Government) [10.32 am]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Control of Vehicles (Off-road Areas) Amendment Bill 2024. This bill delivers on the Cook Government's commitment to support appropriate recreational off-road vehicle riding in Western Australia. Off-road vehicles, known commonly as ORVs, can include quad bikes, all-terrain vehicles and non-road licensed trailbikes. Riding ORVs is an increasingly popular recreational activity, and the Cook government recognises the critical importance of providing areas for riders to participate safely and legally. The Cook government also recognises the immense importance of ORV areas as significant tourist attractions.

This bill will deliver three main reforms to the Control of Vehicles (Off-road Vehicles) Act 1978. Firstly, the bill will remove the requirement for a statutory declaration to be made when registering or renewing the registration of an off-road vehicle, which will enable transactions to be completed online. As members may know, off-road vehicle registration fees are collected into a special purpose account established under the ORV act. Local governments can then seek access to those funds to support the establishment and operation of ORV areas. An ORV must be registered to be ridden in an ORV area.

Funds from the ORV account have recently supported upgrade works at the Pinjar, York, Ledge Point and Lancelin ORV areas. At present, the requirement for a statutory declaration means that all registrations and annual renewals must be paper based, and requires the ORV owner to attend a Department of Transport licensing centre. As registrations must be renewed annually, this process is a real impediment to ensuring that ORVs are registered. This cumbersome process has also impeded the collection of revenue into the ORV account. To date, less than \$125 000 in registration fees has been collected annually, and it is estimated that only a small proportion of eligible ORVs are currently registered.

Secondly, the bill will introduce the option of registration stickers to be affixed to ORVs as an alternative to registration plates. This option responds to requests from ORV users and advocacy groups.

Thirdly, the bill will increase penalties for existing offences, such as riding an ORV in a prohibited area, riding dangerously or riding an unregistered vehicle in an ORV area. The existing penalties within the ORV act have

remained largely unchanged since 1978 and have fallen behind comparable penalties under the Road Traffic Act 1974 and Road Traffic Code. The current maximum for a court-imposed penalty is \$1 000. There is a maximum of \$100 for offences against the regulations, and a \$50 maximum for infringement penalties. This bill will increase all court-imposed penalties to a maximum of \$5 000, up from the current \$1 000. The maximum penalties for offences under regulations and local laws will also increase, from \$50 to \$500. The increased penalties are intended to deter illegal and reckless riding, which can pose significant safety risks and cause serious damage to our natural environment.

I understand that these are the most significant reforms to the act since it was first enacted back in 1978. This bill is another step in the Cook government's ongoing work to support safe and legal ORV riding. For instance, the Cook government recently secured the future of the popular Pinjar ORV area as part of the decision to end pine harvesting in the Gngangara state forest, which will preserve the roosting habitat of the endangered black cockatoo and support the continued recreational use of the area. Work to support other ORV areas and potentially establish new ORV areas remains ongoing. This bill reflects the hard work and advocacy of many dedicated people. I recognise and thank the members of the Off-Road Vehicles Advisory Committee and acknowledge the Recreational Trailbike Riders Association of WA for its advocacy and work to support off-road riding in Western Australia. I also recognise the proactive work of local governments such as the Shire of York that have taken a proactive role in the development and maintenance of ORV areas.

I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr P.J. Rundle (Deputy Leader of the Opposition)**.

CONSERVATION AND LAND MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2024

Second Reading

Resumed from 21 February.

MRS L.M. O'MALLEY (Bicton) [10.38 am]: I rise to add my contribution to the second reading debate on the Conservation and Land Management Amendment Bill 2024. In doing so, I first acknowledge the important foundational work of the Forest Products Amendment Bill 2021, which I had the privilege of speaking in support of when that bill was debated back in 2022. Both these related bills are a continuation of the Cook Labor government's commitment to protect and preserve our precious native forests now and into the future. Thoughtful and specialised management is vital to this. To best achieve the desired protection and preservation outcomes, consequential amendments to the Conservation and Land Management Act are necessary. The Conservation and Land Management Amendment Bill 2024 proposes that amendments be made to the Conservation and Land Management Act 1984—the CALM act—to support the government's native forest policy to protect Western Australia's south west native forest.

By way of background, state forest and timber reserves are reserved for multiple purposes, including conservation, recreation and water catchment protection. The amendments proposed will repeal the provision in section 55(1a) that identifies "timber production on a sustained yield basis" as a purpose for which native state forest and timber reserves can be reserved. A further amendment is proposed to limit the regulation-making power in section 55(1a) so that timber production purposes cannot be prescribed in the Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002. This limitation, however, will still enable forest management activities that improve forest health and clearing for approved mining operations and certain types of infrastructure to proceed. An administrative amendment is also proposed to schedule 1 of the CALM act to enable the Conservation and Parks Commission, a body established to advise the Minister for Environment on the conservation of the state and its management, to convene meetings using instantaneous electronic communication—remote meetings, in other words—rather than in person.

Western Australia's south west native forests are important for biodiversity, conservation, recreation, tourism, industry, water supply and cultural heritage. Forests that are well managed support all these uses and features. The ever-increasing impacts of climate change, the importance of maintaining biodiversity and forest health, the need for carbon capture and storage and declining timber yields mean that it is essential that we act now to protect WA's forests. We all know that protecting the forests is critical in the fight against climate change. WA's south west native forests store approximately 600 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent to roughly 116 years' worth of annual emissions for every car in Western Australia. This amendment bill will facilitate their appropriate management and protection.

This amendment bill will build on the work of the Cook Labor government to protect our south west native forests, including the ending by the government of commercial-scale timber harvesting in native forests. We are undertaking a range of actions that will promote greater resilience of our south west native forests as well as support conservation, protect cultural values and boost tourism. The amendment bill will facilitate the appropriate management and protection of our south west native forests. The Cook Labor government is committed to adding more than 400 000 hectares of karri, jarrah and wandoo forests to nature reserves, national parks and conservation parks. This means nearly two million hectares of native forest will be protected for future generations. The management activities that can be undertaken in state forests and timber reserves are those that promote healthy

forests that are more resilient to climate change. The only timber that can be taken from our native forest will be salvaged from forest management activities that improve forest health and clearing for approved mining operations and certain types of infrastructure. Native timber sourced from these activities will still be available for products such as high-value furniture, joinery, artisanal products and firewood. By transitioning more of the forestry industry to sustainable timber products such as softwood, we are investing in WA's future and supporting the construction and forestry industries and our regional communities.

In relation to this last point, I would like to take a moment to highlight a local long-term sustainable timber company called Wesbeam, with which I am familiar through Bicton businessman and Wesbeam deputy chair Alex Bajada. The story of Wesbeam is both impressive and inspiring, with innovation a core feature. Softwood timber is integral to the products this proudly WA-owned and operated business produces. In 1928, Thomas Cullity, the son of Irish immigrants, started Cullity Timbers in Perth, Western Australia. It was the beginning of an association between the Cullity name and the timber industry that endures to this day. The Cullity family and a team of investors and industry experts formed Wesbeam in 2001. Three years and \$115 million later, the first billet of Wesbeam laminated veneer lumber rolled off the production line. Today, Wesbeam is an Australian-owned unlisted public company and its board and senior management have over 70 years of experience in the manufacture and sale of timber and wood panel products.

What is it about laminated wood products, specifically laminated veneer lumber, that is so important and so relevant to this debate today? Let us start with the basics. Laminating is a process of gluing things together. The process typically refers to plastics or other materials laminated to plywood, solid wood or composites. Laminated veneer lumber—LVL—is an engineered wood construction product. LVL is made of multiple veneer sheets and assembled with waterproof adhesives. It is used in headers, beams, rim boards, truck bed decking, roadway signposts, trusses and many other applications. LVL is an innovation for the construction field. It is a versatile engineered product that combines the best of modern process technology with the aesthetic beauty of natural wood. The main raw material used to produce LVL is wood veneer of various grades. LVL has been used structurally for several years in Northern America and many European countries.

Some of the benefits of using wood veneers include that it is more affordable than hardwood. Wood veneers offer a much more affordable option than hardwood for furniture. Think of Brazilian rosewood, for instance, which is a rare and very expensive species of wood. If we want to purchase a bed made of Brazilian rosewood, we will need to shell out a hefty amount. On the contrary, if the same bed is made from another wood and has a layer of Brazilian rosewood veneer, it will have the same appearance but the overall cost will be much less.

There is a variety of unique choices. Every wood veneer sheet is unique in its design as it is derived from a specific tree. Even in the same tree, there are different layers with unique patterns. The choice in wood veneers, therefore, is virtually endless. Moreover, unlike laminates, veneers can be customised with polish and varnish, which enhance the wood veneer texture to give a new look to furniture. It has enhanced strength and durability. Veneer sheets not only lend elegance to furniture items, but also enhance their durability. Unsurfaced fibre boards, such as HDF and MDF, are prone to damage if exposed to water, but that changes when they are fortified with veneer sheets. Wood veneer sheets, therefore, protect our furniture from damage and considerably increase its durability.

It has luxurious appeal. Whether we talk about residential or commercial spaces, decor is an important aspect that holds high significance for most property owners. No matter the application, the wood veneers for homes and commercial spaces accentuate the beauty of living spaces, giving them a luxurious appeal. It is eco-friendly. This is a really important point. Wood veneers help protect the environment in that many veneers are manufactured from a single log, whereas more wood is needed to make conventional hardwood furniture. Also, wood veneer sheets can be easily recycled; they can be crushed and transformed into wood fibres that can be utilised for making particle boards such as MDF.

At present, WA business Wesbeam is the only manufacturer of LVL in Australia. Wesbeam and many other wood product-related businesses rely on continuity of supply. Wesbeam is a great example of why this bill and conservation and land management more generally are so important for our environment, a sustainable future and local jobs.

In conclusion, the Conservation and Land Management Bill 2024 will support the government's native forest policy to protect Western Australia's south west native forests by ensuring that the unique biodiversity of the south west native forests is preserved and protected so that we can enjoy the beauty of these exceptional natural areas now and for many generations to come. Implementation of the government's native forest policy through the *Forest management plan 2024–2033* was the subject of extensive engagement, with key stakeholders, the community and industry involved. The bill will facilitate the appropriate management and protection of our south west native forests, and I commend it to the house.

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [10.49 am]: I rise to speak on the Conservation and Land Management Amendment Bill 2024 as the lead speaker for the opposition. The opposition will oppose this bill. It is probably one of the most disappointing bills I have seen in my seven years in Parliament. It goes without saying that some of the policy decisions of this government are progressing towards wrecking our regional communities. It plunders our regional communities without a conscience, and here we go again.

The purpose of the Conservation and Land Management Amendment Bill 2024 is to amend the Conservation and Land Management Act 1984 to support the implementation of the Labor government's ill-advised shutdown of the native forest industry in Western Australia. I remember sitting here listening to former Premier Mark McGowan pulling out the policy like a rabbit out of a hat—the government was banning the sustainable timber industry and the community could not believe it. The towns of Manjimup, Pemberton and Nannup—the list goes on—could not believe it. We have seen another spate of rallies—I spoke about it yesterday—in those south west towns because the communities are outraged. This government operates by pulling the rug out from under communities, and our poor old regional communities have to go out and fight again through public rallies and must list all the reasons the government should not be doing what it is doing. However, the government presses on regardless because it has no commitment to our regional areas and their communities. I spoke about that this morning in my grievance on the live sheep export ban. I received a comprehensive response from the Minister for Regional Development; I will give him that much. Once again, this policy is based on zero scientific evidence and will deliver zero climate benefits, was announced with zero consultation with the industry and was based on zero concern for the hundreds of workers and their families who rely on the industry. We see throughout the south west the timber mills—family businesses—that have been there for over 100 years. Let us just pull the rug out from under them! Even senior federal Labor figures, the likes of Joel Fitzgibbon, have lamented that there is no rational reason to shut down native forestry.

Ms C.M. Rowe interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Belmont.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Joel Fitzgibbon is a former federal member of the Labor Party. He says there is no rational reason to shut down the native forest industry.

The Minister for Forestry, Hon Jackie Jarvis, said the goal of banning native forestry was to return the forests to the state they were in before European settlement. Really? As we know, that is an impossible task and a strange proposition, but it provides a true indication of the real ideological purposes behind this government. It is hypocritical. I draw members' attention to an article by Jack Bradshaw, a former manager of the forest management branch of the Department of Conservation and Land Management, showing the WA Labor government's preferred method of timber harvesting. It includes a picture of bauxite mining in the jarrah forest—a chequer plate pattern of forest being wiped out. I will read out this article because it is important. It states —

Having killed off the native forest timber industry by edict, the WA government is now taking the next step to cement its hypocrisy in legislation. Reece Whitby, the Minister for the Environment has recently introduced an amendment to the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984 (WA)* to “lock in this Labor government's historic decision to stop the unsustainable practice of commercial native logging”.

Specifically the Bill will:

1. *repeal the provision in section 55(1a) that allows timber production on a sustained yield basis to be a purpose for which indigenous state forest and timber reserves may be reserved.*
2. *limit the regulation-making power in section 55(1a) so that timber production cannot be prescribed in the CALM regulations.*
3. *amend section 55 to clarify that timber production does not include the removal of salvaged forest products arising from, or in anticipation of, prescribed activities or purposes.”*

So in order to “stop the unsustainable practice of commercial native logging” the government proposes to *ban sustainable timber production* from State Forest as a whole *in favour of unsustainable timber production* from State forest when it is being used for mining.

It does not add up. As Jack Bradshaw says, it is bizarre. He continues —

This comes just 8 months after the WA Minister for Forests, along with other State and Commonwealth ministers signed up to “continued sustainable management of forests”.

But timber production from salvaged forest products from mine sites is not quite what it seems. The government also has another State Agreement obliging it to supply logs to produce charcoal for silicon production. In the absence of firewood logs from the broader state forest, this means that regardless of quality, most of the salvaged timber from mine sites will be sold as firewood for domestic or industrial use.

Bauxite operations in this State has so far removed the forest and most of the soil from 30,000 ha and fragmented 90,000 ha or 17 per cent of the north-west jarrah forest ecosystem (coincidentally the same proportion as the Amazon rainforest clearing). Despite being in operation for nearly sixty years, the operation has yet to be fully assessed by the EPA. The wanton destruction of this unique forest, with only rudimentary environment oversight and totally inadequate reservation of even the remnants is unfathomable, and in the light of the recent proposals, the height of hypocrisy.

I wanted to read out that article because it sums up the conundrum the Minister for Environment has. To be honest, I was approached recently by constituents who are worried about what is happening through Quindanning and

Boddington and the like with South32 and the Alcoa bauxite mining. I spoke to the minister about this. Quite frankly, I was horrified about what is happening on the road through Quindanning to the T-junction that goes off to Boddington. It is quite a bizarre scenario. I understand the challenges the minister faces with state agreements and the conundrum of the idealistic banning of native timber forestry in a sustainable way with those communities in the south west, yet there is clear-felling of the beautiful jarrah forest in that area for bauxite mining. It is okay. We can wipe the forests out. It is not a problem if we are mining a bit of bauxite; however, we cannot touch it if we have a 100-year-old timber mill in the south west running a sustainable business. It is quite a conundrum. I think this is presenting a major challenge for our minister at the moment, because the two elements are totally disparate. I am curious about the comments the minister will make about that. As I said, this affects some of my constituents. There is dust, and there is pretty poor consultation from some companies in those bauxite mining areas. There are challenges with water for dust suppression. Water is taken from around the community when it is needed for livestock, for instance. We have just seen a long, hot summer and our farmers are facing challenges in that area and other areas of the state. It is disturbing that precious water resources are being used for dust suppression.

I heard the minister being criticised on the radio the other day by a Carnaby's black-cockatoo group about 260 hectares of banksia woodlands in which the minister had given approval for another mining operation. I sympathise with the Minister for Environment in some ways for the challenges that he is facing with the appetite for mining in Western Australia and the conservation scenario. That is why a balanced approach is needed. Former Premier Mark McGowan announced the approval out of nowhere. I will talk shortly about some of the things that the former Minister for Forestry announced from 2018 onwards to encourage the timber industry in the south west.

Bauxite operations in this state have so far removed forest and most of the soil from 30 000 hectares and fragmented 90 000 hectares, or 17 per cent, of the north-west jarrah forest ecosystem—coincidentally, the same amount as the Amazon. The forest industry in Western Australia was a sustainable industry that had been harvesting less than one per cent of the forest and it was regenerating all of it. Timber has played an incredibly important role in the development of our state. We use it for housing, floorboards, decking, joinery and beautiful furniture, the likes of which furnish this beautiful chamber. The member for Cottesloe and I have talked in weeks past about the fantastic timber from 1904 that is in this chamber. The member for Cottesloe reminded me that it has 120 years of stored carbon; that is 120 years of history. We will never see an opportunity for something like this chamber to be produced again. We might see some softwood pine, which the Forest Products Commission and the minister are looking at replanting throughout our good farming land, but that will not compare with the beautiful timber that we see here in the chamber.

Timber is also used in industrial building and processes; hardwood is required in the process of producing silicon for solar panels, for instance. Once again, under the state agreement, hardwood is needed for that process. That is another challenge. How is that going to play out in the years ahead? We need it for firewood. We see it used for heritage-listed buildings and restoration work and jetty and bridge construction. Of course, as the member who covers Esperance, I know all too well about the jetty scenario that played out over several years. We also need timber for landscaping and gardening products and nature playgrounds.

When the ban was announced, the then Minister for Climate Action, Hon Amber-Jade Sanderson, sold it as helping combat climate change. She said that, globally, deforestation is a major contributor to climate change. What happens when local hardwood is not available? It is imported. Forest and Wood Products Australia statistics show that 86 per cent of imports are coming from countries with a worse environmental index than Australia has. In 2013, Indonesia produced half of the world's illegally logged timber, despite a government moratorium on forest clearing taking effect in 2011. Since then, Indonesia has expanded its forest protection efforts, but is yet to end deforestation or illegal logging. Interpol estimated that in 2019, 15 to 30 per cent of all timber worldwide was logged illegally. Sustainability certification schemes, such as the Forestry Stewardship Council's label, offer some consolation that imported timber has been scrutinised by an independent third party. However, FSC labels themselves are subject to scrutiny. Forestry consultants experienced in the process remarked that in developing countries, where it is easy to get certified, it can be legally harvested; however, that does not guarantee it is sustainable.

It makes no sense that Labor closed down our own sustainably managed native forest industry while imports of the products we once produced are growing steeply. This policy is another example of how this government is beholden to the factions within the Labor Party and of the confused policy environment of this government. There is no cohesive plan. It is the scenario of not in my backyard. Let us close down the sustainable timber forest industry to keep voters in Fremantle and our inner-city suburbs happy. Do not worry about our regional communities—it is not in my backyard. Let us import timber from Indonesia and the Amazon rainforest. We do not care about knocking over rainforests in other countries, as long as it is not in my backyard.

It is the same as our live sheep industry. It is not in my backyard, even though we have the best practices in the world. We have improved them; we have the best practices in the world for exporting live sheep. Let us ban that and we will hand it over to Ethiopia, South Sudan and all the other African countries where animal welfare standards mean they can put the sheep on the ship and count them at the other end. That is what happens—not in my backyard.

If this Labor government and the federal Labor government were actually worried about animal welfare, they might think about the welfare standards for animals exported from Africa. They do not care about animal welfare at all; this is just a not-in-my-backyard scenario. It is exactly the same with the timber industry. Let us cut it out. Let us keep the Fremantle voters happy. Let us make sure the member for Fremantle gets elected next time with this green timber policy. However, we do not mind if the Indonesian rainforests get knocked over. We will import hardwoods from there.

This is the hypocrisy of this policy. As I said, there is no cohesive plan for this government. We have seen it happen over the seven years that I have been here. Let us take the Djarlma plan announced by the then Minister for Forestry, Hon Dave Kelly, in 2019. At the time he said that he was pleased to announce the launch of the Djarlma plan that would deliver an ecologically sustainable approach to transform the forestry industry and seize new opportunities for economic growth and job creation. The Djarlma plan would prioritise healthy forests and woodlands while driving innovative practices to secure the industry into the future. The wood encouragement policy highlighted the benefits of building with wood, which is natural, renewable and stores carbon, making it one of the best tools we had for fighting climate change. An increase in the use of locally grown wood would support Western Australia's vibrant timber industry, which at the time employed more than 6 000 people and generated \$1.4 billion for the economy. The plan identified opportunities to secure investment and foster innovation in the forestry sector.

Then, not quite six months later in December 2019, Minister Kelly proudly announced that two south west mills had been purchased by a Queensland miller. He said that the company had identified WA as a growth opportunity given the sustainability credentials of the WA native forestry industry, and that it planned to reopen the Manjimup processing centre, which was closed in 2016, and focus on value-adding timber through secondary processing. The company would also invest \$1.5 million in a finger jointing machine to process high-value products such as furniture, long-length flooring and decking. The change of ownership would provide investment and employment certainty, and the potential to create local jobs in the south west region. At the time, the native forestry industry injected \$220 million into the Western Australian economy each year and supported more than 800 jobs in the forestry industry. It was said that that investment would be another step towards native forestry's transformation into a resilient, future industry that could deal with the challenges of utilising smaller logs from regrowth forests.

The McGowan government saw Parkside's investment as a step forward in maintaining a strong forestry industry that would support WA jobs, while still protecting the environmental values of our beautiful native forests. The native forestry sector was said to be an important employer and economic contributor that supplied our community with sustainable, renewable building materials and other timber products. The purchase followed the release of the government's Djarlma plan that set out the strategic direction for the future of the Western Australian forestry industry to support healthy forests and WA jobs.

Then, lo and behold, not quite two years later after encouraging industry and investment, former Premier McGowan announced that his government would be shutting down the industry. You would not believe it unless you had been actually sitting in this chamber, like the member for Cottesloe and I were at the time. You would not believe what we have seen over the last seven years. Minister Kelly had been spouting about how important the industry was and encouraging the likes of Parkside Timber to come over here to Manjimup and spend something in the order of \$50 million to set up that industry in 2019, then, lo and behold, this government, with absolutely no consultation—no doubt a few union meetings and taking into account the importance of its inner-city voters—just shut down those mills. You would not believe it if you had not seen it! The communities of Manjimup, Nannup and Pemberton have been left high and dry. As I said, this is the “not in my backyard” scenario—“We don't mind if we destroy regional communities.” As I have said many times, the member for Warren–Blackwood is out there trying to patch up things by providing those transition packages that are not worth the paper they are written on. This Labor government has sacrificed the member for Warren–Blackwood in order to seek out inner-city votes, which is what the federal Labor government has done in the live sheep export scenario.

To satisfy activists intent on shutting down sustainable industries with the world's best assurances, compliance and conditions, we are concurrently shooting ourselves in the foot. In worsening global conditions, we have seen the paltry transition packages that have been quite offensive, quite frankly, Acting Speaker. I can pick out a few winners, but I will certainly be asking the minister what he thinks about the effectiveness of those transition packages because the reports that we are getting out of the south west are not good.

It is no doubt similar to the live export package of \$107 million provided by the federal government that said, “Look at that. That's a great package. By the way, \$40 million of it is going to our internal government departments.” That will leave only \$64 million to spread through the state for our farmers and industries. The transition package is offensive and our small businesses in the south west have been forced out of business. The whole process of managing the so-called transition was a complete failure by this government. Businesses were told that timber contracts would continue through until the policy came into effect, but that did not happen. Instead, halfway through last year, the industry was advised that the Forest Products Commission was not planning to issue any timber contracts after 1 January 2024 for the foreseeable future. However, assistance was provided by the government for FPC to get through this period. Minister Don Punch indicated that \$11 million would be provided to help cover FPC's

fixed costs and \$24 million would be provided to help it with the costs of ecological thinning. The government does not have a problem with looking after its own department, but it does not worry about those poor old small businesses out there that have been messed up.

When we go through some of the budget figures in the *Economic and fiscal outlook*, they include —

... \$67.2 million ... to continue the implementation of the Forest Management Plan 2024–2033 ... which came into effect on 1 January 2024 ... the management of Western Australia’s South West national parks, conservation parks, nature reserves and State forest and timber reserves. This funding will enable Government to continue to deliver on its decision to end native logging in the South West ... and assist with improving forest resilience ... in a changing climate;

It also refers to —

New Item: **Ecological Thinning Program Account** (\$20.9 million), to establish a recurrent funding source in a new Treasurer’s Special Purpose Account in support of ecological thinning works to be conducted by the Forest Products Commission under the 2024–33 Forest Management Plan.

I am curious about this as it seems to be about the only source of timber left in this state. I would like to ask the minister or his advisers: What is the ecological thinning plan? What does it mean for our small businesses in the timber industry? Is there any opportunity to get logs out of there? What are the volumes of timber? What is the scenario with firewood? Those are the sorts of questions I will be curious to see the answers to. The government has been very scant on detail. The Forest Products Commission has been allocated \$15.9 million to offset the losses on the native forest segment of its activities to maintain a suitable cash position to meet ongoing financial obligations. I have nothing against the Forest Products Commission; I have a problem with the way our small businesses were hung out to dry. There is another budget figure for the softwood plantation investment program. The *Economic and fiscal outlook* continues —

The Commission will invest \$523,000 in 2024–25 on new equipment (packing machine for seedling dispatch and a forklift) for its nursery operations to support the Softwood Plantation Investment Program.

Those are just some of the budget items we were able to locate about the forestry scenario. I just want to give some comments from David Utting, the convenor of the Sustainable Forest Industries WA round table. He commented on this contemptuous situation with dismay. He stated —

“It is a relief that government employees will have their wages paid while they wait for the new arrangements to be settled ...

“But there is nothing for industry, or for small business; they will have to sit on their hands for six months or more and wait for the government to make up its mind ...

“How are these businesses expected to stay afloat with no resource?”

The Minister for Forestry Jackie Jarvis has repeatedly promised that there would be a continuity of supply of wood from mine site clearing and from ecological thinning, but the budget hearing provides a different story. The disdain for small business is palpable, as once again no information has been provided to industry.

“It is a clear tactic to force businesses out of the sector ...

“It’s not only business that will suffer—products to consumers will become scarce.

“I am very concerned about people who rely on firewood for heating as it looks like next year will be worse than this year, if that’s possible.”

As I said, I am curious about the firewood situation. I look at little communities like Donnelly River Village. I do not know whether the minister has been there at all, but it is a nice little village. I think it is a timeshare with something in the order of 36 cottages. It is its own little community. There are owners who rent out the cottages throughout the year. As I understand it, the only heating for all of those little cottages—it was an old timber milling village—is through firewood. They have to go out and purchase that as some sort of strata community amongst all the owners. They have to purchase that firewood for the likes of those 36-odd cottages and they need that right through the winter. I am very curious about this state government’s plan for firewood. As I said, I have not seen much come out about that or about ecological thinning, what that is going to provide for our furniture makers and how that is going to work for the silicon processes that require hardwood.

As we know, it has only been three to five degrees in Perth over the last couple of nights. I do not know how those communities in the south west are getting on. That is another question that needs to be asked. As a result of this government’s policy, firewood will become scarce. It is unfortunate because it is a reasonably effective form of heating. Many of our elderly population also use that form of heating. Of course, another outcome of the government’s policy will be the increased cost of fire suppression for the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions. That has certainly not been fully realised. More significantly, extra capacity will be required by that agency to do its job. That is certainly a challenge. We have some very thick forest out there. That will just be another challenge for DBCA to deal with in times to come.

In summary, I will return to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's fourth assessment report. It states —

In the long term, a sustainable forest management strategy aimed at maintaining or increasing forest carbon stocks, while producing an annual sustained yield of timber, fibre or energy from the forest, will generate the largest sustained mitigation benefit.

It is an unfortunate state of affairs that this Labor government is governed by ideology and not common sense. As I said, this government panders to the unions and its inner-city voters, not our regional communities. I certainly cannot understate the challenges that the Minister for Environment is facing. On one hand, the background activities of the unions and the Labor Party are forcing his hand. There is an irony in former Minister Dave Kelly talking about how great our forests are and about bringing in investment and Parkside Forestry from Queensland. Did he know what was going on in the background? I have no idea. Less than two years later, the former Premier stood up and cut the industry off at the knees.

In about three minutes the other night, I wrote a list about this bill and the issues and challenges the government is up against by finishing off this industry. By the way, there is clear felling of jarrah forests for bauxite mining. I am quite worried about it and the impacts on the surrounding communities. As I said, landholders have said to me that the consultation is basically, "Come to the consultation. You're allowed to ask one question. If you're worried about dust, water sources or whatever else, sorry. You can ask one question and then you can walk away from there." I can understand why people in those communities are upset. For argument's sake, I urge the minister to go for a drive up that road from Quindanning to the T-junction that goes to Boddington. The landscape has changed dramatically in the last 12 months. It is quite a worry for me. I wrote these elements down. There are water catchments that may be impacted by those clearing activities. This is for metropolitan people as well. There are water catchments near those dams. There are question marks over the environmental situation there. As I said, there is the firewood state agreement for silicon production. There is the permission to clear 260 hectares of the banksia woodland north of Perth. There are communities in Manjimup, Nannup and Pemberton. I have mentioned Parkside Forestry. Of course, we then have the \$350-odd million package for the softwood plantations. There is uproar from communities in my electorate such as Darkan. I know that at least three farms there have been bought. Good farmland is being sacrificed to these plantations. Once again, our farming land is under threat and they are not too happy.

The Forest Products Commission has a big chequebook from the state government, making itself feel better after this forestry scenario. It can go into an auction for farmland with its large chequebook and outcompete any farmer because it has \$350 million. That is what they are worried about. As I said, there is a real concern about ecological thinnings. What is the package? How much timber will there be for firewood, furniture, silicon production and any number of things? With a very minimal amount of ecological thinnings, I would have thought that some really good quality furniture-making companies would be under pressure. The list goes on.

It is a challenge for this minister to balance state agreements; it is time this government had a look at it. These state agreements go back to the 1960s. They say, "Let's clear this land for bauxite mining, that's not a problem. Clear the forests, but, by the way, if someone happens to live in Manjimup, Pemberton or Nannup and they have a 100-year-old timber milling business, bad luck." That is the conundrum that this minister is in. That is the conundrum that the people of the south west corner of Western Australia are seeing, and they are seeing the way this Labor government prioritises its city votes. The votes of the people of Fremantle and inner-city Perth and the unions are prioritised over the lives of our communities in the south west.

I am very disappointed with this bill. I am very disappointed with this government. After encouraging businesses to come to the south west of WA and talk about how great our forests and the sustainable industry are, it has pulled out the rug from under them less than two years later. What a disgrace. The opposition will clearly be opposing this bill.

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe) [11.31 am]: I also rise to oppose the appalling Conservation and Land Management Amendment Bill 2024, which has been brought before Parliament. One of the things I have noticed in this chamber, and I am sure all members have noticed, is that the Minister for Environment is a very eloquent speaker. He is very charming and very clever at the 15-second pithy grab.

Mr P.J. Rundle interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: No, I give credit where it is due.

His journalistic experience is being put to effective use in his role as a minister, and on this side, we look at members on the other side and think about who would be a good minister, who is a failing minister and the like. I thought that the member for Baldy would be an effective minister in this Parliament. My great disappointment is that all those great skills the minister has —

Mr R.R. Whitby: I knew there was a "but" coming!

Dr D.J. HONEY: I give praise when it is due, and give brickbats when they are due, but all those great skills are being put to a wrong purpose with this bill. In particular, one of the things a minister has to do is spread the right information, not misinformation to justify an ideology.

Ms C.M. Rowe interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I will go through that, member for Belmont, in a little detail.

Ms C.M. Rowe interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, members.

Dr D.J. HONEY: The government has stopped the logging, but it is not content to do just that; it wants to salt the field and make sure that no subsequent government can undertake logging. It is because of the changes made to the upper house voting system —

Ms C.M. Rowe: You cannot be trusted with anything on the environment.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P. Lilburne): Just one moment, member for Cottesloe. It would be a great assistance for the benefit of this discussion if you put your conversational discussion points through me, sir.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Thank you, Acting Speaker, for your guidance, but I think I am. I am certainly not inviting a continued tirade of comments from the member for Belmont.

This is a medieval tactic. The government is salting the field and it has destroyed the upper house. The upper house will be a shambles for the foreseeable future. It has 24 members up there, and 12 of them will lose their upper house positions. Our side will end up with similar numbers, and we will have a raft of ridiculous legislation, which was justified on the basis of getting rid of minor parties, and it will result in a raft of single-interest minor parties controlling the upper house. That is what will happen because of that election. As I said, it is salting the field. I am fascinated by the sheer hypocrisy of this Labor government. One thing I hear from members on that side is “follow the science”. This bill spits in the face of science. The arguments put by the government’s side are not scientific. They are emotional, untruthful assertions and I will go through that. The government has put before Parliament an utterly appalling piece of legislation. Anyone who cares about following the science knows that managed commercial logging is overwhelmingly good and positive for the environment. I will go through that in detail.

I want to comment a little on the member for Roe’s comments. He was contrasting the government’s continuing support for bauxite mining, which I support. I have some experience in that area. Many members know that I worked with Alcoa for 20 years. It follows the science. Alcoa is the only mining company in the world, as far as I know, that is on the United Nations Global 500 Roll of Honour for management of the environment. Why? It is because it has used science to ensure that it completely re-establishes the forest after mining.

Mr R.R. Whitby interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, minister.

Dr D.J. HONEY: It has had 100 per cent replacement of species in the forest. It shows that if we follow the science, we do not cause permanent harm to the forest. I understand the member for Roe’s concerns on the visual impact, for example, of mining and that the visual impact of logging in the forest is dramatic for many people, but anyone who follows the science knows that that is probably the most sustainable industry in the state of Western Australia. An enormous amount of science was paid for by the government. The old forestry department and the Forest Products Commission carried out substantial research to make sure that we had the most sustainable forestry management processes in the world, by some distance. I will go through a bit of that. As I said, anyone who cares about following the science and who cares about the overall net impact on the environment knows that the logging carried out in our forest was the most sustainable in the world and overwhelmingly good for the environment.

This legislation is not about the environment. As has been pointed out by the member for Roe, it is not about the environment. This is about a cheap grab, a cheap headline, a cheap appeal to inner-city elites in Perth—and it is in Perth. Meanwhile, it is destroying hundreds and hundreds of outstanding, quality, sustainable jobs in regional Western Australia. A few hundred or a few thousand jobs might not sound like anything to any members who care to get out to those regional towns. We have seen the government’s cavalier attitude to jobs with the pending shutdown of the nickel industry and the loss of over 3 300 jobs. It does not seem to care about it. Anyone who knows those regional communities knows that the loss of those jobs will have a devastating impact on the local economy. It means that families will leave. It means that kids will leave. It ultimately means smaller classrooms, so teachers will leave.

If the minister continues to go ahead with this, which he seems determined to do, the package that he has put in place is a mere fraction of the support package that has gone into Collie. That again was driven by political considerations and not by the government treating people with decency. As the member for Roe pointed out, it is just like federal Labor stopping sheep exports, which is an industry located in and a decision that will impact Western Australia almost exclusively. Federal government members do not care about that. They are only appealing to inner-city voters in Sydney and Melbourne. They feed them this information, but then they do something that will destroy a viable industry in Western Australia. I will have another chance to talk about that.

Let us talk about the science. There has been no old-growth logging in Western Australia for the last 20 years. The Gallop government stopped old-growth logging. There has been no old-growth logging in Western Australia for 20 years.

Ms C.M. Rowe interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Let us talk about the facts!

Ms C.M. Rowe interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P. Lilburne): Thank you, members! Member for Belmont, if you could please allow the member for Cottesloe to continue. Member for Cottesloe, if you could please direct your comments through the chair.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Thank you, Acting Speaker.

Let us talk about the facts. Logging forestry has been carried out in only one-third of the state forest. Two-thirds of the state forest has been locked up in perpetuity for no logging. This idea that somehow logging was going on throughout the whole forest is wrong. Two-thirds of the forest had no logging. As I said, in the one-third of state forest in which it was allowed, we had—“had”, because it has been stopped—the most sustainable, well-managed commercial logging in the world. The area and size of the copse that could be logged at any one time was limited to a specific area. No logging was allowed in adjacent copses. Obviously, if an area is logged, there is a dramatic impact on that area, but no logging was allowed in adjacent copses within a specified period to ensure that the logging had no major impact over an extended area. There were strict environmental assessments of the area. No logging was allowed in areas in which there were endangered flora or fauna. No logging was allowed in areas where it would impact endangered flora or fauna to ensure that we maintained critical biological diversity. Endangered plants and animals were completely protected from any logging area. An area that was logged was not touched again for 100 years. If an area was logged, it was not touched again for 100 years, members. It was not some wholesale clearing of the forest, but an outstanding management process, protecting waterways and protecting against the spread of dieback. Also—I listened to some interjections made earlier by the member for Belmont—we made sure that we were protecting recreational areas and areas of high tourism or conservation value. We made sure that we were not harming Aboriginal cultural heritage or causing environmental harm. I might also say that there was outstanding research. Members should read the research carried out by the government to improve the diversity of plants and animals in those areas. Why? It was because the diversity of the types of plants and animals that thrived in the areas that had been logged was different from the types of plants and animals that thrived in the areas of mature forest. In fact, mature forest can become quite sterile because the tree canopy dominates and the understorey is suppressed in a mature forest. That is just a simple fact. The flora and fauna that thrives when the tree canopy is removed is quite different, and that allows certain marsupials and animals to thrive more in those areas, so in fact logging ensured and encouraged biological diversity in the forest. That was a significant impact.

That industry was superbly well managed. It was sustainable not for 10 years or 100 years, but, as it was managed, that industry was sustainable for thousands of years. As I said, it was the most sustainable industry in Western Australia, and the government destroyed it. Now it has decided to salt the field and make sure that that can never happen again. As was pointed out by the member for Roe—this is important for the children who are leaving the chamber now—managed forestry gave a net reduction of carbon in the atmosphere. Why is that? It is because timber stores carbon. This timber around here for 120 years has stored however many tonnes of carbon. This building stores thousands of tonnes of carbon. It has been here for 120 years, and it will be here for another 120 years in all probability. Carbon is stored for hundreds of years, and what happened to the timber that was cut down for this? It regrew. It took more carbon out of the atmosphere. The government does not want stored carbon; it does not want to reduce carbon. I refer to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change for 2007, as the member for Roe pointed out, because that timber regrows again and again. As I have said, the timber that is logged is not touched for another 100 years. It was the most sustainable timber industry in the world by some considerable instance based on the science and people who followed the science.

As has been pointed out, we need hardwood timber because of its strength. It might mean nothing to the government, but for those people working in the mining industry who need pallets to carry equipment, the softwoods are dangerous. They snap catastrophically; they fail and cause injuries. Hardwood jarrah is the best timber in the world for building pallets for heavy industry. That has been lost. Again, jarrah scaffolding planks may mean nothing to the government, but, in fact, they are the safest scaffolding planks in the world. They have been replaced with aluminium planks, which have a massive carbon footprint in the way they are made. They are substantially less safe in complex chemical environments and in the manufacturing industry, because when those metal planks fail, they fail more readily and more precipitously than the jarrah planks, so they are a less safe alternative. What do we see in houses in Perth now? Instead of seeing jarrah frames, we see steel frames. Something that effectively has a zero carbon footprint, and, in fact, because of its use, is actually storing carbon, has been replaced with steel and concrete, as was pointed out with bridges and jetties and the like. Those two materials are responsible for the most carbon emissions in the world. Materials that stored carbon are being replaced with materials that have massive carbon footprints, making it worse for the environment, which all government members tell me is important. They all tell me that reducing carbon emissions is important. Clearly, that is not the case.

It has become very clear that Labor hates farmers and Labor hates regional Western Australia. I saw that on a poster when I was at the Muresk Institute rally the other day. I saw a poster there that read “Labor hates farmers”, and I thought: “Do you know what? That encapsulates it.” Government members say they care, but in fact they do not.

They sit here and appeal to a handful of people in the city. They feed them misinformation to justify their argument; meanwhile, they do not care about the impact on those communities. It is fascinating that they dumped Darren West. He was the only broadscale farmer they had in their team, and they have dumped him out of the upper house.

Mr P.J. Rundle: The only working farmer.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Yes—he is the only working farmer. Labor has dumped him off its ticket in the upper house because it hates farmers. It is happy to sacrifice regional WA for a cheap headline in Perth. That is the reality of this, and that is the reality behind this legislation.

[Member's time extended.]

Dr D.J. HONEY: The government thinks that the future for regional communities in Western Australia is that they cannot have local jobs. They will have to fly-in fly-out to the mining regions to bring money into their economy, because the government wants to get rid of hundreds and hundreds of local jobs. This is an appalling piece of legislation. The government should be ashamed of itself for bringing it to this Parliament. It should be ashamed of the misleading debate that it brings before this place. It should follow the science and abandon this terrible piece of legislation. Thank you.

MS C.M. ROWE (Belmont) [11.49 am]: Yet again, I feel compelled to speak on the Conservation and Land Management Amendment Bill because of what the opposition has spent the morning talking about. I was hoping that today we would see bipartisan support for this fantastic bill, but of course, we have not seen that. I am disappointed, but I am absolutely not surprised.

I am really pleased to see that the Conservation and Land Management Amendment Bill 2024 goes a step further than the 2021 bill. It will enhance protection mechanisms for our south west forests. In a nutshell, it means that future governments—let us be real, future Liberal–National governments—that want to repeal and strip back these protection mechanisms for future generations will not be able to do that by way of regulation. They will have to bring that to Parliament. I am very proud of that change and that is why I wanted to speak on this bill today.

I spoke on this bill when we first introduced it, when we looked to end a really unsustainable industry to protect, in perpetuity, our Western Australian native forests. I know the member for Cottesloe took great umbrage at that fact, but that protection is something I celebrate. Future generations probably will not know that this has been argued about in state Parliament today, but I am really glad that we as a government are doing a responsible job in protecting these forests—as they should be. It was really interesting that the member for Cottesloe talked a lot about how he was going to cite facts, figures and science. I did not hear any of that in his speech. Nonetheless, I put on the record that protecting these forests is a crucial part of our fight against climate change. Those south west WA forests store approximately 600 million tons of carbon dioxide, which is equivalent to roughly 116 years' worth of annual emissions for every car in WA. For the opposition to say that there is no environmental impact resulting from this legislation is frankly misleading at best. That is not to mention the impact that this will have on biodiversity, conservation, recreation, tourism, other industries and, of course, the cultural significance and heritage of these particular forests.

I do get up to talk about facts and science, unlike the other side. I am very proud of this bill and what it will do. I listened to the other side talk about a native forests bill and heard a lot of references to live sheep export—which was quite bizarre—but no-one actually talked about climate change, which I thought was really interesting. In this day and age we are still faced with a Liberal–National opposition at both the state and federal level that does not believe that climate change exists. It is really concerning. This is something I hope all Western Australians are paying particular attention to.

When Peter Dutton came out with his absolutely strange policy announcement a couple of days ago that if the Liberals win at next year's federal election it will put in seven nuclear power reactors throughout Australia—including one in Western Australia—what was really interesting was that the Liberal opposition leader clearly had not done his homework, because not a single Liberal leader or Labor Premier in any state supported that. Why not? It is because the science shows that that would be catastrophic to household electricity costs, not to mention deeply unpopular with the electorate—deeply unpopular! That was a very interesting announcement. What was really interesting as well was that the federal opposition leader, Mr Dutton, had clearly not done the maths. There was no suggestion of how much he anticipates that this will cost, or any realistic assessment about its deliverable component. When will we actually see these?

The CSIRO estimated that the nation's first large-scale nuclear power plant could cost as much as \$17 billion. In today's dollars, that is \$8.5 billion for each one after that, and they would not be operational until at least 2040. That is very interesting and I put that on the record.

I am quoting figures from the *Financial Review*. Even a publication that usually salivates over anything the Liberals say was not terribly supportive. We are a government that has committed, along the way, over seven years, to doing a great deal in this space. This bill confirms and reiterates that, and takes an even stronger position on the protection in perpetuity of these forests. From a biodiversity point of view, they are critical forests. I think that is fantastic. I also say, from an energy point of view, in light of the federal Liberal Party's stance on racing towards nuclear

energy, we are doing the complete opposite. We are investing billions of dollars into renewable energy. That includes 810 megawatts of renewable energy generation and 4 400 megawatt hours of battery storage. That will be on board by 2025. We have the big batteries in Kwinana and Collie. We are also looking at investing in wind farms. This is the future. Of course, under a federal Liberal government, that would all be undermined by its reckless race towards building nuclear power plants. I will talk about what is always missing from the opposition's contributions to debate on any environment bill. We heard the member for Cottesloe talking about live sheep export, which was quite unusual, but no-one on that side ever wants to even acknowledge the existence of climate change. That really troubles me and it is something that Western Australia ought to be very deeply concerned about.

I listen to a news podcast every day on the way to work, and this morning there was a BBC news article about how recently—I think it was in Jordan—the average temperature had gone up by eight degrees in the month it was being measured. That is incredibly significant. I do not have that information in front of me; it was just what I heard on the radio this morning. I thought: “Gee, that is really concerning.” We live in a very hot, arid climate. We are going to be particularly susceptible to the impacts of climate change, as are many people around the world. Another BBC article states that extreme heat has killed more than 1 500 people in the US—that was in 2022. More than 70 million Americans are living under heat alerts in US cities right across the country. This article from the BBC states that this February just gone was the world's warmest February in modern times, according to the EU's climate service. To quote the article —

Each month since June 2023 has seen new temperature highs for the time of year.

The world's sea surface is at its hottest on record, while Antarctic sea-ice has again reached extreme lows.

Temperatures are still being boosted by the Pacific's El Niño weather event, but human-caused climate change is by far the main driver of the warmth.

...

Carbon dioxide concentrations are at their highest level for at least two million years, according to the UN's climate body, and increased by near-record levels again over the past year.

...

Those warming gases helped make February 2024 about 1.77C warmer than “pre-industrial” times ...

This has huge impacts. I do not know where the member for Cottesloe was going with his assertions that we are making legislation for inner-city voters. I think climate change affects us all equally, no matter where we live, unfortunately, but if we recognise that climate change exists—I am not sure the opposition recognises that—we know that it will continue to have major impacts on food security, water security and liveability in climates like ours, and, of course, that comes back to energy. What will the Liberal–National opposition do with energy? Will it fall in behind Peter Dutton and his crazy idea around nuclear energy? I would really like to find out, on the record, whether it will be considering that.

I want to make a brief comment and put on the record how great I think this bill is, because it goes further to enhance a wonderful policy. It will have a great impact. It will protect millions of hectares of native forests in perpetuity for future generations. I am very, very proud of that. It continues our great legacy under Minister Whitby in terms of the environment. If we look at what has been done to date, we see Containers for Change and the Plan for Plastics, and all that has a huge impact in moving things away from landfill. It is very tangible. This, too—despite what the opposition said—will have tangible outcomes in protecting millions and millions of hectares of our native forest. We also have the Plan for Our Parks, which is the plan for new national parks, marine parks and conservation reserves. That will look at including five million hectares.

I am very proud of what our government is doing in this space. I wish to commend the bill to the house and congratulate the minister on this great bill.

DR K. STRATTON (Nedlands) [12.03 pm]: I, too, rise in support of the Conservation and Land Management Amendment Bill 2024. As we have heard, on 8 September 2021 the state government announced that to protect the state's native forest, large-scale commercial timber harvesting in the south west native forest would cease. That policy announcement also indicated that from 2024, timber taken from native forests would be limited to forest management activities that improve forest health and clearing for approved mining operations.

In my short contribution today, I want to talk a little about why protecting the south west forests is very important, and respond a little bit to some of the nimbyism claims—to be fair they are not new—about my electorate. I want to outline exactly what we are doing in our own backyard to support climate action and, in particular, support for the protections given to the south west forest. We know that they are important for biodiversity, conservation, recreation, tourism, industry, water supply and cultural heritage. Our forests are managed in such a way as to support all those different uses and features. The ever-increasing impact of climate change, the importance of maintaining biodiversity and forest health, the need for carbon capture and storage, and declining timber yields mean it is absolutely essential that we act now, in a coordinated and cohesive manner, to protect WA's forest. It is absolutely critical in the fight against climate change.

As members have heard, native forests store approximately 600 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, or roughly 116 years' worth of annual emissions for every car in Western Australia. Nationally, deforestation has seen an estimated 50 million trees bulldozed in Australia annually, leading to the deaths of 70 million native animals. When we protect our forests, we protect it for not only all those community needs but also all creatures great and small. We enhance and improve our biodiversity and decrease risks of adding more and more native species to our endangered lists as well.

As I indicated, the changes that we have made to how we manage and protect our forests has significant support in my electorate. They are very concerned about the impacts of climate change. It is probably one of the key issues that comes through my office. They are very interested in the Collie Just Transition. I get asked lots of questions about the Collie Just Transition. With my social work hat on I am very interested in what that means for the community, and the member for Collie–Preston very kindly hosted me for a day in her electorate, where I met local members of the community to hear how important the Just Transition has been for them as workers and a community that is also interested in climate action. They want to hold back the impact of climate change as workers and as a community, and they are interested in the push to renewables. They are not interested in nuclear energy, it has to be said.

My seat sits within the federal seat of Curtin, a seat that votes fairly progressively on a number of social reforms, including the same-sex marriage plebiscite and the Voice. They are not interested in going back to the 1950s or becoming an episode of *The Simpsons*, and they are certainly not interested in kicking the climate action can down the road. They do not want to see it delayed. They want to see the climate protected for current and future generations. Just as we are doing in Collie, this government is working with other stakeholders to ensure transition support for those who are connected to the shift in how we manage our forests, including helping to develop and diversify small businesses. There are a number of grants to not-for-profits and other small businesses, to improve amenity and liveability of the local area. There are community advisory groups made up of locals, residents, businesses and not-for-profit leaders to guide that diversification. We have small business development grants to invest, to protect existing jobs and for people to diversify their businesses, create new jobs and to bring new businesses into the affected areas. There are redundancy packages for impacted workers and significant financial assistance for the mills. Just as we are doing in Collie, it is about a coordinated transition that engages all the different stakeholders and brings them along.

I also wanted to outline the way metropolitan communities are saying, “Yes, in our backyard. We will do what we can to contribute to greening.” I remind members that cities are green, too. The Cook Labor government announced earlier this year Western Australia's first-ever urban greening strategy for the Perth and Peel region, which says “Yes, in our backyard” to climate action. It is not only the regions that are asking for climate action or, indeed, bearing some of the different impacts that occur as we transition to renewables and more responsible management of some of our natural assets.

Just to show how clearly we are saying “Yes, in our backyard”, over 4 000 submissions were received in the recent community consultation on the urban greening strategy that was announced earlier this year to create a greener, cooler and more liveable Perth and Peel metropolitan region into the future. The strategy looks at how we manage and sustain trees and other vegetation in those areas, recognising the significant social, economic and environmental impact of greening strategies. I am proud to be part of the leadership and coordination and collaboration that will occur across all stakeholders at all levels of government, as well as different community groups to see that urban greening strategy developed and published in the near future.

Nedlands was home to the first tree canopy advocates group, which has grown to a network of 26 local groups with over 22 000 members. They have since formed a peak body, the Western Australian Tree Canopy Advocates. Nedlands is also home to Nature Play WA, which is located on the banks of the Derbal Yerrigan in Crawley. Nature Play advocates and provides strategies for people to engage children in child-led play in the outdoors—nature play. It encourages children to have a childhood with movement, imagination, friendship, connection and all the sensory experiences that come from engagement with nature play. As children's lives are increasingly sedentary and structured with lots of activities, nature play encourages unstructured active outdoor play that contributes to children's development. We know that it is good for their physical and mental health, their social and emotional health, for building resilience, and enhancing creativity and imagination—all building on a connection to nature. Nature Play was involved in the development of the nature playground on the Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre site next to Perth Children's Hospital. That was done in collaboration with the Perth Children's Hospital Foundation. It recognises the many benefits of engaging with nature, particularly the health benefits for children who are hospitalised and benefits to the siblings and parents of those sick children. Similarly, the PCH foundation was involved in building the Koolangka Bridge–Kids' Bridge that connects PCH to Kings Park. Again, that highlights how important nature is to our physical and mental health.

Continuing to highlight the work of the PCH foundation, but, more importantly, the role that nature plays in all aspects of our lives is the building of the first-ever children's hospice for Western Australia that is embedded in nature. It is being built surrounded by bushland and overlooking the ocean. In all these different ways, nature, including our forests, plays an important role in our most meaningful moments—when we are at play, when we are sick—for our children's development and for our family's recreation as well as diversifying our economy and how we continue to protect our native forest.

One of the things the government has done to protect the south west forests is to end commercial-scale timber harvesting in native forests. I have an old house in Nedlands and I absolutely enjoy my jarrah floorboards, but I am happy to adapt my aesthetic to ensure that those forests live on for future generations and continue to provide those climate benefits that my kids and grandkids can continue to enjoy, rather than the superficiality of what my floors might look like. The government is taking action to promote greater resilience in south west native forests, as well as to support conservation, protect cultural values and boost tourism. Often when my family visits Margaret River, in particular, we do some of the beautiful drives along Caves Road through the tunnel of trees. Even though my kids think that lots of the things I like to do, such as birdwatching, are dead boring, they are entranced by driving through that tunnel of trees and forest. I would hate to see that beautiful engagement with nature taken away from future generations. I am proud that the government is doing all it can to protect that.

The amendment bill will facilitate the appropriate management and protection of our south west native forests and the government is committed to adding more. Some 400 000 hectares of karri, jarrah and wandoo forests will be conserved as nature reserves, national parks and conservation parks. That means that nearly two million hectares of native forest will be protected for future generations. The management activities that can be undertaken in state forests and timber reserves are those that promote healthy forests. We see them being protected, enhanced and sustained for future generations, and being more resilient to climate change and, therefore, making us more resilient to climate change. By transitioning more of the forest industry to sustainable timber products such as softwood, we are investing in WA's future, supporting the construction and forestry industries as well as our regional communities.

It is important to point out that the implementation of the government's native forest policy through the *Forest management plan 2024–2033* was the subject of extensive engagement and community consultation with not only key stakeholders in business and industry, but, importantly, the community, including local residents. The bill will facilitate the appropriate management and protection of native forests in the south west. As a member of this government and also as a parent and a future grandparent, I am proud to commend the bill to the house.

MR R.R. WHITBY (Baldivis — Minister for Environment) [12.16 pm] — in reply: A lot has been said around the chamber and I want to express my gratitude to all speakers who contributed to this debate this morning and into this afternoon—the member for Bicton, the member for Roe, the member for Cottesloe, the member for Belmont and the member for Nedlands. Essentially, the Conservation and Land Management Amendment Bill 2024 is a very simple piece of legislation; it will be a simple amendment of the Conservation and Land Management Act 1984. There are basically three essential functions of the amendments. The first will repeal the provision in the CALM act that allows for timber production on a sustainable yield basis to be a purpose for which state forest and timber reserves may be reserved. We want to repeal that provision to align with the current forest management plan that, of course, does not do that. The second is to limit the regulation-making head power that allows these changes to be effected by regulation so that any future government wanting to change this legislation or reintroduce logging in native forests would bring it back to Parliament to effect the change. That is a reasonable and democratic thing to do.

The third function will amend section 55 of the act to clarify that timber production does not include the removal of salvage products. In other words, when trees are removed for safety or a road, infrastructure or mining, there can be a commercial use rather than a waste of that timber.

Members opposite raised a number of issues and I know there is a lot of passion about this matter. We have heard about climate change and the importance of storing carbon; however, this legislation deals with a serious issue. We do have climate change. The sustainability of the yield from our native forests is under question because of the change in climate and we want to protect our native forests and the ecosystems they support in the long term. The debate has been with us for some time. The new forest management plan took effect on 1 January. We are progressing the legislation so that the CALM act catches up with the reality of the world we now live in. With that, I will wrap up the second reading debate.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

[Leave denied to proceed forthwith to third reading.]

Consideration in Detail

Clause 1: Short title —

Dr D.J. HONEY: In the discussion that has been held in the chamber and in the debate on this bill, a point was made that this bill will somehow improve and increase carbon sequestration from the state forest. Is it the minister's understanding that this change will do that?

Mr R.R. WHITBY: Yes, indeed it is. As I pointed out when I wrapped up the second reading debate, we find that climate change is putting stress on growth rates in our native forests. I point to an estimates committee in which the member made the observation about the critical need for ecological thinning, which is about going to those

replanted areas and thinning out the forest so that it can be more sustainable and we can have the growth of larger trees. Where there are tight-knit plantation areas and limited rain, there is stunting of all growth in the forest and we do not have a closer-to-natural scenario in which there is a mix of ages and a true forest that can support the ecology of the area.

Dr D.J. HONEY: In the debate, both speakers who are opposed to the bill pointed out that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change said that sustainable logging, which is the logging that was carried out in our forests, in fact led to a net increase of carbon storage, not a reduction, because the forest is allowed to regrow. How does the minister justify the assertion that if this bill is enacted we will see a net improvement in sequestration of carbon by the forest?

Mr R.R. WHITBY: I can also point to the IPCC report on climate change that found that reducing deforestation, reducing the cutting down of trees and forest degradation rates, represents one of the most effective and robust things that we can do to mitigate climate change. That was the view of the IPCC. It also identified and named the south west forests of Western Australia, which, in its words, were at critical risk of collapse. I think that is an indication of the importance of the ability of the forest to successfully grow to take up greater stores of carbon.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Of course, deforestation refers to clearing the forest and not allowing it to grow. I have travelled through those forest areas in the south west extensively. There is stunning regrowth: for example, the area of land that was cleared for the proposed dam on Record Brook, which I know is not the minister's portfolio, but is the Minister for Water's portfolio. I have visited the area and it now has half-grown trees on it and a vast expanse of flora and fauna in an area that was cleared only a handful of years ago. Is the minister aware that the Forest Products Commission was aware that rainfall rates have reduced and that it adjusted the allowed timber take every year to match the growth in the forest? It took that into account so there was no willy-nilly clearing, regardless of environmental changes. Everyone understands that rainfall has decreased by around 20 per cent in the south west of the state since the mid-1970s. The Forest Products Commission reduced the take. Again, I am trying to understand how we will see a net increase in carbon sequestration, given that the forest is allowed to regenerate and given that many of the products out of that forest end up as long-term stored carbon like the timber in this chamber.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: The advice of the *End-of-term review of performance of the Forest Management Plan 2014–2023*, reports —

The continuing impact of the drying, warming climate of Western Australia's south-west remains evident, with declines in vegetation cover ... and significant impacts on water runoff [and] stream flows.

Further, the *Independent Silviculture Review Panel Report May 2022*, projected increased warming and drying climate trends across the south west and added that "these trends have the potential to reduce the growth rates and carrying capacity of forests". That, to me, is a clear indication that the forests are being impacted and their capacity to grow and take in and absorb carbon is lessened. I make the point that business-as-usual logging is no longer considered viable due to the yields of native timber in the south west forests declining significantly due to a drying climate. I am not the minister responsible for the Forest Products Commission; however, I am aware that the yields were declining because of the growth rates of the forests.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: We will probably ask most of our questions in clause 1. What modelling was undertaken to assess the impact of this policy on the health of the forest and the surrounding communities?

Mr R.R. WHITBY: I refer to issues around modelling in terms of the environmental impact. There was advice about the sustainability and the reduced yields, and the long-term impact of climate change in the south west, which is almost internationally a case study of reduced rainfall and the impact on the environment. There are issues around the economic impact, which are not within my remit. It is certainly a matter for the Minister for Forestry who has responsibility for the Forest Products Commission. The member knows very well that an extensive and quite valuable range of assistance was brought in to support workers who were affected, to support new industries and to invigorate a pine plantation scheme to support construction in the building industry in Western Australia. Those considerations would have very much been a factor when considering the impact of this decision. The government has always held the position of wanting a just transition when a transition needs to be made. It has played out in Collie, and a similar undertaking has been made to communities impacted under this plan.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: The minister can probably see why I am a little dismayed, if that is the right word. As I said in my contribution to the second reading debate, the former Minister for Forestry said how great it was going to be and how the government had encouraged Parkside Timber to come across from Queensland and all the rest of it. Then, out of nowhere, less than two years later, the Premier announced that was all over. By the sounds of it, no real modelling was done in the lead-up to that decision; it was more of a political decision, I guess you could say. There is no indication that any modelling was done around how it would affect those communities. I know about the climate change argument and so forth, but it appears that no real modelling was done.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: I cannot speak to the detail of that because it is outside my portfolio area; that is a question for the appropriate minister. However, I am aware of significant investment in terms of hundreds of millions of dollars to support those communities and new industries. The member will have to talk to the relevant minister, but I very much think that knowledge and information would have informed that support.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Has the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, which will bear the responsibility of this momentous task, been provided with the level of resources required to maintain forest health?

Mr R.R. WHITBY: Certainly, it was provided in the order of \$67 million in the last budget to invest and undertake the processes around the new forest management plan. That will involve ecological thinning, which, as the member for Cottesloe pointed out, is a vital part of sustainability and increasing the health of the forest. I think it was the member for Roe who commented earlier on how the issues around fire mitigation were important and required resources from the state. About \$36 million has been provided in the state budget that was just delivered to resource more employment for firefighters, fire trucks and heavy equipment to look after our state forests. We are very much aware of the increased responsibilities and resources needed under the new forest management plan.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Can the minister outline what the task involves for DBCA and the Forest Products Commission? Is there some sort of breakdown of the number of hectares that will be covered by each agency? How will that play out in the years ahead? Is there some sort of breakdown and what will be the nature of the working relationship?

Mr R.R. WHITBY: I am told that a lot of this information is online, but I am happy to respond to the member's question. As the member would be aware, the land is managed by DBCA. It is the responsibility of that agency to ascertain works in terms of ecological thinning. It will assess the areas that are appropriate and relay that information to the Forest Products Commission that will undertake the work through a series of contractors. The intention is for ecological thinning to occur across up to 8 000 hectares a year. That will provide a lot of the timber needed for a range of requirements, including commercial applications and processes; firewood, which will be recovered from there and other places; and artisanal furniture makers, which we heard about before. That does not include the clearing of timber from mine sites, which is another source of timber.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I have a further question about fire suppression. As a result of this policy, can the minister outline what extra resources will be required and the extra impact this will have on the likes of DBCA?

Mr R.R. WHITBY: I am not sure whether I have that detail in front of me, but I will try to recall the details. Incidentally, the member asked about the funding for the ongoing management plan that involved \$67 million, but it will also involve the creation of employment for 65 people. This is a good plan for those regional communities and towns because it will bring in extra employment.

In the last budget we announced just under \$36 million for the fire management spend. I will try to remember the breakdown, but it involved the employment of around 30 extra staff. A lot of those people were existing rangers who were employed on seasonal contracts. The good thing is that they had their contracts extended to full-time work and new positions were created that were spread across the south west, including Esperance, Albany and Margaret River, and I am sure other communities within the south west and the great southern. We talked about the impact of this plan, but it is important to realise the extra resources and DBCA jobs provided and the management and flow-on effect. We have also invested in about seven or eight extra fire appliances, which is significant when we talk about a town having one extra appliance, and we have also invested in heavy equipment. A large bulldozer, a float and a semitrailer, which I think will be headquartered in Albany, will be available. Often in the past, we have had to rely on commercial operators for that equipment. That equipment will be dedicated assets of DBCA that can be called upon to cover the south west region. There is a significant uplift in the resourcing and capacity of DBCA firefighters to manage fires in forests, which is very important, but those assets will also be available to help communities at risk.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before I give the call to the member for Roe again, I would like to acknowledge the former member for Darling Range Mr Tony Simpson in the Speaker's gallery. Welcome, Tony.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I heard the minister's numbers in relation to extra employees and fire trucks with DBCA, but has a model been created that balances out with the number of people in those communities who have lost their jobs? Has any modelling been done that demonstrates how many DBCA employees we have gained against how many jobs have been lost in small businesses in those communities?

Mr R.R. WHITBY: That is a difficult question for me to answer, particularly because I do not have responsibility for the Forest Products Commission, so I cannot tell the member about all the contracts that have been let and how many people have been employed in ecological thinning. I am aware of the upsurge in tourism opportunities that this will bring. One of the things that we are promoting through the investment in the just transition for this industry is finding where we can invest in new opportunities in town. These are beautiful parts of the state. We have seen examples in Collie in which there has been huge investment and an upsurge in visitation. The town is growing and prosperous because of the just transition initiatives that we implemented. I dare say that we are going to see similar stories unfold throughout the south west because of this change.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I hear what the minister is saying about the transition packages, but does the minister know of any key performance indicators or the like that were put in place for those transition packages?

Mr R.R. WHITBY: Again, the member has to understand that FPC is outside my portfolio. If those KPIs exist, I am not aware of them.

Dr D.J. HONEY: In the debate that we heard in the chamber, one of the justifications for this ban was that it would somehow limit or stop logging in old-growth forests. As a minister would well know, just two decades ago the Gallop government banned logging in old-growth forests. Is the minister aware of how much logging occurred in old-growth forest in the one-third of the state forest that was allowed to continue to be logged?

Mr R.R. WHITBY: I will point the member's attention to my second reading speech in which I said that logging in old growth-forests ended two decades ago under the Gallop government.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Would it be incorrect for members to argue that this bill will somehow prevent logging in old-growth forests because logging in old-growth forest has already stopped?

Mr R.R. WHITBY: I know my colleagues are very passionate about this issue, as are many people across the community. Whether the phrasing is appropriate at each moment is probably less important than the passion they have for protecting our native forests. Whether it is old growth or new growth, native forests have a very important role in the sustainability of our environment, protecting ecosystems and being part of ecosystems. I think the passion there is absolutely to be commended and that many Western Australians feel the same.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will just remind the member that we are on clause 1. It is the short title of the bill. The minister has been very patient in fielding some of these questions.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I appreciate the minister's patience. We will probably restrict our questions to clause 1. Purchasing farmland to grow softwood timber is obviously a response to this legislation. Has there been any modelling? The fact is that a lot of government members have talked about climate change. We have talked about the watertable and groundwater resources. Has there been any planning or modelling on the watertable and groundwater resources in areas where plantations are planned?

Mr R.R. WHITBY: I understand the member's interest in this area, representing a rural electorate, but again, this is outside my portfolio. I am not aware of the detail, I do not have access to it, and it is a matter for another minister.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: The minister would understand that there are a lot of growing feral pest issues in the south west forests. It has been well recognised by many communities. Does the minister foresee any modelling or have any steps been taken to reduce and deal with feral pests once this industry has been closed down?

Mr R.R. WHITBY: Feral animals are a concern, particularly in our native forests, with the impact they have on native species. A point to remember is that when there is less disturbance in forest areas, it protects the environment and makes it more sustainable for the species that are there. It might have a positive benefit.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 3383.]

LIVE EXPORT — SHEEP INDUSTRY

Statement by Member for Cottesloe

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe) [12.45 pm]: I rise today to congratulate the organisers of last week's "Keep the Sheep" protest in Muresk for standing firmly against the proposed phase-out of the live sheep export industry. I had the honour of attending this significant event alongside the Leader of the Liberal Party, Libby Mettam, MLA; Hon Steve Martin; my Nationals WA colleagues who are in this chamber; and my federal colleagues. The live sheep trade is a cornerstone of Western Australia's agricultural economy. It not only sustains numerous jobs but also contributes significantly to our state's overall financial health. Over 82 per cent of Australia's live sheep exports come from Western Australia. The industry is crucial for our state and its rural communities, unlike the eastern states where they are significantly less reliant on live exports.

I recall memories from my childhood when farmers, including my family and me, were forced to shoot their livestock because prices plummeted so drastically that it was no longer economically viable to keep their animals alive. This stark example underscores the importance of the live sheep export market in providing a stable price floor that protects our farmers from severe financial distress during periods of low domestic demand. Moreover, demand for our livestock from the nations that purchase it will only grow as their prosperity improves, making this an industry with sound long-term potential. It is unfair to suggest that farmers do not care about the welfare of their animals. Farmers' livelihoods are intricately linked to the health and wellbeing of their livestock, and they are committed to maintaining the highest standards of animal care. Proposals to ban the live sheep trade are being based on the opinions of individuals who simply do not know what they are talking about. In closing, I urge the state and federal Labor Party to consider the real-life implications of this closure. Let us support our farmers and ensure the sustainability of this vital sector for future generations. Let us keep the sheep!

PUBLIC OPEN SPACE — BATEMAN ELECTORATE

Statement by Member for Bateman

MS K.E. GIDDENS (Bateman) [12.47 pm]: When I was elected to the seat of Bateman, I committed to be the kind of local member our community expects: hardworking, accessible and a strong advocate for our community.

In 2022, we came together to save our local parks and I was proud to represent my electorate. With the support of Minister Saffioti, seven state-owned parks and reserves across the electorate of Bateman were rezoned as public open space and are now protected for future generations. Last year, I stood again with our community to protect our iconic verge trees along Forbes, Sleaf and Kintail Roads. Hundreds of residents shared their support for the protection of these trees and the amenity and value they provide to our community.

I again joined community members in making representations on the provision of much-needed public open space near Canning Bridge and the creation of a new park at the Esplanade. The decision by the City of Melville council not to approve funding for the Esplanade is unfortunate; however, my focus now is how I can contribute as a leader to build the collaborative support and shared commitment required to deliver this park. Following the council's decision, I met with CEO Gail Bowman and Mayor Katy Mair to identify a way forward. I thank them both for their engagement on and contribution to this goal. I encourage the City of Melville to identify and apply for suitable grants, such as from Lotterywest, and offer my full support to that process. I am pleased that following our meeting, the Melville council has now provisionally approved \$500 000. Although not enough to deliver the park, this funding provides a potential co-contribution towards grant opportunities and is a step in the right direction.

I am proud of our community and our strong history of working together, and I acknowledge and thank the Melville City Climate Action Network, which gathered over 2 900 signatures in support of the park. I also acknowledge the City of Melville Residents and Ratepayers Association and the Melville Tree Canopy Advocates, as well as the new community association Save Our Space. We are at our best when we work together, and I will continue to do my part to deliver for our community.

NICHELIVING — HOME CONSTRUCTION DELAYS

Statement by Member for Moore

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Leader of the Opposition) [12.49 pm]: I rise today to speak about the chaos within Nicheliving and the complacency of this Cook Labor government, which has failed to stand up for hundreds of Western Australian families.

Last week, I delivered a grievance in this house raising concerns about Nicheliving. I outlined that some 300 to 500 homes under construction by the troubled builder were incomplete, dating back almost four years. At a time when the Perth rental market is so highly constrained, this represents hundreds of homes that could ease pressure on the rental market. The situation has left many families in desperate and dire financial circumstances. Many are paying their mortgage on top of rent, storage locker costs and council and water rates, and are doing it tough in a cost-of-living crisis. On top of the financial and emotional distress, some customers are now receiving bills from RevenueWA for stamp duty on their unfinished homes. One customer, an 85-year-old retiree from Applecross, was forced to draw tens of thousands of dollars out of his superannuation to pay his stamp duty bill to the state government for his unfinished home.

The Fair Work Commission is investigating claims that workers are not being paid superannuation and that trades and suppliers have taken Nicheliving to court over unpaid bills, and there are allegations that Nicheliving has not been taking out home indemnity insurance. Despite the serious nature of these allegations raised by the opposition, the response from the government has been dismal. Although the government claims to have met with Nicheliving this week, it has walked out of that meeting with no answers and no plan. The opposition has also asked the Minister for Commerce, the Treasurer and the Minister for Industrial Relations multiple questions seeking further details about their meetings with Nicheliving and the number of homes that remain unfinished. Frustrated by the lack of answers from the government ministers, the opposition has had to resort to lodging freedom of information requests to get basic information. What does this government have to hide?

We will continue to pursue these matters during budget estimates in the other place next week as we continue to press for answers and solutions for Nicheliving customers.

GIRRAWHEEN LIONS CLUB

Statement by Member for Mirrabooka

MS M.J. HAMMAT (Mirrabooka — Parliamentary Secretary) [12.51 pm]: I rise to acknowledge the incredible work undertaken by the Lions Club of Girrawheen and to thank its outgoing president, Eric Snow. The Girrawheen Lions Club is one of our great local community groups and we are very lucky to have it. The club president, Eric Snow, tells me that he will be stepping down from the role of president soon, so I take this opportunity to thank him for his service to our community. Eric has been a long-term member and president for six years, contributing a significant amount of his time to ensuring the continued success of his club.

The Girrawheen Lions run the Saturday swap meet at Newpark shopping centre in Girrawheen—a very successful fundraising activity. As one of the people who help to run the swap meet every week, Eric is out of bed every Saturday, regardless of the weather, to be at the car park at around 5.30 in the morning so that he and his team can collect fees from the sellers coming to set up their stalls. The swap meet is so successful that it raises many thousands of dollars

throughout the year. The club also raises money by selling the fantastic Lions Christmas cakes and puddings and collecting parking fees at the Royal Show. It also supports our community by hosting an annual Australia Day breakfast in Marangaroo, which has been very popular in recent years. The funds raised by the Girrawheen Lions are invested back into our local community, including to provide support to students in our local schools and seniors groups, as well as to make donations to organisations like the Fred Hollows Foundation, Foodbank WA and the Royal Flying Doctor Service. It has even donated to an international organisation called Cows for Cambodia.

I record my thanks to Eric Snow for his significant contribution to and leadership of this very important community group. I am pleased that he will continue to be a member and provide ongoing support and guidance to the incoming president, whomever that might be. I also take this opportunity to record my thanks to all the members of the Girrawheen Lions for all that they do in our community.

TOP TOURISM TOWN AWARDS

Statement by Member for North West Central

MS M. BEARD (North West Central) [12.53 pm]: I take this opportunity to congratulate and acknowledge towns from across the north west that were recently recognised for their innovation and commitment to excellence in tourism at the 2024 7NEWS Top Tourism Town Awards, which were presented at the Perth Airport WA Tourism Conference dinner last week. A big congratulations goes to our fabulous tourism towns from across the north west that were recently announced as very deserving winners and recognised in their respective categories in the awards.

Congratulations to Exmouth for both taking out the gold medal in the Small Tourism Town category and being inducted into the Tourism Council WA hall of fame, which is a testament to the significant contribution the community has undertaken over the years.

Carnarvon was rewarded for its commitment to tourism, winning the bronze medal in the same category. Again, this reflects a dedicated and proud community.

The gold medal for the Tiny Tourist Town category was awarded to Kalbarri, acknowledgement of a resilient, determined and hardworking community.

Coral Bay won the bronze medal, which is also a reflection of a small but committed and hardworking group of tourism operators catering for the needs of thousands of tourists.

Congratulations to the Tourism Council WA for the support it provides our amazing small businesses and communities. The 7News Top Tourism Town Awards have been running for 35 years and recognise cities and towns across WA for their commitment to tourism and the innovative experiences and facilities on offer. Regional towns are committed and dedicated to growing the tourism industry and showcasing our towns, the regions, and welcoming visitors. It is fantastic to see so many visitors exploring our amazing north west with such diverse landscapes and experiences, with something on offer for everyone.

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR — PETER GERAGHTY

Statement by Member for Central Wheatbelt

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt) [12.55 pm]: I rise to speak about Peter Geraghty, who was recognised as the 2024 WA Volunteer of the Year for his more than 43 years of extraordinary service to the wheatbelt community. Amongst 240 nominees, Peter stood out as a beacon of selflessness and dedication, embodying the spirit of service that defines our region. His journey as a volunteer began in 1980 when he joined the St John Sub Centre Kununoppin as a volunteer ambulance officer. Since then, he has tirelessly served his community, earning the respect and admiration of all who know him. As the secretary and treasurer of the sub centre since 1985, Peter has provided steadfast leadership, ensuring its stability and growth for over four decades. At 18 000 square kilometres, the Kununoppin crew he is a part of covers one of the largest patches in WA, servicing the shires of Mukinbudin, Mt Marshall, Trayning and Nungarin. In recognition of Peter's impact on the region, all four local governments made him an honorary freeman of their shires in 2016. It is the highest honour a council can bestow.

What truly sets Peter apart is his unwavering commitment. For 39 years, he has been the sole call-taker and ambulance dispatcher available 24/7 to ensure a timely response to emergencies in the district. He also manages the sub centre's fleet of 12 ambulances, conducting regular maintenance checks across the wheatbelt region. Despite his demanding volunteer duties, Peter juggles these responsibilities with running the local BP station, driving a school bus, and his family commitments. He also mentors fellow volunteers and offers support during major emergencies. His humility was on display as he accepted his award earlier this year and acknowledged his fellow volunteers, his family and community. Peter is an amazing individual and very deserving of the honour of the top gong amongst a field of inspirational volunteers.

COMMUNITY CABINET — HILLARYS

Statement by Member for Hillarys

MS C.M. COLLINS (Hillarys) [12.57 pm]: I offer a sincere thanks to Premier Roger Cook and the ministry, who joined me recently in Hillarys for community cabinet. First stop was the Whitford City Football Club, where we

announced the Perth International Football Cup, which will take place in August. Then we held a town hall at the Hillarys Yacht Club, where community members were able to ask cabinet questions about local issues and the future of our state. The following morning, we welcomed locals to the Hillarys Beach Club for my community champions breakfast to thank them for all the wonderful work they do. Next, we held a press conference to announce the commencement of works on the new headquarters for Marine Rescue Whitfords, the new Ocean Reef Sea Sports Club and Joondalup City RSL clubhouse as a major milestone for the Ocean Reef Marina project.

Later that day, I was privileged to welcome ministers to the electorate, where we conducted meetings with community groups. I popped into Belridge Secondary College and Springfield Primary School with the Minister for Education, Tony Buti. The Minister for Health, Amber-Jade Sanderson, and I visited medical practices at Hillarys Plaza. Attorney General, John Quigley, and I went to Hungry Jack's in Beldon to meet with fast-food staff, Shop, Distributive & Allied Employees Association representatives and local police to discuss our new laws that will protect fast-food workers. Minister for Seniors and Ageing, Don Punch, received a warm welcome at the Whitford Senior Citizens Centre, and he joined in on their choir practice. I went with Minister for Police, Paul Papalia, to Hillarys Police Station, where we discussed community safety and the successful protected entertainment precinct at Hillarys Boat Harbour. Minister for Environment, Reece Whitby, and I got to meet with the amazing Padbury Community Garden and the Duncraig Senior High School climate crew to discuss their sustainability initiatives. Minister for Housing, John Carey, was in Beldon checking out a recently refurbished social home. Minister for Early Childhood Education, Sabine Winton, visited Padbury Indigo Montessori. Thank you to everyone involved in making the Hillarys community cabinet a huge success.

SPORT — STATE REPRESENTATION — BELMONT ELECTORATE

Statement by Member for Belmont

MS C.M. ROWE (Belmont) [12.59 pm]: I take this opportunity to acknowledge some of the very talented young people in Belmont who have been selected to represent our state in sporting endeavours. I am very proud of brothers Fynn and Nate Tomasini, Riley Clayton, Benjamin Cranny, and Alicia Ward who were all selected to represent Western Australia in cricket. I am particularly proud of Alicia, to whom I presented the citizenship award when she graduated from Belmont City College back in 2019. In addition to cricket, Fynn Tomasini is also representing WA in AFL, along with Zeeahra Anderson and Sarah Vollrath-Hale. Maddison Fenwick is representing WA in hockey. Brothers Lukas and Cooper Truong represented WA in baseball, along with Kaiden Richmond. Aitaua Enari and Charisse Rond are representing WA in netball. This year, the Belmont Netball Association sent its highest ever number of teams to the association championships, with brand new uniforms incorporating beautiful Indigenous artwork by Jacinta Anderson. Jeshua and Alia Williams represented WA in climbing, and in athletics we were represented by Thomas Webb, Tory D'Alessio and Angelina Kosta. We are immensely proud of all of their efforts.

I am delighted to advise members that three young people from Belmont also represented Australia internationally in their chosen endeavours. Congratulations to Tamiaka Whitefield for competing internationally in softball, Kieran Webster in ice hockey, and Thomas Bland in BMX racing. I also give a shout-out to Jess Tan who represented WA in cheerleading just recently. This is all outstanding and impressive work. Finally, I give a shout-out to Zane Arkinstall from the Belmont Bombers Senior Football Club who is playing his 200th game this weekend. Congratulations!

Sitting suspended from 1.01 to 2.00 pm

KIRSTEN ROBINSON — CLERK OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY — ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [2.00 pm]: Ahead of question time, I would like to make a couple of acknowledgements. Please hold your applause until the end. I note that it is our Clerk Kirsten Robinson's last sitting day in the chamber. Kirsten has worked here for over 28 years, and she has done the last nine or so years as Clerk. She has achieved a number of firsts. In this day and age, when we accept that women can take on all roles, it is worth reflecting on how Kirsten was the first woman to be the Sergeant-at-Arms. She was also the first woman to be a Clerk (Assistant), the first woman Deputy Clerk and the first woman Clerk. She has been a real trailblazer. Kirsten, we thank you for your magnificent service to the Western Australian Parliament over such a long period. We congratulate you on your achievements here. We thank you for the support that you have given to so many Speakers, to so many members of Parliament and to all the staff here over that long period. We wish you well for your post-parliamentary life. Congratulations!

[Applause.]

VISITORS — BASSENDEAN PRIMARY SCHOOL PARENTS AND CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [2.02 pm]: I also have a note here to welcome representatives of the Bassendean Primary School Parents and Citizens Association for the member for Bassendean. I assume that he is here. It is nice to see you.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**NICHELIVING****437. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Deputy Premier:**

I refer to an 85-year-old Applecross man who is building with Nicheliving and recently contacted my office. Despite signing a contract over three years ago, he has been told that he is at least 18 months away from being able to move into his new home, and he is uncertain whether that will even be achieved. He was recently sent a substantial invoice from RevenueWA demanding his stamp duty be paid, resulting in him having to draw on his superannuation to afford the bill.

How widespread is this situation, and will the Deputy Premier commit to reviewing the practice of RevenueWA, which is demanding stamp duty payments from Nicheliving clients who are already in desperate and dire financial situations and whose homes are incomplete?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

On a serious note, before I answer that question, I want to publicly acknowledge the sudden passing of the Premier's mother, Lynnette, earlier this week. On behalf of the Parliament of Western Australia, I offer our condolences to the Premier and Carly; the Premier's father, Hugh; and the whole Cook family. I also want to acknowledge, on behalf of the state of Western Australia, the incredible efforts the Premier went to on Tuesday to honour his commitments on behalf of the state as part of Premier Li's official visit to Western Australia. He did this all while he was still processing the loss of his mum. It showed incredible strength, and our thoughts continue to be with the Premier at this time.

I also want to wish Kirsten, on behalf of everyone in the Labor Party, all the best in the future. Thank you for all your work and efforts in supporting us over the many, many years.

I thank the member for the question. In relation to the question about stamp duty payments, I will seek further advice from the Minister for Finance on that matter. More generally, we very much feel for those people who entered contracts in good faith with Nicheliving. As I have said on a few occasions, we understand that many have been left stranded by builders in this state, and we have been working on this issue. Number one was in relation to land tax, but I will get further advice from the Minister for Finance on the matter of stamp duty.

We introduced the builders' support facility targeting smaller builders. We understand their cashflow issues and are helping to support them at that time. That is what we are doing for smaller builders. Nicheliving is much more complicated. The Minister for Commerce continues to work on this issue because there are a number of complicating factors in relation to this, Nicheliving itself and how we can support the people who really need it. We also need to make sure that we have a process that can withstand public scrutiny and public probity. We are going through those issues, but we very much feel for all those who have been impacted by this builder.

NICHELIVING**438. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Deputy Premier:**

I have a supplementary question. Before I ask my supplementary question, I join the Deputy Premier in wishing the best for the Premier at this difficult time. I send the condolences of the opposition to him.

Nicheliving customers have been calling for action from the Deputy Premier's government for over a year, and we have asked countless questions about this in recent weeks. When will the government come up with a plan to help the hundreds of families who are trapped in limbo?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

The Minister for Commerce and the Building Commissioner are working on this issue at the moment. As I said, this is complicated. As we know, in some instances—in many instances—private companies sometimes do not do the right thing or face some significant challenges in delivering what they promised to do. As a result, we are going through this very systematically. Also, we feel for, understand and have a lot of concern for the individuals involved. That is why we were the first and only state to bring in a builders' loan facility, acknowledging that there are stranded houses out there, and behind every stranded house is a family or an individual facing severe anxiety and stress in relation to not having their house finished. We understand that. We take this issue seriously. That is why we will make sure that we develop a proposal that works in this instance but will also be very much protected or respected in any further probe or analysis. We will make sure that we have spent taxpayers' money wisely, while also protecting the individuals involved.

FIREARMS ACT — REFORM — COMMUNITY SAFETY**439. Ms K.E. GIDDENS to the Minister for Police:**

I refer to the passing of the Cook Labor government's nation-leading reforms to Western Australia's firearms laws.

- (1) Can the minister advise the house how this historic achievement places community safety as the primary consideration?

- (2) Can the minister outline to the house what these laws will do for people who are vulnerable to acts of family and domestic violence?

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

I thank the member for her question, her interest in this matter and her support for the law.

- (1) In response to her first question about how this historic achievement places community safety as the primary consideration, I say that what we have done is essentially lift the key principle from the John Howard–led National Firearms Agreement. That key principle is that ownership, possession and use of a firearm is a privilege in Australia, and that privilege is conditional on the provision of community safety. That is embedded in our legislation, I think, at clause 4, which then impacts on every other part of the legislation and ensures that any consideration of applying the law will take that into account.
- (2) Beyond that, the member asked what the laws will do for people who are vulnerable to acts of family and domestic violence. There will be specific changes to the law to address the vulnerability of people to family and domestic violence. Firstly, we will prevent access to firearms by people who pose a risk of violence, family violence or intimidating behaviour. This amendment will ensure that in addition to considerations of public safety, which we have elevated, in any decision-making or administration of the bill, specific emphasis will be placed on preventing access to firearms by any person who poses a risk of family violence or intimidation. We understand that the elevation of public safety might include an interpretation of that guidance as addressing domestic violence, but in response to the tragic events in Floreat, we will specifically state the government’s position on family and domestic violence, and that is to be reflected in this space by preventing access to firearms by perpetrators of family violence. By placing it within the objects of the bill, it will flow on to each decision point within the bill, and particularly the consideration by the commissioner of a person’s fit and proper status. In regard to that decision-making process, we have also taken the definition of “family violence” from the Restraining Orders Act; the bill has been amended to include that definition. Previously, the bill reflected only upon violence and did not countenance the wider definition in the Restraining Orders Act. That definition considers not only physical violence to a family member, but also any other behaviour that coerces or controls a family member or causes them to be fearful.

On top of that, we have created mandatory disqualifying orders. There are people currently in the community who have been convicted of serious offences for which the penalty is up to five years or more in jail. Those people who are currently in possession of a firearms licence will have it removed; they will receive a mandatory disqualifying order. This part of the law can be applied in advance of commencement. People who have been convicted of a serious offence will be prevented from owning or retaining a gun. If someone commits an offence now and is charged and then found guilty, they will be subject to these MDOs, but there are as many as a thousand or so of those people out there now, and a hundred of them committed serious family and domestic violence offences. Obviously, the police will be looking very closely at them. The commissioner will apply his own judgement to the fit and proper status of those people in light of the message we have sent with this legislation. It will mean that the community will be safer, and particularly those people who are vulnerable to family and domestic violence will be safer.

HOUSING — AVAILABILITY

440. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Minister for Housing:

I refer to Anglicare WA’s annual rental affordability snapshot released earlier this year, which revealed that rents were up 16 per cent compared with 2023 and 35 per cent since 2022, with only 77 more properties available across the state than were available at the same time in 2023. How can the minister and his government continually say that they are doing everything possible when there are no houses available to rent or those that are available are simply unaffordable?

Mr J.N. CAREY replied:

I thank the member for her question. As I have said repeatedly in this chamber, as a government, we take the issue of our housing and rental markets very seriously. Unfortunately, we are not alone; every state in the country is impacted by housing and rental pressures. We know that. When we speak to industry stakeholders, they tell us that COVID radically reshaped our housing market, with skilled labour shortages, global supply chain issues, cost escalations and, of course, Perth facing unprecedented demand from people who are deciding to move to Western Australia. We know that it is tough, but we also know that Western Australia still remains relatively affordable in comparison with other states.

We are introducing a vast number of measures to boost housing supply, because, ultimately, that is the answer. They include our record investment in social housing, through which we have delivered more than 2 200 social homes to date, with another thousand under contract or construction. There is also our tough approach to short-term rentals and our financial incentives to get homes back into the market. I note that 200 have flowed back into the private market to date. There is our \$5 000 cash incentive for vacant homes, our tax reform around build to rent, our infrastructure fund and our rental relief scheme, which provides up to \$5 000 to keep people in their homes. I note

that Anglicare and the social housing sector have acknowledged the work of this government. I do not have a direct quote, but Anglicare in fact said it was the budget that it had been waiting for. Mark Glasson said that himself, the head of the organisation the member just quoted. We are doing everything we can to boost housing supply, and that is demonstrated in the large number of initiatives that we are rolling out as a government.

HOUSING — AVAILABILITY

441. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Minister for Housing:

I have a supplementary question. Only 77 more properties across the state are available for rent compared with the same period in 2023–24 when the snapshot was taken. When can the thousands of people who are living in their cars, sleeping rough or sleeping on relatives' or friends' floors or going into debt to afford rent expect to see this government's policies actually make a difference?

Mr J.N. CAREY replied:

That type of question from the opposition is just cheap and crass, and it is a reflection of the opposition. Our serious and genuine commitment is demonstrated by the large number of initiatives that we are rolling out. I find it fascinating, because there is no recognition by the opposition of the current housing market. What is quite clear is that the opposition does not even bother to engage properly with the sector. We are told that Hon Steve Martin is missing in action, not to be seen. It is reflected in the fact that they —

Ms M.J. Davies: The numbers from Anglicare don't reflect any shift.

Ms A. Sanderson: You had an opportunity to support reform.

Mr J.N. CAREY: I will get to that. It is reflected in the fact that it is nearly July and the opposition does not have one policy measure. The opposition has criticised every measure that I have introduced, but, more importantly, the member personally had an opportunity to vote on rental reform to provide certainty and protection for renters who are doing it tough. She personally voted against capping rent rises. She personally voted against banning rent bidding. She personally voted against that. She comes into this place and feigns concern about the housing and rental market, but when she personally had a choice to vote on critical measures to protect renters, the people she says she is worried about, she voted against them. It is her shame. She should hold her head in shame.

Ms M.J. Davies: You're in charge, minister. You tell us you're doing everything possible and the numbers are heading in the wrong direction.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr J.N. CAREY: The member for Central Wheatbelt does not care. Each member of the opposition could have voted for —

Ms M.J. Davies: The numbers do not lie, minister.

Mr J.N. CAREY: I can see that the member for Central Wheatbelt is getting angry and agitated; she is embarrassed by her vote.

Ms M.J. Davies: I am not getting agitated; I'm not even close.

Mr J.N. CAREY: There is nothing to laugh and grin about how renters are doing it tough.

Ms M.J. Davies: I am embarrassed for you. You're in charge of making sure people have a roof over their head and none are available.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr J.N. CAREY: The member for Central Wheatbelt laughs and grins about voting against rental protections. The member for Central Wheatbelt voted against measures to deal with rent bidding. She voted against rent capping. She voted against increases only every 12 months. She voted against making —

Ms M.J. Davies: You are failing to deliver any housing.

Mr J.N. CAREY: I have touched —

Several members interjected.

Point of Order

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Point of order.

The SPEAKER: I am about to give the call to the Leader of the House for a point of order, which will, hopefully, be heard in silence.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The minister is attempting to answer the question and is being interjected upon and he is not accepting the interjections.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the House has made a valid point; however, the minister's comments have been a direct attack on the member, so I can understand why there has been a response. Minister for Housing, could you please draw your answer to a close?

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr J.N. CAREY: The reason we see the member for Central Wheatbelt so agitated is because she had a clear choice. Maybe she would like to speak to Anglicare and ask it for its position on those rental reforms. Anglicare would have told the member to vote for the government bill.

You are shameless! You are a disgrace! You had an opportunity to support renters and you did not! You are shameless! You are appalling! You do not care about renters in this current market.

METRONET

442. Mr Y. MUBARAKAI to the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's commitment to creating new local jobs and delivering on world-class infrastructure.

- (1) Can the minister update the house of the progress of Metronet and advise how the program is supporting sustainable local jobs?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house whether she is aware of anyone who opposes the creation of Western Australian jobs?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

- (1)–(2) It is the last question time for the first half of this year so I thought it was a good chance to provide an update on the progress we are making on world-class infrastructure in Western Australia, and Metronet in particular. The member for Butler will be with us in the middle of July —

Mr J.R. Quigley: The fourteenth!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: On 14 July! It is in his diary. He will be with us as we open the Yanchep rail extension. There are three brilliant new train stations and a 14-kilometre extension that will provide world-class infrastructure to the front door of the thousands of people who are moving into the Alkimos corridor. We have seen a lot of excitement from the community. It is a big milestone for Metronet. For the Armadale line transformation, over 75 per cent of the elevated rail between Victoria Park and Beckenham is now in place. Elevated rail is in place over Mint Street, Oats Street, Hamilton Street, Walsh Street and Williams Street and the final level crossing removal at Welshpool Road is happening at the moment. Of course, down in Armadale, work continues to progress with the Byford train station taking shape and the first beams are in place at Armadale Road. All the track has been laid for the Morley–Ellenbrook rail line. The track has all been laid. Remember, the previous government did not lay one centimetre of track for the Morley–Ellenbrook rail line, even though it promised it twice.

Of course, we have our locally made trains and our electric buses down in Malaga. Over 10 000 people have been employed on our Metronet projects. We look across the supply chain at key suppliers like InfraBuild, for which Metronet has afforded the ability for 65 additional local jobs as it supports the delivery of 2 000 tonnes of mesh, more than 5 500 tonnes of structural steel, 16 500 pile cages and 21 000 tonnes of rail. We have very much been supporting local manufacturing and Australian steel. We have seen the strongest employment market in the nation. In May 2024, our employment grew by a massive 1.8 per cent. We continue to see strong employment growth in Western Australia. We support local manufacturing and local content for our projects to make sure that the benefits can be realised right down the supply chain.

The previous government never engaged on those matters. It wanted to fully import trains. It did not want to build the world-class infrastructure that is supporting jobs and supporting affordability and cost-of-living for those who are moving into these corridors. It has been a proud record so far and I cannot wait for the member for Butler to be there on the first train on 14 July as we celebrate yet another significant Metronet milestone.

MINISTER FOR HOUSING — OVERSEAS TRAVEL

443. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Minister for Housing:

Before I ask my question to the Minister for Housing, I put on record the great service of Kirsten Robinson as our Clerk. I wish her all the best.

I refer to the report of overseas air travel by ministers that was tabled today. It revealed that in December the minister took a \$25 000-plus first-class flight to the UK, accompanied by his adviser, Claire Comrie. It was \$51 000 for the pair of them. They flew along with two departmental staff members, making the airfares alone for this trip a \$92 000 expense to the taxpayer. It was a trip supposedly to visit and review social and affordable housing. The cost of the minister's flight is equal to the yearly rent for three houses in Perth, despite an economy return flight —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Minister for Education and member for Swan Hills and others, I would like to be able to hear the question and I would like to minister to hear the question too.

Mr R.S. LOVE: The cost of the minister's flights is equal to the yearly rent for three houses in Perth, despite an economy return flight costing around \$2 500. If the minister had taken those, he would have saved \$84 000. How does he justify this extravagant use of Western Australian taxpayer funds?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please. Minister for Education, I asked you not to interject before. You have continued to do it. Please do not. Leader of the Opposition, there was a lot of preamble to that question—more than usual. I ask you to bear that in mind when drafting future questions. Minister for Housing.

Mr J.N. CAREY replied:

I thank the member for the question. That is wrong. I did not fly first class. I flew in accordance with government policy. The costs relate to —

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

The SPEAKER: This is an opportunity for the minister to respond. I ask the opposition and other members not to continue to interject.

Mr J.N. CAREY: The report tabled in Parliament does not relate to flight costs only. It is a full cost for the visit, including flights, accommodation and associated costs such as internal travel on trains and subways. I did not fly first class, as the member has claimed. In accordance with the policy, I made a full —

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, if you want to have the opportunity of a supplementary, please do not continue to interject. Minister for Housing.

Mr J.N. CAREY: I made a full statement to the Parliament for the ministerial trip and provided a full itinerary of that trip.

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

The SPEAKER: Minister for Education, you are really testing my patience. As a former teacher, I would hope the minister knows better. The Leader of the Opposition with a supplementary—not the Deputy Premier.

MINISTER FOR HOUSING — OVERSEAS TRAVEL

444. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Minister for Housing:

I have a supplementary question. How does the minister reconcile spending \$51 000 of taxpayer funds for a single trip with his adviser when Western Australians are struggling to keep a roof over their heads?

Mr J.N. CAREY replied:

Can we be on the record that the member has it wrong. The member does not acknowledge that he has it wrong. The member has made false claims to this Parliament that he is not choosing to correct. I repeat very clearly: the cost relates to the full cost of the trip, and it was not a first-class flight. The member should retract that in this chamber.

HOUSING — INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT FUND

445. Mr M.J. FOLKARD to the Minister for Planning:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's expansion of the successful infrastructure development fund.

- (1) Can the minister advise the house how the fund is supporting reforms, accelerating housing delivery and boosting supply?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house whether he is aware of anyone who is opposing the government's agenda to deliver more housing?

Mr J.N. CAREY replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for his question and his support for accelerating housing supply in Western Australia. As I have said, this government is doing everything it can to boost housing supply in Western Australia. We have seen from this government a vast number of different initiatives to drive and boost that supply. Those initiatives include infill and apartment developments. It is well known. The Deputy Premier, the Minister for Environment, the Minister for Water and I met with land developers yesterday in a roundtable to talk about boosting housing supply. There is a general recognition of cost escalations. For example, we have seen a more than 30 per cent rise in the cost for a single home, and for apartments and infills we have seen much larger cost escalations to the point that we have seen a number of developments not proceed. That is why we created an \$80 million infrastructure development fund that pays for the headworks of major apartments and infills.

This week I announced the latest grants, which will deliver another 363 apartments across suburban Perth in eight successful projects. Already, as a result of this program, 564 new apartments are currently under construction. As we know, in this tight rental market, every apartment being built is critical for the rental

market and the housing market. In the latest round, I was at a mixed-use development where we turned the soil in Cockburn Central—not the western suburbs, as the member for Cottesloe claims. That will deliver 109 apartments—that is the component we are funding—as well as a hotel lodging house and commercial floor space. Suburbs with other projects include Midland, Fremantle and Sorrento. This is a demonstration of how our government is thinking outside the box to drive that supply.

I note that the opposition is going in the opposite direction. The Nationals WA has already announced planning reforms that it would introduce that will make it more difficult to build workers accommodation and houses in regional Western Australia. It will do that by lifting the threshold, reducing access to the development assessment panel system, and also by changing the composition of DAPs to three experts and three councillors. Anyone could look at the sums and make a very clear determination that a lot more projects will be deferred and unresolved and stagnate in the system. The official Nationals policy is to make it more difficult to deliver housing. What is apparent from the member for Roe, who has complained about local governments and their impact on housing development, is that his party does not even understand it.

It is interesting. The Leader of the Liberal Party also did a piece for the Urban Development Institute of Australia in which she talked to the housing industry. She said that she wanted to provide certainty for those who want to invest in local communities. That was her message to the housing industry sector. She wants to provide certainty for those investments. Yet, when it comes to a precinct approach in her own electorate of Dunsborough, she shows the total opposite. In 2017, the council recommended the upzoning of the town centre to five storeys. Investors and property owners then made a decision about those properties. Come last year and this year, the Liberal leader then advocated for a downzoning to three storeys in Dunsborough. She actively went out of her way to advocate for less housing in the town centre and downzoning in the town centre. I am just interested to know from the Liberal leader how that fits with wanting to provide certainty for those who want to invest in local communities. She wants to flip the zoning around after a decision has been made. This demonstrates the point about the Liberals and the Nationals: they do not understand planning policies. We have seen that with the member for Cottesloe making incorrect statements about CEOs approving high-density. The Liberals do not even have any housing policies, and it is so close to the election. On this side of the house, we are doing everything we can through a range of measures, and on that side of the house, they are either bringing in more red tape or are all over the place.

TREASURY — STAFFING

446. Dr D.J. HONEY to the Treasurer:

I refer to the budget, which shows, a massive 26 per cent increase over two years in Treasury's expenses along with 12.6 per cent staffing growth and an average wage cost rise per full-time officer of 13.8 per cent, which is double the government's wages policy, as well as a 15.7 per cent increase in Western Australian Treasury Corporation staffing.

- (1) Can the Treasurer explain such seeming indulgence with Treasury and the Treasury Corporation and tell us what controls the Treasurer exercises over her agency's spending and staffing growth?
- (2) Is this evidence that the Treasurer's disregard for cost blowouts in the transport portfolio is now extended to Treasury and the wider public sector?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for this question. I find the question quite odd because the total public sector has grown because there has been extraordinary demand for more nurses, doctors, teachers and people in agencies undertaking approvals; you name it. Across every part of government there has been increased demand for services. In Treasury we have just created the housing supply unit. As everyone keeps telling us, and as we understand, housing is the number one priority, so we will throw everything at it. That includes creating a new dedicated housing supply unit to ensure that we continue to have new ideas and better cross-government coordination to deliver on the enormous challenge of housing. In relation to the GST, we have of course a continued attack on the GST from other states wanting to claw back the GST.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Dr D.J. Honey: GST has not changed.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It has not changed because we are protecting it. We continue to protect the GST deals, plus a significant review of the GST will be undertaken over the next two years. That will feed further decisions in relation to it, in particular the analysis that underpins the distribution formula. We will throw everything at that too. As the public sector grows, we need analysts to help us inform how we deliver our services and infrastructure. I can see this is going to be a daily or weekly event. The member has nothing left to do and no-one to talk to.

Ms S.E. Winton: No policy to write.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: He has no policy to write. It is a bit sad. I do not like doing this because I feel sorry for the member, but he stands in the afternoon tea room looking lonely with no-one to talk to, and so he wants to come in here and throw out some ridiculous accusations about how we are running the government. The member for Cottesloe

can keep doing that, and I will keep explaining what a well-functioning government looks like and the fact that we continue to deliver to address the enormous demands in the community. As I said, whether it be health, housing or police, there is an enormous number of projects. Our asset investment program has gone from about \$5.6 billion when the Liberal–National government was in power and had a recession with falling employment to over \$10.6 billion just for this financial —

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Cottesloe, if you have something further to contribute, you can do it by way of supplementary question if you do not continue to interject.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Just off the top my head, and again back-casting to ensure consistency in numbers in relation to the Australian Accounting Standards Board —

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Sorry—member for Cannington?

Mr W.J. Johnston: I just want to point out that in the last year of the Liberal government, 113 per cent of revenue was expenditure, whereas we are at 87 per cent of revenue as expenditure. Talk about deficit!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Turning to the revenue boom, I want to reflect on the fact that somehow the previous government thought there was no revenue boom and nothing happened. During the second term of the previous government, there was the most significant expansion of the resources sector in history, and we basically saw a doubling in production capacity and major investment by major iron ore players throughout the Pilbara. The capacity pretty much doubled. I have seen the investment. The private sector investment was a massive boom. The former government had massive royalties. The former government then budgeted on the basis that it would always get that massive increase in price—so that is what it did. Again, I do not know how the former government did this or on what basis anyone provided advice to do this, but it did it: it was basically forecasting, I recall just off the top of my head, an iron ore price of over \$US110 across the entire forward estimates. The iron ore price then normalised and the former government found itself with operating deficits. If we want to talk about deficits, let us talk about the operating deficits that the former government delivered. The former government did not have enough money to pay the ongoing recurrent everyday expenditure. As I said, everybody in this chamber has probably borrowed money to buy a house, but if people borrow money to go shopping every week, that is when they have a problem, and that is what the former government did. It put the state into operating deficit. The former government saw debt from actual to actual climb by about \$29 billion in eight years. The net increase in eight years was \$29 billion.

Since winning government, our net debt has fallen, and we have delivered five consecutive operating surpluses. The member tries to claim that somehow the former government was poor and everything was out to get that government when it was in power for eight years. It is actually the opposite: the former government had the biggest investment boom, far bigger than what we have seen. I have the graph in my mind. The asset investment and the expansion of the resources sector was incredible. Basically, every major iron ore miner was doubling its capacity.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Gorgon. Wheatstone.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Sorry, there were also Gorgon, Wheatstone and the major liquefied natural gas projects.

Again, like I was saying, I know the member for Cottesloe does not have much else to do —

Several members interjected.

Dr D.J. Honey: You don't know the difference between personal insult and criticism of government policy.

Mr J.N. Carey interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please! Minister for Housing!

Mr J.N. Carey interjected.

The SPEAKER: Minister for Housing, the Deputy Premier is on her feet endeavouring to answer a question. Do not incessantly interject.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The member for Cottesloe said, “You don't know the difference between a criticism of policy and personal attack.” The member for Cottesloe has come in here and called me corrupt. He has said worst things in the *Subiaco Post*. He did Facebook posts on the member for Perth that were literally the most personal, insulting Facebook posts I have ever seen an opposition do.

Dr D.J. Honey: That's untrue.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It is; it is true, and you have done the same to me, so do not come in here and pretend you have done nothing. You pretend that somehow the former government did not have any money; it had tonnes, but it just could not forecast. It ran two Expenditure Review Committees. Remember, the former government had

two cabinets; that is why it led the state to a disaster. There were two cabinets making decisions based on false forecasts. That is why the Liberal–National government failed and that is why we continue to budget conservatively and we deliver a united, coordinated cabinet, which the Liberal and National Parties will never do. I mean, they cannot even keep an opposition of six together, let alone ever, ever deliver a coordinated, united government.

The SPEAKER: Just before I give the call for a supplementary question, we could be here a very long time if we do not get short, sharp supplementary questions and short answers to them.

TREASURY — STAFFING

447. **Dr D.J. HONEY to the Treasurer:**

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and you will enjoy this. I have a supplementary question. Does the Treasurer see her ministerial role as having any public interest obligation to exercise restraint over public sector costs and staffing on behalf of the community?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

Every day, the opposition says we need to employ more police. I agree, and that is why we are employing more police. The opposition says we need to deliver more nurses. I agree, and that is why we are delivering more nurses.

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please. You have had the opportunity to ask your question.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The opposition calls on us to deliver more doctors, and we are. The opposition calls on us to deliver more education assistants and more teachers, and we are. Does the member for Cottesloe know what a good government does? A good government balances the needs of the community with the fact that we are here to deliver quality services to address challenges while also managing the finances. You can do both, and that is what Labor governments do. They manage the finances well to deliver on the priorities of the community.

HEALTH — WORKFORCE

448. **Mr G. BAKER to the Minister for Health:**

I refer to the Cook Labor government's ongoing commitment to delivering a strong health workforce.

Can the minister update the house on how this government is supporting WA Health's junior medical workforce and making WA Health an employer of choice?

Ms A. SANDERSON replied:

Speaking of employing more nurses and doctors, that is exactly what this government has done. We have increased our clinical workforce by around 30 per cent since coming to government. Since 2017, we have grown our healthcare workforce by 4 400 nurses and 1 600 doctors—that is a 30 per cent increase. That is where the expenditure is. If we ask the community whether that is the right priority for expenditure, it will say yes and that it is exactly where it expects a state government to spend its money—in core public services, improving access to public transport, improving access to education and improving access to health care. That is exactly where it is. We are proud of that on this side of the house. We are not trying to penny pinch in the public health system. We are not trying to cut back on staff in the public health system and reduce the number of full-time equivalents. We are proud of our increase in expenditure in health, education and public transport, because that is what we believe in on this side of the house. The member for Cottesloe can continue to ask those questions and he will continue to be ridiculed because he is so far out of step with community expectations.

I was really delighted to be at Fiona Stanley Hospital this morning, because, of course, we are increasing our clinical staff, but we also need to make sure that the place where people are working, WA Health, has a really good, positive workforce. We want people to have long and happy careers in the public health system. One of the most challenged clinical workforces is junior doctors, also known as doctors in training. Essentially, once doctors finish their medical undergraduate degrees, they do many, many years—sometimes eight to 12 years—of postgraduate training to specialise in a particular area. Previously, junior doctors were treated pretty badly, flogged pretty hard, by the consultants and hospitals. There are some historic cultural issues and challenges that both the Australian Medical Association and the government acknowledge. The way that we challenge some of those cultural norms in the medical workforce is to change the processes available to junior doctors to access leave and overtime and to have reasonable rostering hours to provide a more sustainable career path for them.

The period of time in which people generally undertake their postgraduate training is also the time they are having families. Junior doctors are in their late 30s and 40s. It is the time they are having families. They want flexibility. Men want, and are demanding, quite rightly, more parental time off. They want to be more engaged with their families, and they want to spend time with their children when they are young and growing up. The government needs to respond and meet those challenges. That is why I am so delighted to be launching the doctor support unit at the South Metropolitan Health Service, which will improve the workplace in south metro for the Rockingham General Hospital, Peel, when it comes online, Fremantle Hospital and Fiona Stanley Hospital.

As I said, it is no secret that there are cultural challenges in medicine. Sometimes it is about changing the processes around how people access existing entitlements. Senior doctors have commented that they went through hell when they were junior doctors and it should be different for our junior doctors now. I am glad to see that these attitudes are changing. There have been calls for a cultural shift amongst the medical workforce, fostering a more inclusive and supportive medical culture in which doctors feel safe to report inappropriate behaviour. We have been working very closely with the Australian Medical Association on its next agreement, really prioritising the junior doctor workforce. We have provided permanency for our medical workforce. For the first time in about two decades, our medical workforce will be permanent.

South metro and east metro have launched their own platforms to support the junior doctor workforce. North metro has a really strong program of supporting its junior doctors. We recognise that this is a historic challenge but one that we have to meet if we are going to maintain a sustainable and healthy workforce. The wellbeing and health of our junior doctors is incredibly important. We need people to not burn out. We need people to be working, and working into the future.

We are also focusing on expanding models of care for other areas of our workforce, tapping untapped scope in enrolled nurses, in nursing, in nurse practitioners and in allied health. We now have extended scope allied health workers and physios. We have a fantastic extended scope physio who runs out of Rockingham, providing a great alternative to the emergency department.

Supporting our workforce is a hallmark of this government. Expanding our workforce is a hallmark of this government, and we are very proud of it.

WESTERN POWER — POLE REPLACEMENT

449. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Minister for Energy:

I refer to the recent call from a farmer from Kojonup to the ABC morning show regarding his bizarre experiences with Western Power's pole replacement. He requested the removal of six poles in one paddock and three in another area, which both led to unused facilities. He was quoted in the order of \$50 000 to remove the poles, which he obviously rejected. Eventually, Western Power took it upon itself to replace the nine poles and put in a new transformer, which led to nowhere. When we have new businesses and developers waiting up to two years for a new connection, why is Western Power not able to help them but is able to replace poles and a transformer that my constituent wanted removed?

Mr R.R. WHITBY replied:

I thank the member for prior notice of this question. I appreciate that.

I also heard that conversation on the radio, but I think it is one of those cases in which there is another side of the story and the full details need to come out. It is true that Mr Heggaton—I will go through the history a bit—has requested that poles and wires be removed from his property. He first lodged a request back in 2008. That request was later cancelled by him. Another request was made in 2013, which led to poles and wires being removed in 2018. Mr Heggaton last officially asked for poles and wires to be removed from his property in 2017. This was costed at \$14 500. The issue was escalated repeatedly. There were issues and requests. Western Power eventually decided to bear that cost after the customer complained about the quoted cost of disconnecting and removing assets.

It is important to know that this property owner has a number of large landholdings that are made up of many separate titles. In fact, I am told there are 170 poles on his entire Kojonup property—so many titles making up one landholding. To further complicate the matter, not all those titles are in his name, so it is a bit of a minefield working out which properties are which and which ones he is referring to. When Western Power does a search on his name, it does not necessarily come back with all the properties he is talking about because they are in other names.

Mr Heggaton apparently reached out to Western Power in March after the previous history I spoke about. However, there was no recent formal request for poles to be removed from his property. Western Power has done a search. It believes that after a conversation Mr Heggaton had about issues about poles, he did not make a formal request. That is Western Power's information to me; it cannot find evidence of that. That was in March. There was a conversation with Western Power but no formal request for anything to be done. There was a conversation on ABC radio on 12 June when Mr Heggaton made some comments, asking Western Power for two spur lines and nine power poles to be removed, and he was quoted a cost of \$50 000. After that conversation on the radio, Western Power reached out to Mr Heggaton. During their conversation, he told Western Power, according to Western Power, that the quote was for between \$30 000 and \$40 000 and it related to a request about four years ago, in 2020.

We need to get to the bottom of this. I will say though that when there is a belief that infrastructure is no longer required by a certain property owner, it is often the case that the infrastructure that traverses their property supplies power to other neighbours. Western Power does not want to de-energise infrastructure if it serves other neighbours across the property. It needs to clarify exactly what is going on. We are talking about over 100 poles on a property broken up into different titles. It needs to seek clarity.

The other issue is that these are Western Power assets. There might be a request to no longer have a property energised but after a change of ownership of property, the new owner might request that to happen, so we do not want to expend money by taking away infrastructure only to reinstall it later.

The issue of replacing Western Power's poles is also important from the perspective of safety. First and foremost, Western Power has a responsibility to maintain safe infrastructure. When it sights infrastructure that needs replacing, it will replace it. That is a very important issue because when Western Power infrastructure fails, it could lead to outages certainly, but in worse situations, it could lead to tragedies, loss of life and devastation resulting from fire. That is a priority of Western Power.

There is some confusion with this issue. Western Power has taken the initiative, after not hearing from this gentleman for some time. After hearing that radio spot, I am very keen that it gets to the bottom of the requests and the issues. It is currently working with the property owner to resolve his issues.

WESTERN POWER — POLE REPLACEMENT

450. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Minister for Energy:

I have a supplementary question. I understand that these poles and wires were going to unused premises. Certainly from my perspective —

The SPEAKER: Sorry, this is not an opportunity to explain.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Sorry, minister. There were also challenges with the online system. Will the minister do a review into that?

The SPEAKER: Member, you cannot make a statement as a supplementary question. Minister, given the time, can we have a very brief response please.

Mr R.R. WHITBY replied:

I understand that this person may be having some frustrations, but I think that, on balance, there are issues on both sides. Western Power has tried to do the best thing in a confusing situation. I have made a claim to Western Power to seek a resolution and reach out to the property owner.

COMMUNITY SPORTING AND RECREATION FACILITIES FUND

451. Mr P. LILBURNE to the Minister for Sport and Recreation:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's continued commitment to support sporting clubs across Western Australia.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on the delivery of this government's record investment in new and upgraded community sporting and recreation infrastructure?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house how this investment is providing safe and accessible sporting facilities for all Western Australians regardless of gender, age or ability?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN replied:

- (1)–(2) I will, and I will be as brief as I can. I start by saying well done, congratulations and best wishes to our Clerk, Kirsten Robinson, to whom I make a formal apology. During the last coalition government, I was Opposition Whip and sat where the member for Scarborough is sitting when the Clerk had been the Clerk for only a few months. On the last Thursday of the Parliament, I looked across and there were no Barnett government members here, so I closed the Parliament down. I moved that the house do adjourn and we had to adjourn. I apologise for that, but it was a great feeling at the time!

As we close Parliament before we go to the winter break, I thank the member for the question. It is important that everyone is aware of the significance of the spend on sporting and recreation infrastructure by this government since coming to power in 2017. It has been very focused, as the member highlighted in his question, ensuring that girls and young women now have better access than ever to facilities that suit them for their sporting needs. There has been record money for the community sporting and recreation facilities fund and a record amount spent on the legacy projects that the Minister for Tourism supported after the FIFA Women's World Cup, for example. We have now seen dozens and dozens of fields, projects and facilities expanded, renovated or reconfigured to allow girls and young women to play sport. Those facilities were simply not fit for purpose for them prior to that, and we have seen a huge increase in the participation rate.

In the last 12 months alone, the CSRFF has provided a total of \$23.2 million, which equates to 55 projects right across the state. The Club Night Lights program received \$4 million for 32 projects. We want to light up more and more grounds and outdoor courts so that more people can access those facilities to train and play at night. That has been a successful program over our period of government. In April 2023, I announced an uplift in the CSRFF from \$12.5 million to \$20 million. The Club Night Lights program has been a huge success. Since 2017, the CSRFF has provided a total of \$125 million to 651 projects across the state. In addition, over \$350 million has been provided through election commitments and as a result of the WA Recovery Plan.

There is probably no place in Western Australia now that has not benefited from the investment by this government into sport and recreation facility infrastructure. There are more lights on at night around the state so that young people can play, there are more children and young people—both girls and boys—and young men and women playing sport, and more seniors out there engaged in sport. That investment will continue because the Cook Labor government recognises that investing in this type of infrastructure means that more and more young people and other people in the community will be connected with and participate in high-quality and good, healthy lifestyles.

I thank all members here for their support for all those sporting organisations throughout their communities, big and small. Let us not forget the smaller codes. Some of the bigger codes get a lot of attention, but we must never forget the smaller codes such as Diamond Sports and pickleball, which is booming around Western Australia, Australia and the world.

Well done, member. I thank him for the question and his support of his community sporting organisations. It is a significant investment that makes a huge difference to every community no matter where it is in Western Australia. I am very proud of that investment. We will keep going because I have a magnificent friend here in the Minister for Tourism, who is getting out there and supporting sport, sporting events and all those sorts of things and the legacy they provide to the state and the people of Western Australia.

The SPEAKER: The member for Roe with the last question.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE PAYMENT

452. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Minister for Education:

My last question is to the Minister for Education. I note that the student assistance payment applications close next week and the reports that up to 30 to 40 per cent of families have not applied for it yet.

- (1) Will the government consider extending the application timeframe and provide a targeted campaign to the regions where the uptake has been lower to encourage them to access the payment rather than let the money return to the consolidated revenue?
- (2) Why is the minister refusing to release the breakdown of the payments by school to the media and non-Labor members of Parliament?
- (3) Finally, does the minister agree with the comments made by the member for Kalgoorlie that the payments have been difficult to access in some ways?

Dr A.D. BUTI replied:

- (1)–(3) I am glad I was asked this question because it allows me to reiterate what a great program this is. As of 18 June, over \$67 million has been paid out to families in Western Australia—over \$67 million. This is a program that the opposition opposes. It is quite intriguing that the member who has been at the frontline of opposing it keeps asking me questions about it in Parliament. I promised and even said to the member that I would go out to those schools with him. Let us go to them next week and help those who have not applied for the payment to apply. I am interested in ensuring that as many people as possible who have not yet applied will apply by the deadline, which is next Friday. That has been well known. People have had a whole term to apply. We, on this side, have been out there championing this program. All members opposite have done is bag it and criticise it. As I said, if the member changes his mind and wants to promote it next week, let me know and I will go out and help the member.

As I said, over \$67 million has gone into the bank accounts of Western Australian families. It would be zero under the opposition because it opposes it. It opposed us giving each secondary student \$250 and each primary school student \$150. It is a brilliant program. We are proud of it, as Minister for Education I am proud of it, and we will continue to champion it for the next seven days.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE PAYMENT

453. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Minister for Education:

I have a supplementary question. There are 51 schools in my electorate, but I again ask the minister: will he release the breakdown of the figures to non-Labor members and the media so that we can ascertain which schools in our electorates have not had a large number of applications? That is the opportunity —

The SPEAKER: No, you have asked your question.

Dr A.D. BUTI replied:

I gave the member the answer the first time. We are proud of this program and we will keep championing it for the next seven days to ensure that as many people as possible who have not signed up do sign up.

The SPEAKER: That concludes question time.

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION*Minister for Housing — Personal Explanation*

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Leader of the Opposition) [3.09 pm]: I rise under standing order 148 to make a personal explanation. In question time, I said that the Minister for Housing had travelled first class. Apparently, he had travelled business class. That was confirmed in the *Report of overseas air travel undertaken by ministers, parliamentary secretaries and government officers on official business*. However, it also has been confirmed by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet that it relates to air travel only.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please! Please sit down.

Point of Order

Dr A.D. BUTI: In a personal explanation, a member corrects the mistake they made. They do not then continue with an argument. That is against the standing order for a personal explanation.

The SPEAKER: That is right. Under standing order 148—I pointed this out to members yesterday—members cannot enter into debate on a personal explanation. It is not about commenting on what someone else has said; it is just for a member to correct what they have said. Unless the Leader of the Opposition wants to correct anything further that he has said, that will conclude it.

Personal Explanation Resumed

Mr R.S. LOVE: I will leave it at that.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please.

CONSERVATION AND LAND MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2024*Consideration in Detail*

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

Clause 1: Short title —

Debate was interrupted after the clause had been partly considered.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs M.R. Marshall): We are dealing with the Conservation and Land Management Amendment Bill 2024 and we are still on clause 1.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: From memory, we were looking at the feral pig situation and the minister was halfway through his response on how the government is going to manage feral pigs and other feral pests under the new regime.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: I thank the member. From recollection, I made the point that less disturbance of the forest would help the resilience of native species against the incursions of introduced species. The other point is that the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions already maintains a regime of pest control for feral animals. That will continue on state forest land and elsewhere.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I would beg to differ. I would have thought that if there were less interaction and less forestry, the number of feral animals would probably expand. Nonetheless, I will move on. I mentioned this in my contribution to the second reading debate: how will the provision of firewood be managed?

Mr R.R. WHITBY: I thank the member for the question. This is always an issue of interest. The supply of commercial firewood will be contracted by the Forest Products Commission, so that detail would be best sought from the FPC. Commercial firewood can come only from ecological thinning or in anticipation of mine operations or infrastructure. Some of those areas were defined earlier; firewood can be extracted ahead of mining operations or the building of roads or other infrastructure works in state forests. In addition to making sure that commercial supplies are made available to commercial firewood businesses that then supply the public, DBCA will continue to make non-commercial firewood available from public firewood areas of state forests and timber reserves. The member will be familiar with the areas that have already been set aside where people can collect their own firewood, and those locations are advertised online. Firewood is also available for private use from unallocated crown land, with permission from the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage, and from freehold land. Again, we are not saying that people can wander into any national park and chop down a tree, but there are areas set aside by DBCA and others from which people can seek permission to obtain firewood, and they are well advertised and promoted.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Before I give you the call, member for Roe, I note that the questions are straying a little from clause 1.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: We are basically going to ask all our questions under clause 1 and pretty well wrap it up, I think.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I am willing to accommodate that, if the minister is happy to do that.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: Yes, we are. Stick to the plan! Thank you.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: For the uneducated, I am just curious about the ecological thinning program and, as the minister mentioned, timber from mining clearances. What goes to the silicon scenario under the state agreement? What goes to firewood? What goes to furniture makers? Is there some sort of overview of how that is all going to work?

Mr R.R. WHITBY: I would love to be able to give the member that detail, but, again, this is something that the FPC deals with. Certainly, there is a range of sources of timber from the infrastructure work we do and from ecological thinning, which obviously results in smaller diameter trunks when we are getting rid of the thin stuff. I also mentioned mine clearing. The detail of how that is accessed and what comes through the market is definitely a matter for the Forest Products Commission.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Will the ecological thinning program expand in future to provide more timber for furniture, firewood et cetera?

Mr R.R. WHITBY: Yes, it will certainly ramp up. This is a new way of managing our forests, but, as I mentioned earlier, it is our aim to make available up to 8 000 hectares per annum for ecological thinning. The product that can be harvested as a result of that process will then be available. That is what we anticipate to be the right balance in maintaining ecological thinning. Remember, the point of this is harvesting for the health of the forest, rather than creating a timber extraction industry.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: The minister spoke about online advertising of the firewood areas where people can potentially collect firewood. Is there some sort of overall breakdown of that—how many hectares that will be and in which shires—in summary?

Mr R.R. WHITBY: Without having the internet in front of me and going online to find out where people can be directed, it is spread across the south west. We are mindful of having access and proximity issues; it might not always be just over the road, but we are trying to maintain a spread of area that provides convenience. It is about collecting what is on the forest floor in an area where thinning has occurred. In many of these areas, fallen timber and the results of thinning can deliver a lot of timber for collection. Obviously, areas where the resource has been identified are known, so people will go there and find firewood.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I have a couple of final questions. How is the timber felled from mining activities presently managed? Who manages the process? Obviously, some of those trees are pushed into heaps and the like. How is that managed and how does some of that timber find its way to become suitable timber for firewood, furniture or whatever?

Mr R.R. WHITBY: That is a good question. At the heart of one part of this amendment is ensuring that we do not waste a precious resource. I note the member's comments during his second reading contribution and his concern about mining. Those comments are well taken and noted. If that does happen, it is important that we make the most of the resource. We can imagine that in a mining scenario in which there is clearing, more than just small diameter trunks would come out of ecological thinning; it could be rather large trees. There is value for different people. Artisanal furniture people might be interested in the larger trunks that are available, and there might be a whole range of timber for firewood et cetera. Again, that is part of the role of the Forest Products Commission. The FPC would be onsite, in consultation with the mining company, to work out where the block to be cleared is, identify the opportunities and make sure that when that timber is felled it finds a very happy recipient.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: We spoke about the transition package a little earlier. I refer to the failure to supply logs according to the supply agreements that were in place. Does the minister have any figures on the number of logs and whether any compensation was provided or requested?

Mr R.R. WHITBY: Again, I am terribly sorry, but this is outside my portfolio. I have never been briefed on this issue. It is a matter for another minister, and I cannot answer the question.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I am sure that our friends in the Legislative Council will ask the Minister for Forestry. Does the minister have any idea of the number of jobs that will be lost? I know that he has spoken about 65 additional jobs in the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions coming into the mix. Does the minister have any idea of the number of jobs that will be lost as a result of this legislation going through?

Mr R.R. WHITBY: I do not. As I said, this is an area in which we see the potential for opportunities and new industries. We are investing heavily to ensure that those new industries and opportunities exist so there will be job creation. I cannot supply the member with any detail on that.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I have a further question. I have nearly wrapped up.

As the minister knows, in my second reading contribution I referred at length to the encouragement that the former Minister for Forestry gave to Parkside Timber. Does the minister have any information about whether Parkside has totally ceased its activities and whether it was compensated in any way for the closure of the industry?

Mr R.R. WHITBY: The member is again testing me, and I am loath to make guesses. I am trying to remember. I do have some recollection, but, again, it is not my portfolio area. I do not want to say something that may be incorrect, given that I do not have access to that detail. I apologise, but that is a question for someone else.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 2 to 8 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

[Leave granted to proceed forthwith to third reading.]

Third Reading

MR R.R. WHITBY (Baldivis — Minister for Environment) [3.25 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a third time.

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [3.25 pm]: Very briefly, I say thank you to our advisers, who have nearly departed the scene. I appreciate their efforts. Certainly, as I pointed out to the minister a short time ago, I think that the Minister for Forestry will be asked a copious number of questions in the Legislative Council. My understanding is that there is still a lack of clarity about many of these issues, whether that is about firewood, ecological thinning, supply agreements for logs or timber for furniture. The list goes on.

As I said earlier, my perspective is that I found it ironic that the former Minister for Forestry, Hon Dave Kelly, said in 2019 how fantastic the industry would be, how we would encourage companies like Parkside Timber to come across from Queensland, and how we would take up all those opportunities for sustainable forest management. Of course, we have had such a great industry over time. That was quite ironic from my perspective. When almost two years later, out of nowhere, the former Premier Hon Mark McGowan came in and said that the government was pulling the rug out from underneath the industry and messing up the lives of many people in Manjimup, Pemberton, Nannup and all those associated towns, it was quite frightening for those communities.

The rallies began. A feature of this government is rallies; if it is not teachers who are rallying, it is nurses or farmers. The list goes on. Even the Country Women's Association rallied in front of Parliament House. The feature of this government is that regional communities do not matter. It will put the boots into regional communities. There will be some collateral damage. Some of its regional members will get wiped out; there are no two ways about that. The government hopes that it has enough Labor members in its union-oriented background to win enough seats in the 2025 election. This is what has happened: regional communities have been sacrificed. Regional members of the Labor Party have also been sacrificed, but that is a decision that the leadership of the WA Labor Party has made. Once again, another industry is collateral damage to the policies of this Labor government.

I look forward to our members in the Legislative Council having an opportunity to get some more clarity about some of the issues—firewood, ecological thinning, supply agreements, logs et cetera. I reiterate that the position of the opposition is that we oppose the bill.

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe) [3.29 pm]: I will not reprise my contribution to the second reading debate on the Conservation and Land Management Amendment Bill 2024, but I will say that the consideration in detail stage revealed a couple of important facts. In relation to some of the comments made by members on the other side in their contributions to the second reading debate, this bill will do nothing extra to prevent logging in old-growth forests because that is already banned. That was confirmed by the minister. This bill is not about preventing any logging in old-growth forests and will do nothing to improve the environment in respect of greenhouse gases and carbon dioxide emissions. In fact, a consequence of this bill will be that we will have less carbon sequestered by the forests. I was a little surprised by the member for Belmont, who complained about this side talking about other subjects but then went on to talk for a long time about nuclear energy. She claimed that members on this side are not interested in global warming and the like, but I am certain the member for Belmont knows that the principal contributor to global temperature increases is believed to be increasing atmospheric carbon dioxide. A consequence of this bill and the cessation of sustainable logging in one-third of our state forest is that it will ultimately lead to an ongoing increase in carbon in the environment as opposed to pulling more carbon out through the forests.

The reality is that this bill will simply destroy hundreds of jobs in small communities that cannot afford to lose those jobs. The tragedy is that they are hundreds of jobs in what I think would be easy to demonstrate is the most sustainable industry that the state had—that is, sustainable logging in the state forest. That industry could literally have continued for centuries because it was so well managed over sequential governments, and I give credit to the government departments that have been responsible for that. Clearly, the previous Minister for Forestry, Hon Dave Kelly, believed that, too, as was well pointed out by the member for Roe. This is an extremely disappointing bill that has come before the house. The government will get its headline and its grab, and people in Fremantle might be happy with it, but I think this is actually a tragedy for the state of Western Australia.

MR R.R. WHITBY (Baldivis — Minister for Environment) [3.32 pm] — in reply: I will wrap up the debate on the Conservation and Land Management Amendment Bill 2024. I voice my appreciation for the advisers, Brendan, Sophie and Emily, who have been on the longer journey than just today but were very helpful today. I thank everyone for their contributions today. I have a much more optimistic view of this legislation. I note that the Assembly will pass this legislation on national Arbor Day, and I think that is entirely appropriate. I am very optimistic, because this is an important decision. We can think back to when the former Gallop government banned logging in old-growth

forests 20 years ago. I do not think we would find anyone—hopefully no-one in this chamber—who would say that that was a bad idea and wants to revisit that decision. I think we will say the same thing about this legislation in time. With time, we will say what a wonderful decision this was.

This legislation will allow a future conservative government to come back to the Parliament and argue to restart timber logging in native forests. That will be its call. The member for Cottesloe mentioned Fremantle. People in Nedlands, Churchlands and other electorates might be very interested in the Liberal Party's position on this. If members opposite have a proposal to reinstitute logging in native forests, they should put it to the election, and we will talk about it far and wide in the regions and the metropolitan area. They can debate that and stand by it if they wish.

The member for Cottesloe was very interesting today. At one point, he effectively made the point that chopping down trees was good for the environment. That is an interesting argument. I would love to hear more about his idea that it is good to chop down trees and that that is a good result for the environment.

The member for Roe bemoaned the impact of mining on our native forests and had real issues with that, which I can understand and appreciate. Then again, he has the opportunity to vote for this legislation and he is not doing it. I wonder how much of that is actually his view.

This is good legislation that will protect the environment. We face a crisis with climate change. This legislation will protect our forests and make them more resilient for the future. The vast majority of Western Australians will thank this chamber for what it is doing today. I thank everyone.

Division

Question put and a division taken, the Acting Speaker (Mrs M.R. Marshall) casting her vote with the ayes, with the following result —

Ayes (37)

Mr S.N. Aubrey	Ms M.J. Hammat	Mr D.R. Michael	Dr K. Stratton
Mr G. Baker	Ms J.L. Hanns	Mr S.A. Millman	Mr C.J. Tallentire
Ms H.M. Beazley	Mr M. Hughes	Mr Y. Mubarakai	Mr D.A. Templeman
Dr A.D. Buti	Mr W.J. Johnston	Mrs L.M. O'Malley	Mr P.C. Tinley
Mr J.N. Carey	Mr H.T. Jones	Mr P. Papalia	Ms C.M. Tonkin
Mrs R.M.J. Clarke	Mr D.J. Kelly	Mr S.J. Price	Mr R.R. Whitby
Ms C.M. Collins	Dr J. Krishnan	Ms A. Sanderson	Ms C.M. Rowe (<i>Teller</i>)
Ms D.G. D'Anna	Mr P. Lilburne	Mr D.A.E. Scaife	
Mr M.J. Folkard	Mrs M.R. Marshall	Ms J.J. Shaw	
Ms K.E. Giddens	Ms S.F. McGurk	Mrs J.M.C. Stojkovski	

Noes (4)

Dr D.J. Honey	Mr R.S. Love	Mr P.J. Rundle	Ms M.J. Davies (<i>Teller</i>)
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Pairs

Ms L.A. Munday	Ms M. Beard
Mr R.H. Cook	Ms L. Mettam

Question thus passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT TRUST BILL 2024

Second Reading

Resumed from 13 June.

MS M.J. HAMMAT (Mirrabooka — Parliamentary Secretary) [3.41 pm]: Members may recall that about this time last week, I was halfway through making a contribution about this bill before we broke for question time. I rise to finish my contribution. I have a lot of excellent comments I want to say about this bill, but because I am always a team player, I will keep my comments brief this afternoon as I know people are keen to bring this bill to a conclusion.

I want to talk today about one particular community sporting event in my electorate. I want to do it today because today is World Refugee Day. Therefore, I want to give a shout-out to the Mirrabooka Refugee Week Committee, which hosted the Refugee Week Freedom Cup and family fun day event last Saturday at the Herb Graham Recreation Centre at Mirrabooka. The Freedom Cup involves about a dozen teams representing their countries of origin, and competing for what is called the Freedom Cup. It was great to see the teams there on Saturday and, in particular, to see the increase in women's teams this year. Although it is called a football tournament, it is the round football, so it is a soccer tournament not AFL. It was fantastic to see the City of Stirling and the Western Australia Police Force play an exhibition match to get things underway at the beginning of the day.

Great emphasis was placed on it being a family fun day with activities, including information stalls, face painting, henna, Australian animals, farm animals and a free sausage sizzle. I want to take this opportunity to thank all the organisations that were part of the collaboration that brought the event together. In particular, I thank the Edmund Rice Centre WA, the City of Stirling, MercyCare, Australian Red Cross, Football West, the WA Police Force, Australian Federal Police and the Australian Border Force. It was also brilliant to see both Football Futures and the Bachar Houli Foundation there with activities and stalls. I thank Hon Dr Tony Buti for attending the opening ceremony, and I am delighted that we were able to support the event with a grant from the Office of Multicultural Interests this year.

I congratulate Mirrabooka football club, or the Hazari boys, who won the male competition, and Westnam United Football Club, who won the girls' competition. These kinds of fun and inclusive community sporting events bring our community together and make it stronger and better. As it was the start of Refugee Week, it was a brilliant way to bring together the diversity of the Mirrabooka community and celebrate that cultural diversity in a way that was fun, supportive and underlined by community sport.

I will bring my contribution to an end, but I conclude by reflecting on one of the things that is great about this bill and the work that the minister has done in this portfolio. The bill has underlined community participation. Sport is a way to bring us together. It makes our community stronger. It makes us better as individuals, and it helps us build more resilient communities for the future. I congratulate the minister for the work he is doing to support community sport and increase participation. This bill is another part of it. With that, I commend the bill to the house.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Sport and Recreation) [3.44 pm] — in reply: I love praise, and I ask members to give it in abundance! I thank the member for her comments.

Before I begin my response, I acknowledge that with the opposition's support I understand we will deal with this bill promptly. Following that, the Speaker will acknowledge a very long-serving member of our Parliamentary Library. I acknowledge Judy Ballantyne's long service to Parliament and the Parliamentary Library. I think she has been here longer than I have. I have been here for 23 and a half years, and I think she has been here a bit longer than that! After we have dealt with this bill and voted on the third reading, I understand there will be an acknowledgement. I pass on my sincere congratulations and thank Judy on behalf of members past and present for her service to the Parliament.

I turn to the Sports and Entertainment Trust Bill 2024. If we are using athletics terms, that was a bit of a false start, but we got there and have run through the ribbon. I thank members for their contributions. Some members highlighted their own sporting prowess and some highlighted their lack of prowess in a range of sports. Many members highlighted the tremendous contribution of the many volunteers in their communities who keep all sorts of sport codes alive. That includes the volunteer hours that go in, and the support that goes into ensuring that children and young people, men and women, are engaged, and a greater diversity of people are able to feel safe in playing sport, no matter what their gender circumstances. I think that is very important. That is one of the reasons why this government has, through various funding sources, upgraded so much infrastructure throughout the state. We have lit many fields and courts so that kids and local communities can play and train at night and feel safe. I think that is really important.

I thank all the members who made a contribution to this debate. I thank the opposition spokesperson for sport and recreation for his contribution. I hope that with this response I will be able to deal with a couple of the issues that he raised. I understand if they are satisfied, we will not need to go into consideration in detail and we can deal with the third reading forthwith—and then, of course, we will acknowledge the tremendous contribution of Judy Ballantyne.

First, I will go through a couple of important aspects. The measures of this bill are modelled on the successful Arts and Culture Trust Act, which I took through this Parliament last year. The Arts and Culture Trust Act has provisions that are almost identical to the bill we are dealing with, apart from the inclusion in the bill before us of some additional public safety measures in part 5 modelled on similar provisions in the Major Events Act 2023. I am sure members will acknowledge that those measures are entirely appropriate given the size of venues that are operated by VenuesWest. As we know, VenuesWest has a suite of important infrastructure that it manages, and I think it does that very effectively and well. From the vast number of patrons the venues are capable of hosting and the varied kinds of events that take place in them, we know that mitigating against increased risk factors and profile is important. I will go into a few more measures shortly.

The bill will repeal the outdated Western Australian Sports Centre Trust Act 1986, which of course we know is a dated piece of legislation. The bill will see the Western Australian Sports Centre Trust discontinued, and, in its place, the Sport and Entertainment Trust will be established. The old trust is governed by a board and trades as VenuesWest. The new trust will be governed by a board and will trade as VenuesWest. The new trust's functions will largely reflect those of the Western Australian Sports Centre Trust, with additional recognition of the important role that the trust plays in hosting entertainment, recreational and cultural activities, and events across its venues. As the member knows, our venues operated by VenuesWest see a whole range of events, including sporting events, of which we have seen some magnificent examples in recent times, such as the FIFA Women's World Cup, the recent matches with Italian soccer teams at Optus Stadium and the UFC. Those events go through to high-level cultural events, including world entertainers and spectacular events in the RAC Arena. For example, Seinfeld was

in town last Saturday night, and lots of others come through those venues. The key thing is that those venues must be safe for patrons, and that is an important aspect. We have modernised the framework in which the trust carries out its functions. The bill makes it clear that the trust will be empowered to act commercially, and that is an important consideration.

The member for Roe was interested in me giving him a bit more detail on the improvements to the legislation for governance arrangements for VenuesWest and the public safety measures I referred to earlier. I want to address the governance first. Under the bill, the board membership will reduce from nine to seven members. In keeping with contemporary practice, board members will be selected based on a range of appropriate commercial, legal, financial and other skills and experience. Quite often, board representation is done with a matrix that ensures that there is a good balance of expertise across a range of skill levels, so the board collectively has a very good mix of experience and know-how that helps it to oversee the organisation appropriately. Under the legislation, the deputy chair will also be acknowledged, and this will provide for business continuity in the absence of a chair. That is similar to what we did with the Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2021 as well. Similar statutory bodies have been established that make provision for a deputy in case the appointed chair is unable to be present or carry out their duties for short periods of time.

Under the current act, the board members are required to disclose direct or indirect pecuniary or financial interests, and these requirements will be modernised under the bill. That is to keep pace with contemporary practice. Again, we will modernise and ensure that members who are appointed to the trust are aware of the requirements of disclosure of any direct or indirect pecuniary interests. It will also ensure that decisions are made in the best interests of the trust and are not consciously or subconsciously influenced by any personal interest of that board member. The bill will establish a clearer framework for the disclosure of conflicts of interest. Again, we are modernising legislation to ensure that those who are appointed to the board understand their obligations with pecuniary interests and that there is a framework that allows them to deal clearly with any potential conflicts of interest. In particular, the bill will provide that a board member must disclose at the earliest opportunity a material personal interest in a matter to be considered by the board. As we know, from time to time board members should and will be required to disclose interests in a timely manner. Those are the elements that have been embedded in this bill. It will also enable any conflict between the member's duties to the board and their personal interest to be properly managed. A lot of thought and effort has gone into ensuring that these enhanced governance principles are embedded in the legislation. For example, clause 34 of the bill provides that a board member who has a material personal interest in a matter to be considered by the board will not be able to vote on the matter and may not be present when it is being considered.

Looking at the explanatory memorandum, I can advise members that the term "material personal interest" appears in many contemporary statutes. It is defined and, if you like, replicated in many of our contemporary statutes that currently exist. It is not defined in the legislation, but there is a body of case law that informs understanding of what "material personal interest" means, having regard to the particular circumstances of a specific situation. The general principle underpinning it is that a person who is in a position of trust should not personally benefit or profit from that position. Material personal interest may be of a pecuniary nature—that is, financial—or a non-pecuniary nature, and its existence may place the person in a position in which their duty conflicts with their personal interest. Material personal interest will likely be an interest that is personal or of substance or value and has a realistic capacity or propensity to influence that member's decision. Again, I highlight that a lot of thought has gone into ensuring that we protect the board member in their roles and responsibilities. Under the bill, failing to comply with those disclosure requirements will constitute an offence.

The member for Roe asked whether the bill will make any changes to the role of the CEO of VenuesWest. I acknowledge David Etherton. I think David has been an outstanding CEO of VenuesWest. He has been full and frank with his advice to all ministers I know who have been in this position, and it is very much appreciated. I assure the member that there will be no material changes to the role of the CEO of VenuesWest under this legislation. In his consideration of that question, the member may have been thinking about a new internal VenuesWest policy that specifically relates to when the position of CEO is advertised before an extension can be granted and after a person has reached 10 years of service in that role. That is what the member may have been querying. As I said, I commend the VenuesWest executive team for instituting this measure. It is essentially aimed at ensuring that diversity and opportunities for new blood continue to occur within the VenuesWest executive. Again, it is a modern approach to the operations of such an important entity as VenuesWest.

The member for Roe mentioned public safety measures and asked a very important question. The measures in the bill intend to act as a significant deterrent to conduct that can be dangerous to a perpetrator, a sporting participant, a performer, a patron or venue staff, and that can be damaging financially or reputationally to VenuesWest and the state government. We should never take lightly the importance of the safety of patrons and staff during smaller and larger events in a world where we know that people will seek to use opportunities at places where large gatherings occur. Whether events be within the confines of a stadium or in outdoor settings, the importance of public safety and security measures is critical to ensuring the safety of patrons and staff. Part 5 of the bill will create a pitch invasion offence. It also allows for other offences to be prescribed in regulations. Currently, dangerous and disruptive conduct is largely dealt with through conditions of entry and ticket terms and conditions, under which patrons can

be removed from trust property. Under the bill, conviction of a pitch invasion offence will attract a maximum penalty of \$5 500. The CEO of VenuesWest will be empowered to appoint trust officers to enforce the provisions of the new act. That will allow a trust officer to have the power to direct a person to leave trust property if the officer reasonably suspects the person is committing or has committed an offence such as a pitch invasion. The board will also be empowered to make a temporary or permanent exclusion order applying to a person who has been convicted of a relevant offence or removed from trust property in certain circumstances. In terms of natural justice, there will be a right of review for such a decision, if it is made. In the first instance, it will be via the board reviewing its decision and, in the second instance, a review can be sought via the State Administrative Tribunal.

I want to underpin that. In a world in which we have seen recent examples, thankfully not in Australia, of attacks on people in large gatherings, within stadiums and theatres, VenuesWest staff, as I have highlighted, will have access to places and spaces that will give greater opportunity to oversee outside venues. The safety of staff and patrons is critical. These elements of the bill put the safety of staff and of patrons at the forefront and also clearly allow for potential problems to be dealt with effectively and efficiently, enhancing the safety and the appropriate operation of the venue.

I hope that addresses the issues raised by the member for Roe. Again, I thank all the members for their interest in and their support of this bill. The work of VenuesWest through the Sports and Entertainment Trust Bill is really important. We want to continue to attract higher calibre performances across sport, cultural industries and cultural experiences for Western Australians and for visitors to our state. We also need to make sure that we have modern legislation that underpins that and ensures that those appointed to the trust board will be supported by the legislation. We also need to ensure that there are appropriate checks and balances, as I said, with regard to any potential pecuniary interests or other interests that they may need to declare. When those appointments come up, the skills matrix will ensure that the people submitted for consideration by the minister of the day do, in fact, have the skills and expertise that will ensure that the board operates appropriately. I thank all members. I appreciate this, and I am very keen that we move to pass this bill this afternoon.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

[Leave granted to proceed forthwith to third reading.]

Third Reading

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Culture and the Arts) [4.04 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a third time.

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [4.04 pm]: On behalf of the opposition, I recognise Judy Ballantyne and her great service to Parliament and the Parliamentary Library. If she has been here longer than the minister, she has definitely been here longer than me.

On behalf of the opposition, I know all members really do find the library very valuable. Your leadership there has been excellent, and we will certainly miss you. On behalf of the opposition, thanks for your efforts over the years. Well done.

I will speak very briefly on the bill. I thank the minister for those explanations. I think it is important in this day and age that we get the governance right. As time goes on, I think we understand that things like courses at the Australian Institute of Company Directors and all the other things that our directors quite often undertake are really important. The other thing is that obligations on directors and board members are actually much more stringent than they used to be. They used to be “Oh well, I’ve got the opportunity to be a board member. That’s great. I will put my hand up and help out.” But there are actually obligations, and there are also penalties if people do not do the right thing. I think it is important to recognise that.

The minister referred to the false start, which I alluded to in my contribution to the second reading debate, of the one and only bill that has been referred to the Standing Committee on Legislation. Funnily enough, it was introduced into the wrong house. That is why we, as an opposition, have asked for many bills to be referred to the Standing Committee on Legislation. Unfortunately, we failed to get the government’s consideration of those requests. The one bill that was referred, which is this one, has had to come around for the second time. As the minister said, it had a false start.

I also want to echo the minister’s sentiment on David Etherton, his leadership and the executive team at VenuesWest. They do a great job. There are 14 venues now and, when you look at the facilities at Optus Stadium, RAC Arena, the WA Athletics Stadium and the Bendat Basketball Centre, they vary from large to small, but they are all very important. As we know, places like Optus Stadium were not around when the legislation was initially in place. The security requirements and the patron requirements, as the minister mentioned, are so important nowadays. I welcome those changes.

I also want to reiterate that sport has been a big part of my life. I love going to high-quality sporting events, and I love playing sport, whether it is tennis, golf, squash or whatever. Sport is a big part of my life, and I know it is a big part of life for many of my constituents in the regions. The community sporting and recreation facilities fund

program, whether it is through a Labor government or a Liberal–National government, is really important for both regional and metropolitan constituents. It takes a bit of pressure off our shires and local governments as well. That is really important.

I want to give a final shout-out to KidSport and to my old friend Hon Tuck Waldron, who preceded me and was the founder, or the originator, of KidSport. The minister and his government have continued that great program and increased funding for it. Once again, our children and families across the regions and the metropolitan area appreciate that. I will wrap up at that. I think this legislation is good, now that we have seen it come through the Legislative Assembly. The opposition certainly expresses support for it.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Sport and Recreation) [4.09 pm] — in reply: Very briefly, I also wish to acknowledge the wonderful work of Mary Anne Stephens, the board chair, and the board of VenuesWest. We currently have a very good board. I want to acknowledge Mary Anne. She is an outstanding board chair and well supported by a very strong board.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

JUDY BALLANTYNE — PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARIAN — RETIREMENT

Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [4.10 pm]: Members, with your indulgence, I would like to make an important statement. I would like to acknowledge the service of Judy Ballantyne, who is retiring after 26 years as our parliamentary librarian. Judy commenced with the Parliamentary Library in 1997, before the creation of the Parliamentary Services Department, and she had responsibility for the Parliamentary Library and the Parliamentary Education Office. She was one of the first Parliamentary Services Department managers when the department was created in 1998.

During her service as parliamentary librarian, Judy oversaw the successful relocation of the Parliamentary Library, which some may recall was upstairs on the eastern side of the building, to the western side. The architecture of the library in the original part of Parliament House reflects its status as one of the oldest libraries in Western Australia.

Judy has been an absolutely passionate advocate for parliamentary education. Under her leadership, the parliamentary education program has grown, with over 20 000 people, mainly students, now visiting Parliament House each year.

Judy has provided absolutely exemplary service to the Parliament. We all wish her well in her retirement. I have known Judy for all that time. She has been a complete asset to the Western Australian Parliament and has been of fabulous support to so many members during her tenure here as our parliamentary librarian. She has also been a great support to staff. She took on her leadership role, ensuring all our student visitors to this Parliament had a fabulous experience.

I sincerely thank you, Judy. We appreciate your service. We hope you have a long, happy and fulfilling retirement. I know you already have some imminent travel plans. We are all very envious of you as you are about to head off to Italy, I think, staying for a considerable period of time.

Congratulations on your service to this place, Judy. We appreciate your service. Thank you.

[Applause.]

KIRSTEN ROBINSON — CLERK OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY — ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Statement by Leader of the House

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Leader of the House) [4.13 pm]: I also acknowledge our Clerk. We also did that in question time. To the Clerk, we wish you the very best. Thank you sincerely for all you have done for all members during your tenure here in Parliament and, of course, as our Clerk for the last nine or so years.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE

Special

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Leader of the House) [4.13 pm] — without notice: I move —

That the house at its rising adjourn until Tuesday, 6 August 2024 at 1.00 pm.

I wish all members a safe winter break. It is important that you not only spend time with your families, but also keep safe during the winter break and return here, as I said, on 6 August at 1.00 pm, please.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 4.14 pm
