



Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

FORTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION
2024

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Wednesday, 17 April 2024

Legislative Council

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THE PRESIDENT (Hon Alanna Clohesy) took the chair at 1.00 pm, read prayers and acknowledged country.

DINGO CONTROL — SODIUM FLUOROACETATE

Petition

HON KATE DOUST (South Metropolitan) [1.01 pm]: I present an e-petition containing 194 signatures couched in the following terms —

To the President and Members of the Legislative Council of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled. We the undersigned ...

are opposed to all forms of “Lethal Dingo Control” and note the use of the poison sodium fluoroacetate (1080) which is being used to kill native dingoes en-masse subsequently exposing ecosystems to invasive feral species. We do not believe this current practice meets community expectations. We therefore ask the Legislative Council to support a moratorium on all lethal dingo controls and undertake an investigation into the adoption of non-lethal tools and practices and make recommendations accordingly.

And your petitioners as in duty bound, will ever pray.

[See paper 3078.]

LEACH HIGHWAY–FIFTH AVENUE INTERSECTION

Petition

HON NICK GOIRAN (South Metropolitan) [1.02 pm]: I present an e-petition containing 927 signatures couched in the following terms —

To the President and Members of the Legislative Council of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled. We the undersigned ...

1. Oppose the proposed changes to the intersection at Leach Highway and Fifth Avenue; 2. Note that this change will not only be inconvenient, but will as a consequence increase traffic on Webb Street as the only right turn into Rossmoyne from Leach Highway; 3. Are very concerned about the obvious increased risk to school children during peak periods as well as patrons of the aged care development; 4. Request the immediate retention of the inward bound right turn from Leach Highway into Fifth Avenue which is a vital route for Rossmoyne and Shelley residents; 5. Call for a road engineering review of the intersection to ascertain what changes can be made to improve its safety so that it can be retained long into the future; and 6. Urge the Legislative Council to inquire into this issue as a matter of urgency for the purpose of recommending the intersection be retained and that a review be commissioned.

And your petitioners as in duty bound, will ever pray.

[See paper 3079.]

PAPER TABLED

A paper was tabled and ordered to lie upon the table of the house.

DISALLOWANCE MOTIONS

Notice of Motion

1. Shire of Kent Bush Fire Brigades Local Law 2023.
2. Shire of Kent Public Places and Local Government Property Local Law 2023.

Notices of motion given by **Hon Lorna Harper**.

TOURISM — CAMPAIGNS AND EVENTS

Motion

HON PETER FOSTER (Mining and Pastoral) [1.05 pm]: I move —

That the Legislative Council acknowledges the Cook government’s investment in tourism and attracting significant events to Western Australia.

Western Australia is truly a beautiful and large state, and quite frankly there is much to see and much to do. We have the south west, the Golden Outback, Perth, the Coral Coast and my favourite place, the north west. As we saw during the pandemic, Western Australians were encouraged to wander out yonder, and, particularly for us in

the north west, we at times welcomed thousands of visitors to our region. Many of those visitors had never visited the north west before. I had a number of conversations with people who had pulled into a service station with their quite large caravan for their first trip up to the north west; they were really excited. This trend is fantastic to see. Why is this so important? We know that tourism supports jobs; tourism supports our businesses, in particular our local businesses up in the regions; and tourism drives investment. For us up in the north west, it helps diversify our economy because, as we know, there is a heavy reliance on the resource sector. As we have seen following the pandemic, tourism has resumed and, as we will learn from some statistics that I will run through, interest in visiting WA is extremely strong. Although it has taken some time to return to pre-pandemic levels, it has now exceeded those levels and continues to grow each month. We can see that tourists are travelling the globe again. Of course we want them to visit Western Australia, and many are visiting Western Australia. Why is that so? It is thanks to the many investments by this government that we were able to supercharge our tourism industry right across Western Australia.

I want to start by briefly talking about the Walking on a Dream campaign that was launched in September 2022. I acknowledge and thank Tourism WA and all who were involved in putting together the Walking on a Dream campaign. The domestic launch took place in September 2022, and it involved television, online videos, paid social and digital elements and it was even in a number of magazines and newspapers. If members have not had time to check out the Walking on a Dream video, they can see a number of versions on YouTube. One version talks exclusively about the Kimberley. One version features beautiful Ningaloo, where I was at on the weekend. There is a Margaret River version and also a Perth version, because we are attracting a lot of visitors to Perth. Of course, the campaign did not just stop at focusing on a domestic launch; it was also broadcast overseas to a number of locations, including New York. There are a few photos online of the whale shark being broadcast in New York. That is a pretty amazing and powerful image. I had the good fortune to visit New York once, so I have been in the location where the video was broadcast. Literally hundreds of thousands of visitors walk past that location every day so it was great that we were able to showcase parts of our great state in New York. The campaign was broadcast in not only New York, but also the United Kingdom and Paris. Many, many millions of people—I would in fact say billions—have seen this Walking on a Dream campaign. It has succeeded because, as we can see, thousands and thousands of visitors are now visiting us in WA.

As I said, I want to run through some statistics, although I know stats can be a little bit tedious. We received 11.9 million overnight visitors in 2023. There were 21 million day trips taken in the state. An amount of \$17.7 billion was spent in WA, and of that, \$8.4 billion was spent in regional WA. Our visitor spend was \$4.2 billion, or 28 per cent, ahead of the 2019 figures. That is ahead of the national growth rate, which is 23 per cent. Here in WA we are exceeding the norm across Australia for visitors to our state. We understand that 785 000 international visitors came to Western Australia in 2023. They spent \$2.3 billion. WA's market share of international visitors was up from 7.7 per cent pre-COVID to 8.2 per cent in 2023. Just from the numbers we can see that that campaign has been a really strong success. It has really piqued people's interest in visiting us in WA. They have taken advantage of the fact that the borders are open, the flights are returning and they can come and see us in WA.

I want to talk a little bit about flights. We are very lucky here in Perth. We now have quite a large number of destinations we can access, and places from which tourists can access and visit us in Perth or regional WA. This is in part thanks to the WA government aviation recovery fund. I understand there was about a \$75 million budget towards that project. A number of flights have returned to us, and I will rattle through some of them. We have Singapore, Dubai, Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok. I understand that the Rome flight will resume soon. We have a direct flight from Perth to Paris, which I believe will start in June or July, just in time for the Paris Olympics. We have direct flights to Manila, Jakarta, Auckland and Ho Chi Minh City. That is quite a large number of places. It is great because it brings tourists from those locations to WA to check out what we have on offer.

We do not just attract those international flights. We have also made a number of affordable airfares available for people from Perth to travel to the regions. In particular, the Perth to Broome, Perth to Kununurra and Perth to Exmouth flights are subsidised. The Perth to Exmouth route is very popular. I fly it quite regularly, and it is very difficult to get a seat. In the conversations I have been having with Qantas I have been encouraging it to look at the capacity on the route because there are not a lot of seats, as a lot of people want to go there and visit. The Shire of Exmouth and Australia's Coral Coast have been doing a lot of work with Qantas to try to increase capacity. Last year we had a Melbourne to Exmouth route, and I want to thank the Minister for Transport; Deputy Premier because she lobbied very hard for that route to be established. Sadly, after six months Qantas made a business decision to stop that route. I strongly encourage Qantas, if it is listening, to think about bringing that route online again. I had a number of friends who drove up from Carnarvon to catch the flight from Exmouth to Melbourne because it saved them a lot of travel time, so I really hope Qantas understands that although it is changing over pilots and planes, perhaps in the future it would look to revisit that route. It is great to see that the airport is busy. I know there are a number of regional members in the chamber. Whenever I go to the airport it is chockas, and there are lots of international visitors visiting us now.

That is not the only thing we have done for tourism. We obviously have the campaign and we are encouraging people to visit us through the airport, but we have also done a number of infrastructure upgrades. This is important

because if we get extra visitors to WA, we need to have the infrastructure in place to support them. For people in the city, we are doing works on the Tonkin Highway and the airport rail line to improve access because when visitors get here, they need to be able to get to their hotels. Maybe they are transferring to another location and they need to get access. The work we are doing to improve highways and railways, like Metronet, increases infrastructure for our tourists to access.

It is not just in the city that we are getting a lot of infrastructure upgrades. Members in this chamber might remember that last year, in April 2023, we had the total solar eclipse, which was a really exciting time for us in the north west. People came from all over—Americans, Germans, Canadians. There were so many visitors to the north west. To enable us to support those tourists we did road and telecommunications upgrades because there would be more people in the regions increasing demand on phone services and roads. There was a lot of road widening, and overtaking lanes and rest bays were created to accommodate extra visitors in our region.

Earlier this year the Deputy Premier announced further infrastructure upgrades to regional WA. I was particularly proud of this because a lot of the announcements were in my part of the regions. A \$26 million investment was announced to improve tourism infrastructure, and of that \$10 million was allocated towards Rottneest Island and \$5.2 million towards Karijini National Park—I will return to that in a moment. There was \$4.6 million allocated to the Hamelin Pool boardwalk in Shark Bay, which is a World Heritage area. I have visited that location and it is quite beautiful. As members know, in the north west we get cyclones, and sadly, as a result of cyclone Seroja, the boardwalk needed to be rebuilt and it needs to be protected. This will be a great investment to make that area safe and protect it so it is with us for a very long time. There was also \$2.7 million allocated to the Cape to Cape track in the south west and \$2.7 million for upgrades to access Wellington National Park and the Wellington Dam mural.

I want to talk about infrastructure at Karijini. I do not know whether members have been to Karijini National Park, but if they have not, I strongly encourage them to do so. It is on Banjima country and it is a really beautiful location, but it is also remote. There are gorges and a lot of bushwalking areas there. Part of these infrastructure upgrades is about improving access. Some of the money is being put towards building a new Knox Gorge lookout area so that people can sit at the lookout and look down at the gorge safely without hurting themselves. Sadly, over the years a number of tourists have hurt themselves there, so it is great that these infrastructure upgrades will make access to those areas easier. Another part of the investment will go towards roads. One road in particular is still unsealed. It is closed at the moment and sealing works are being undertaken. Once that is finished, it will improve access. Not everybody owns a four-wheel drive vehicle. Often tourists jump into their hire cars from Perth, which are not four-wheel drives, and drive up to the north, so it is great that we will have more sealed roads, which will improve access.

We have not just invested in infrastructure; we have also invested in a number of events. I will not talk too much about metropolitan events; I have not visited any of the metro events. I might talk about some of the events we are investing in in the regions. In Perth we can obviously have really fancy big events because there is Optus Stadium and the like, but we run smaller events in the north west. I want to talk about some of the events that we support. We support events in a number of ways. One is through the regional events scheme. Each year grants go out to support those events. One that pops into my mind is the Karijini Experience, which was held recently in April. Some of the events that the government supports through the regional events scheme are the Margaret River Pro surfing contest, the Ord Valley Muster in Kununurra, the Shinju Matsuri Festival in Broome, the Taste of The Kimberley, the Great Southern Stage Run, the Northam Heritage and Multicultural Festival, the Avon Descent, the Broome International Airport Marathon, the York Motorcycle Festival, the Lake Argyle Swim and, of course, as I said, the Karijini Experience.

I will talk a little bit about the Karijini Experience, which, as I said, was held recently. It is a four-day event held on the old airstrip in Karijini National Park. A village is set up with marquees. Food vendors come from Tom Price to sell their wares and there is also a makers market. A stage is set up on which there are a number of performances over the four days. It does not stop there. The event is held close to the Karijini Visitor Centre, which conducts a number of cultural walks. People can take a walk with a traditional owner around parts of Karijini National Park and learn about its history, the different animals and plants, and some of the Banjima language. I want to acknowledge the Banjima Native Title Aboriginal Corporation because the Karijini Experience is its event. The event was created by the Nintirri Centre and the Tom Price and Paraburdoo Business Association because they saw a real need to market the area to the wider community. Over time, they involved the Banjima Native Title Aboriginal Corporation before handing it over to the traditional owners, who now run the event with an events company called CMS Events. Richard and his team did a fantastic job this year running the four-day event. This is the second year that they have been involved and they did a fantastic job—it was flawless.

The fact that the event is held at Karijini National Park means that people are able to immerse themselves on country. When I talk to traditional owners—I will talk about Hazel, who was at another event that I went to recently—they say that the best way to understand the significance of those areas and their language and culture is to walk the country with them. One of the most special things I like about the Karijini Experience is that you are out of the city on country and getting covered in red dirt. This year, we were attacked by flies; indeed, every second person was wearing a fly net. You are out there feeling it and smelling it and that is what makes the event so great. It also

gives local businesses an opportunity to be involved. As I said, a number of food vans travelled to the park from Tom Price to be at the four-day festival. We are investing in this event not only to ensure that it happens, but also because of the spin-off effects, such as the Karijini Eco Retreat, the Tom Price Tourist Park and the pub in Tom Price all having a number of bookings. Because the event was held during the school holidays, people were able to stay and then travel on to other places. I spoke to a number of visitors who were heading to the coast, to Exmouth and Coral Bay, and to a number of visitors who were heading further up north to Broome. Not only are we attracting people to the event, but they are also dispersing and travelling through the region.

I want to talk about another event that the government recently sponsored; in fact, it was held last weekend. The Jamba Nyinayi Festival was held at Cardabia Station, which is only a few short kilometres from Coral Bay in the very beautiful Baiyungu country. We were welcomed to country by Hazel Walgar, who is an amazing individual. If members have not met Hazel, I strongly encourage them to do so. She has a lot of stories, particularly about Exmouth Gulf and Coral Bay. She welcomed us to country. This event was held on the station. It, too, had a pop-up stage and food vendors. In this case, the food vendors travelled from Carnarvon to sell their wares. There was a makers market there as well. It was great to hear about the importance of that region to the Baiyungu people. The event was held at Cardabia, which is a popular meeting place of the local tribes. They chose that place to have the event because they wanted to bring everybody together to showcase their language, music, songs and stories. It was a great night. Clint Walker and his Ngurrangga dancers came down from Karratha to perform. Clinton Walker won a gold medal at last year's tourism awards. He is a really interesting character, and I hope members get an opportunity to meet him. Also performing were the Coral Spawn Dancers from Carnarvon. It was great to see everybody singing and dancing. The importance of events such as these is that they allow the community to come together and showcase their culture, which they do with pride. At the Karijini Experience, it was great to see the grandchildren and great-grandchildren painted up, singing and dancing and showcasing their culture, which gives them a sense of pride.

Noting that the time has gone quickly, I will leave my comments there. I acknowledge and thank the Cook government for its investment in a number of significant events here in Perth and in the regions. I acknowledge its contribution to infrastructure, such as roads and telecommunications, and its efforts to attract more flights and visitors to WA through the Walking on a Dream and other campaigns. I also acknowledge and thank Tourism WA for all its fantastic work. I commend the motion to the house.

HON LOUISE KINGSTON (South West) [1.25 pm]: I had to read the motion twice because I do not think that during my involvement in tourism—I am 59 and I became involved when I seven, so it has been 52 years—I have ever seen so many tourism features closed during one term of government. I refer to Horizontal Falls, all three of our climbing trees in Warren—Blackwood—all three of them!—the town of Cossack and the Dolphin Discovery Centre. Those tourist attractions have not closed because there are issues with them and things need to be done. Rather, they have closed due to the government's total and utter incompetence.

The Gloucester Tree has been closed for more than 12 months. Seriously, I can get an arborist in to look at a tree at my place within three weeks. I have asked the question over and over again and I have written to the government asking how long is too long for this tourist attraction to be closed. A world-class investment has recently happened next door to the tree. Those guys made that investment because the Gloucester Tree would bring them 200 000 visitors each year. They invested more than \$1 million in their tourism facility when access to the tree closed—and it has remained closed. That is having a significant effect on their operations. Horizontal Falls is another example. The group up there is desperately trying to do the right thing and manage the facility, but it does not have the skills needed to ensure that the facility remains open through to 2028. Last week, Cossack was closed, and it is in exactly the same situation. A fabulous group of people there have invested time, effort and money into Cossack. I have been there many times; it is the most beautiful place. Why on earth would the government not help those people to keep this facility open? It is beyond belief. The Dolphin Discovery Centre has had ongoing issues for a significant length of time, of which the minister is well aware. The lifeline he has given to the centre is fantastic, but it will sustain it for only a very short time. It needs a proper management plan so that it can stay open. Hon Peter Foster mentioned Wander out Yonder, the fabulous program during COVID-19 that supported jobs, businesses, diversity and investment in the economy. If those facilities remain closed, there is no point in wandering out yonder, is there?

I have a history of running speedway events over 30-something years. The people who go to the events that Hon Peter Foster mentioned want to look at other things while they are there. If tourist attractions continue to close and the government continues to invest in events, we will not make any difference. The difference is that we need to grow the investment in tourism, and we need to sustain the existing tourist attractions. Members are well aware that I have a long background connection to Whale World, which was built from the ruins of the whaling station when it closed, so I understand how difficult it is to sustain tourism facilities. Investing is really easy. It is really easy to get up and, as I call it, kiss babies and cut ribbons. It is really easy to do that, but the actual hard slog is the difficult part. People do not often get a lot of credit for that, but those facilities are so incredibly important to our tourism areas and tourism businesses.

The member said that \$17.7 billion was spent in Western Australia on tourism, and of that \$8.46 billion was spent in regional Western Australia. Imagine how much more would be spent if we kept those attractions open. People

would have more to look at and would stay longer in the regions, which is what we are all about in the regions. We want to get people out there and keep them out there for longer, but if we keep closing existing facilities, that will not work. We cannot build on or extend that.

I have written many regional events scheme grant applications over the years. It is a fabulous program, and it brings those events to regional Western Australia to bring people to see all our other attractions, which, as I keep saying, will not be much good if they keep closing.

Motorsport events were not mentioned much, but motorsport events are a phenomenally big drawcard for Western Australia. They definitely need more investment and new facilities to be built and provided for the people coming to visit our wonderful state. It is interesting to listen to what was said about investment in those events and how much value it brings to regional Western Australia, but we definitely need further investment in infrastructure in regional Western Australia, new events, other events and other infrastructure projects to attract people to come to visit Western Australia for longer and more often.

The member talked about the campaign being showcased in New York, and I visited New York in 2015. I cannot imagine how New York would be if it closed the Brooklyn Bridge for 12 or 14 months. I am not sure that people understand the gravity of the situation with the Gloucester Tree and the other climbing trees in our neck of the woods; they are synonymous with tourism. As we think about places around the world that people visit, like New York, and as we grow our tourism sector and become more sought after for world tourism, we need to make sure that the tourism attractions' fundamentals are sound. I bring that back to my experience with Whale World, which we have grown and built over many years. My two brothers still work there and are heavily involved in the attraction. That attraction needs to stay open for Albany. Most members would have been there and would know that it sits on a beautiful, pristine stretch of coastline. Basically, it is the reason people go out to the peninsula, and it needs to remain open at all times. The attractions we are talking about are exactly the same for the other areas and for the people who operate the tourism businesses in those areas.

I thank the member for the motion, but I implore the government to also focus on looking after the existing attractions; improving attractions, particularly their operations; and ensuring that the groups or people who are running the attractions are skilled and have the resources they need to continue to operate them and keep them open.

I am about to start to cough, so I will sit down and let Hon Neil Thomson take over. Thank you.

HON KLARA ANDRIC (South Metropolitan) [1.34 pm]: I rise today to speak on the fantastic motion brought before the house today by Hon Peter Foster. I was very excited to speak on this motion because it is not very often that I get to talk about a sport that I am very passionate about and grew up with. I thought I would use this opportunity to speak on it today. Although I know that the Cook Labor government has been doing quite a lot in tourism, I thought I might focus on one area that I am very strongly passionate about.

As we know, under our government's leadership, WA has become a magnet for some world-class events, which in turn have boosted tourism and showcased our great state on a global stage. As I have said, one such area is sporting events, and it is no secret that Western Australians and Australians in general, including me, love sport. The Clearinghouse for Sport website states —

41% of Australians ... participate in a sport-related activity at least once a week.

Whether it is football, tennis, rugby, hockey, basketball or cricket, Western Australians love a healthy pastime, and we certainly know that this government very much encourages sport. Sport is also a passion we share with the world. We love not only participating in sport but also watching sport. That is why I would like to focus my comments today on football and the overwhelming number of blockbuster football matches the Cook Labor government has brought and will bring to Western Australia. I have to make a clarification: when I say "football", I am referring to the round ball game.

Hon Samantha Rowe: Soccer.

Hon KLARA ANDRIC: No! Football! It always was!

Hon Pierre Yang: Always will be!

Hon KLARA ANDRIC: Thank you for finishing my sentence there, honourable member. As some members of this side of the chamber know, that is the only way that I will refer to the game.

As some may recall, I also spoke about football in my first speech. Football well and truly runs in the family. It is in the blood; we are all very passionate about it. Football takes me back to my childhood and my earlier days of Sundays spent watching SBS football and listening to the greats like Les Murray and Craig Foster.

I will get back to some of the policies and what we have been doing as a government. As members know—back in July 2019, I believe—the Labor government brought the English football giants Manchester United to Western Australia and to Perth for the first time in over 40 years.

This coincides with a year earlier, when our government launched the Perth to London direct flights, which commenced in March 2018. Although I did not fly on the Boeing 787, I was one of the very lucky people in

Western Australia who got to board the aircraft to see what it looks like. The direct flights connecting Western Australia to Europe and a city like London were a very big deal. It was very exciting. I only wish and hope that one day I can board that flight, take off and land in London. That was fantastic, and it was great to see the great work of the then Minister for Tourism, who worked so hard to secure that very first big connection between Perth and the rest of the world. Subsequently, we have seen that followed up with Western Australia being connected to many other cities around the globe. The arrival of Manchester United in Perth was made possible by the government's \$425 million funding of tourism marketing and events. The event saw over 13 000 out-of-state visitors come to Perth to attend the match and resulted in a massive \$16.5 million in visitor spending, supporting local businesses and also WA tourism. That \$16.5 million went to all sorts of businesses, such as coffee shops, restaurants, souvenir shops or wherever else visitors from across the state went to spend their money, which, as we know, is fantastic for our economy and is great news for small business.

In July 2022, WA once again hosted some of England's Premier League football teams for a week of elite international football at the ICON festival. Teams included the greats such as Aston Villa, Crystal Palace, Leeds United and also Manchester United. The event saw 100 000 spectators descend on Optus Stadium over the course of two days of world-class football matches being played right here in Western Australia. The event was a major economic boom for WA, generating an economic impact of over \$77 million and attracting just under 5 000 out-of-state visitors. Following this success, a second English Premier League event was held in July 2023, which saw two more of the league's top teams—I believe it was Tottenham Hotspur and West Ham United—play at Optus Stadium.

Hon Stephen Dawson: What was the first one?

Hon KLARA ANDRIC: Tottenham. Was that correct?

Hon Stephen Dawson: That was better.

Hon KLARA ANDRIC: Fantastic. Cheerio!

In 2023, WA secured five matches for the world's biggest women's sporting event. I am sure everyone in the chamber knows about that. It was the FIFA Women's World Cup. The matches were played here at Perth Rectangular Stadium. The FIFA Women's World Cup proved to be a major success for both our state and also for Australia as a whole. Kicking a goal for the WA economy, Airwallex global accountants tracked that the state generated a \$663.2 million economic impact from the five games that were hosted. It was not just a local turnout either, with FIFA stating that one-fifth of all tickets to the game that were sold were purchased by people from overseas.

Matildas fever was still being felt well after the World Cup concluded. The following October, the Cook Labor government secured another three matches of the Asian Football Confederation Asian Olympic qualifiers, with all three scheduled matches selling out at HBF Park. We all know that the government worked with Football Australia to move the Matildas versus Philippines match to Optus Stadium. That was a brilliant decision because the move to a larger venue provided an extra 40 000 seats and it sold out, totalling an unprecedented 60 000-strong crowd for that incredible event. The sellout of the stadium set a new crowd record at a women's sporting event. Many of us have spoken about the amazing boost that was to encourage more women and young girls into sport. It was a very inspirational time across not only Western Australia, but also the country. I tried to secure some Matildas merchandise. Unfortunately, it was sold out in every sporting store across the South Metropolitan Region. People certainly took to it. We have seen a massive increase in the number of young girls who participate in sport. These sorts of events inspire the future generations of our sporting leaders.

Pivoting from the English Premier League to the Italian Serie A men's league, the Labor government is continuing to deliver blockbuster football matches with the incredible AS Roma and AC Milan set to battle it out right here in Perth at Optus Stadium in May this year. I believe that will be on 31 May, to be precise. That match is exclusive to Western Australia and is the only game that either team will play in the Asia-Pacific region this year. That is an incredible achievement for our government and also for sport in Western Australia. Our government has brought these teams back to Australian soil for the first time in many, many years. This will be the first match on Australian soil for AS Roma in exactly nine years. AS Roma has not been on Australian soil in nine years and AC Milan has not stepped foot on Australian soil in 30 years. This is truly incredible. As a young person who went to many Perth Glory games and spent many Sundays at HBF Stadium cheering on Perth Glory, this is the kind of event that someone at my age back then would probably have only dreamt about watching. I know that many football—I will say it: "soccer"—lovers across our state are going to be very excited. That is the only time I will say "soccer"! This will be huge for the community.

Hon Lorna Harper: I will be there.

Hon KLARA ANDRIC: I will be there, too.

Another event I am excited to watch later this year is the Socceroos versus Palestine FIFA World Cup qualifier. I look forward to attending that game and barracking for both amazing teams. It is a qualifier, so it is huge in the world of football. That game will also take place at HBF Park. It is another example of yet another jewel in the crown of Perth's current sporting events list. Novak Djokovic, from my home country of Serbia, visited Perth in

January this year for the Hopman Cup. I have not seen him here in a very long time. I think the last time he was in Perth was well over 10 years ago, so it was nice to catch up with him here in Australia, not overseas in Serbia or Bosnia. The great games and the quality of the players and teams that we are seeing being brought to our state is incredible. I commend the Cook Labor government on everything that it is doing to put Perth on the map of the world sporting stage.

HON NEIL THOMSON (Mining and Pastoral) [1.48 pm]: I am a little surprised by this motion. I have noted that whenever the government is in trouble, it wants to pat itself on the back a bit harder to try to deflect from the reality on the ground.

Hon Kyle McGinn: Are you saying tourism is no good?

Hon NEIL THOMSON: The member opposite, by way of interjection, is saying that tourism is no good.

Hon Kyle McGinn interjected.

Hon NEIL THOMSON: The people of the Kimberley feel that this government has abandoned them. People in the Pilbara and Exmouth also feel that the government has abandoned them.

Hon Kyle McGinn interjected.

Hon NEIL THOMSON: We heard Hamelin Pool mentioned today. I am surprised that the member opposite had the audacity to raise that subject. Let me start with Hamelin Pool. The boardwalk at Hamelin Pool was damaged in 2021 due to cyclone Seroja. Here we are in 2024, and we have only now got on with the contracts to actually start dealing with the rebuild of that important piece of infrastructure. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization threatened to write to the government because it was worried about visitors going to the area and trampling those ancient stromatolites, which are a very important part of our World Heritage site, yet this government is taking a very long time to deal with that issue. The government had the audacity to fence off that area for a very long time and it did not get on with the repairs. In fact, it has taken us three years to get to this point.

We had a situation with the only caravan park that is used by people who come down for the Bungle Bungle Range. It is on one of the properties owned by Andrew Forrest. A dispute is going on between the native title holders and the pastoralists about that property. Why has the government not intervened? We now have a second season for which that important facility is going to be closed. Bungle Bungle Caravan Park is between Warmun and Halls Creek. It is very difficult for tourists to go into the Bungle Bungles if they have a caravan. Previously, tourists would park there, stay overnight and then drive into the park and enjoy the wonderful situation there, but now they have to stay in Halls Creek or Kununurra in order to enjoy that facility.

Giralia station is another sad case. It was bought by the state government in 2002 in order to turn it into a national park. The government's dithering means we have got to the point at which it is now closed. This important facility is 125 kilometres south of Exmouth. The family had been operating that station for over 100 years.

The saddest situation is Horizontal Falls. I am quite disgusted at the way the minister has handled that. We saw a press release went out on it. One would think that something new was happening with the way the press release was put out. In fact, the government is closing down the Kimberley's most iconic attraction, which draws tourists from all over the world. The government is closing it down! This is a very sad situation. It sends a message to the tourism industry that if a person invests \$100 million into a tourism product, they have got no guarantee whatsoever. The Barnett state government negotiated for a very good marine park to be established in that area. There was always the implied purpose that the park was to be there for all to enjoy, while being able to continue liaising and working with the traditional owners, but not allow that to be closed. Ultimately, at the end of the day, it is up to the government to make a decision in order to provide security. We know what the minister did!

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon NEIL THOMSON: The minister went up on 22 March and met with stakeholders, including people from the visitors centre, the shire, and the chamber, and what did he do? He came out and basically misrepresented the facts of that meeting. He said there was consensus. There was no consensus! I have spoken to all those groups. They have said there was not a consensus. The only consensus given was that there would be further discussions. In fact, there is a lot of fear in the community because they have to work closely. The minister has created a very divisive situation in the Kimberley community—extremely divisive—and then shut down a \$100 million asset and 58 jobs. The minister shut down the most iconic attraction fundamental to that part of the world's economy. That is what this government does!

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon NEIL THOMSON: There are 7 304 signatures already on the petition calling for a guarantee to keep that open. The government just abrogates any responsibility whatsoever, and there will be more to come out on this.

I know that members opposite might like to think they have got the upper hand on this, but they have not because this is going to blow back very seriously on Western Australia's tourism industry. This will cause much harm to employment in Broome. This is already causing division in our community. This government fails to deal with the fundamentals to make sure that there are some non-negotiables in those marine parks, such as being open and accessible to all, and to work with the traditional owners in order to resolve these issues. That is the issue. This minister goes and speaks to the community, then comes out of the meeting and speaks on 6PR, misrepresenting the facts. In fact, it was so badly misrepresented that one could say that his points were completely inaccurate. There was never that support.

I know that there is anger in the community. There is anger at what is going on, and that is not going to stop. That anger will continue. That anger will be there until the election because this government needs to be thrown out. It cannot be trusted on the issue of tourism. It cannot be trusted to guarantee access to our marine parks. It cannot be trusted to protect the long-term investment that is there. It cannot be trusted to manage those joint management arrangements. This government is irresponsible. It cannot be trusted in the area of tourism, and I am surprised that government members have the gall and the audacity to stand up here and blow their own trumpet about what the government is doing for tourism, when it is shutting down tourism in the state, destroying jobs in the state, and destroying the reliability of the investment community.

Hon Kyle McGinn: That is disgraceful.

Hon NEIL THOMSON: You're a disgrace!

HON ROSIE SAHANNA (Mining and Pastoral) [1.56 pm]: Wow, Neil, great speech! He should look in the mirror when he speaks, he might get some answers back. But who knows?

I would like to speak in support of the motion moved by Hon Peter Foster on the many investments made by the Cook government into tourism in Western Australia. Sit down, Neil! I would like to speak in particular about the investment this government has made into the Kimberley region of Western Australia, where I reside. Earlier this year, the Cook government announced the Kimberley Season Pass, offering discounts for travel right across the Kimberley region, including discounted airfares, tours and accommodation. The implementation of this plan was in recognition of the support tourism operators in the Kimberley needed following the flooding in the region last year. The \$2.8 million package for the Kimberley Season Pass was in addition to the \$2 million tourism flood recovery package released last year.

The Cook government acknowledges the importance of supporting local tourism operators and attracting tourists back to our remote regions. I believe the allocation of these passes has been exhausted, which is fantastic news for local operators, who will see the benefits of so many people living in and visiting our remarkable region, especially as we enter our dry season and the prime tourist season. We are all looking forward to welcoming all the visitors this year and showing off our beautiful part of the world, and we welcome the support from the Cook government.

The Kimberley, Neil! You should know better. The Kimberley is known for its stunning landscapes, waterfalls, coastlines and gorges, but so many visitors traverse to the Kimberley to also explore its rich Aboriginal history and culture. The Cook government recognises this and is increasing cultural tourism prospects within its Plan for Our Parks program. The program offers opportunities for traditional owners to jointly manage country and develop cultural tourism ventures within new and existing national parks.

These opportunities are also supported in *Tjina: Western Australian Aboriginal tourism action plan 2021–2025* released by the Labor government in 2021 to encourage visitors to venture into regional Western Australia to experience Aboriginal culture and to build capacity for Aboriginal people and businesses to enter the tourism sector. It is vital to facilitate and explore new commercial opportunities in the regions while also ensuring the unique wilderness and culture remain unspoilt.

This support of regional cultural tourism is also evident in the government's recent decision to respond to calls—listen, Neil, listen—from the traditional owners of Horizontal Falls in the Kimberley to stop visitors and tourism operators from traversing the narrow gaps at the falls. Many tourism operators already offer tours to Horizontal Falls that do not include a fast dash in a boat through the gap, and these tours are very popular. Talbot Bay and Horizontal Falls will remain open for tourism business and people will come to the Kimberley and still be able to experience the power of the site. People cannot climb the pyramids in Egypt or sit on top of Stonehenge in England, but they can still visit the sites and marvel at them, just as they will still be able to visit Horizontal Falls without climbing them.

The Dambimangari Aboriginal Corporation, which represents the traditional owners of the sacred Horizontal Falls site, has asked for this decision since the 1990s and I am proud to be part of a government that has listened to it, just as I am proud to be part of a government that truly acknowledges the importance of regional tourism in Western Australia and that works to make decisions that benefit tourism operators, traditional owners and visitors by offering opportunity and support for respectful tourism ventures. The Cook government's ongoing investment in the tourism sector is a testament to its dedication to promote WA as a world-class holiday destination and its commitment to supporting tourism operators statewide.

Hon Neil Thomson talked about the Bungle Bungles and Horizontal Falls. He said he had a meeting. He did not have a meeting with the TOs. If he wants to stand in this chamber and talk about it, he had better make sure he has his facts straight because that is coming from the non-Aboriginal people that he has spoken to, such as the shire. Who does he think he is? He is a Kiwi guy talking about my land. He had better learn some more before he stands in front of me and says he can talk about it.

HON SAMANTHA ROWE (East Metropolitan — Parliamentary Secretary) [2.01 pm]: I am pleased to be able to make a contribution in support of this motion that was moved by my colleague Hon Peter Foster that we acknowledge our state government's investment in tourism and in attracting significant events to Western Australia. I will give the government response this afternoon. I would like to cover a few matters in my comments. I would particularly like to focus on the significant events that we have seen brought to Western Australia and Perth. Before I do, I am pleased that some members on this side of the house have risen in support of this motion to give thoughtful contributions to the debate. I want to say that I am shocked by the contributions that were made by members opposite, particularly from Hon Neil Thomson, but, really, one should not be. Maybe I should not speak for everybody on this side of the house, but I can tell Hon Neil Thomson right now that I will not be lectured by him or his former government on how we should prioritise funding in this state. It is only because of our government managing finances in a sustainable way after members opposite left the state in such a mess that we now have the unique opportunity to bid for blockbuster events and attract them to Perth and Western Australia. That is because of our government's hard work. Money does not just come out of nowhere. Members opposite spent recklessly when they were in government and we have had to work incredibly hard as a government to bring it back.

Hon Neil Thomson: With corporate boxes for your members.

Hon SAMANTHA ROWE: If the member would just listen, rather than give a hysterical speech—a tirade and a lecture—as he did before.

Hon Neil Thomson: I am representing the people in the community.

Hon SAMANTHA ROWE: Are you though? Are you?

Hon Neil Thomson: I am.

Hon SAMANTHA ROWE: I am not sure that you are.

That is the only interjection I will take from the member. We have a story to tell in tourism, major events and hospitality that as a government we can be really proud of. It is important that we are able to diversify our economy and we are starting to see that happen. We heard from Hon Peter Foster about some of the wonderful events and tourism attractions in the regions and what some of the flow-on effects can be, whether it be job creation or upgrading roads and facilities and the like to create a lasting legacy, so that it is not just a one-off event or attraction that is brought into the state and that sustainable money is spent on ensuring we have world-class facilities that people expect when they visit our state to attend these events. The government has a strong story to tell in this space. I am pleased that Hon Rita Saffioti, who was made Minister for Tourism last year, has done fantastic work in this area. I also give a shout out to my minister, Hon David Templeman, Minister for Sport and Recreation; Culture and the Arts. The fantastic events that are held throughout Perth and Western Australia each year because of these two ministers is something of which we can be very proud.

I have some statistics to share; Hon Peter Foster mentioned some in his contribution earlier. Since December 2023, our state has achieved a record visitor spend of \$17.7 billion, making it a \$4.2 billion increase compared with 2019. That is a significant amount. Western Australia is the third highest performing state for total spend growth compared with 2019. The state definitely has a strong tourism industry. Although things are certainly trending in the right direction, of course more work can still be done to grow our visitor economy even further. The government has a number of priorities for tourism, one of which is direct flights. Hon Peter Foster mentioned that in his contribution earlier, so I will not repeat information that he has already shared with the house. Having direct flights from Perth to overseas destinations is incredibly attractive for Western Australians. It is great to be able to go from Perth direct to a holiday destination, or it might be a workplace destination. Internal flights are also hugely significant for Western Australians to be able to visit this beautiful state.

Another priority on which the government wants to focus is major events and business events. We have seen already a number of blockbuster events come to our state, and I will touch on a few of those later in my remarks. I mention specifically the concerts by Coldplay, which were a huge success for the state. Unfortunately, I did not get to attend because I came down with COVID! Additionally, around one billion people around the world tuned in to see the WWE exhibition at Optus Stadium. It is phenomenal for Perth to have that strong exposure.

Another priority is tourism infrastructure, which is important. The government wants to ensure that it maintains its current facilities so that it can attract world-class events, particularly some sporting events. As my colleague Hon Klara Andric mentioned in her contribution, we hosted the FIFA Women's World Cup last year. I am sure many remember cheering on the Matildas during that time. I sat around the television with a number of colleagues from this chamber, cheering on the Matildas. It was a really exciting time, but it was more than that. When governments vie for those attractions to come to their state, they need to make that investment in the relevant infrastructure.

I think the rectangular stadium received \$35 million in upgrades so that we were able to host the five events here in Perth. That is a significant amount of money being spent on infrastructure upgrades. I am really pleased that we have been able to do that as a government. I think it is something that we can be very proud of. If someone went on to the WA events website that lists some of the events that we are having just this year, they would see a number of things each month that interstate, overseas and intrastate people could go to. These are massive events that we can all be very proud of. In January, we had the United Cup and the HSBC Sevens Series in Perth, which was a fantastic festival event of rugby that I was able to attend to witness the festival-like atmosphere over the couple of days that it was hosted at HBF Park. We also had the Australian Open Water Championships and OceanSwim Festival; Bunbury Fringe; the WWE Elimination Chamber, which I touched on before, and Perth Festival, which is one of my favourite times of year. I think we provide an incredible event each year with the Perth Festival. It is one of my favourite times of the year.

I want to acknowledge that this year was artistic director Iain Grandage's fifth and final festival program. If members can indulge me, I would like to take the opportunity to thank Iain and congratulate him for his five years of leading the Perth Festival. He did an amazing job. He has got incredible artistic vision and leadership. There are certainly big shoes to fill.

Hon Peter Collier: Good Scotch boy.

Hon SAMANTHA ROWE: Is he? I was not aware of that.

I just think that he has put on such a full program for Western Australians, interstate visitors and international visitors to enjoy each year here in Perth.

I would like to mention two events that were on the calendar this year that I had the opportunity to attend to represent Minister Templeman. One of those was the world premiere of a tragic Noongar opera about forbidden love. This was produced by Gina Williams and Guy Ghose. Some people in the chamber may be aware of some of their work. It was an incredible opera that was sung entirely in Noongar. Of course, Gina and Guy are award-winning songwriters and storytellers. Their opera is *Wundig Wer Wilura* and it is a Dreaming story of two star-crossed lovers whose souls vanished to Mount Brown and Mount Bakewell in York. It had all the elements of great opera. It was a tale of family, connection, obligation, rebellion, love and betrayal, with catastrophic consequences. I have to say, it was an incredible piece of opera and storytelling put on at His Majesty's. I think it is wonderful when people like Iain at Perth Festival tell our stories, Australian stories and Western Australian stories and provide a vehicle to bring these stories to life, whether it be through theatre, opera or visual arts and the like. It is really important that we have the opportunity to tell our stories. That is just one of the shows that was on this year at the Perth Festival.

One of the other shows that I had the opportunity to attend was called *Food*. Again, this one was at His Majesty's Theatre. The set on stage at His Majesty's was a dining room table. Selected people from the audience were able to sit around the dining room table. It was a one man show. Unfortunately, when I first looked at purchasing tickets for this show, I was of the understanding that it was dinner and a show, but it actually was not. I was most disappointed when I arrived and it was not dinner and a show, but that the actual set was a dining table. However, it was a fantastic piece of art. I think the artist was from New York. It was not the dinner and magic show that I thought I was going to, but it was still a brilliant piece of theatre that I got to enjoy with friends.

Those were just two of the shows that the Perth Festival put on this year. It does a range of fantastic events in Perth that I encourage anyone to see and enjoy. We also have a number of wonderful events that are put on in the regions. As Hon Peter Foster mentioned, we have such a diverse and beautiful state here in Western Australia. I think the fact that, as a government, we are able to make sure that we attract different tourism events right across the state, whether it be in the south or far north and in Broome in the Kimberley, is a real testament to the passion and importance the government puts on the tourism industry. I really encourage everybody to have a look at the different events that we have got coming up this year. We have only touched on a handful that happened and are about to happen. There is a full calendar of events and attractions that people can attend. I encourage every single member in this house to do that. This industry is strong. As a government, we want to make sure that we can grow it even further. As I have outlined in some of my comments, there is still a lot to do, but there is certainly a lot that we have invested in already. I think it is something that everyone should be very proud of.

HON SHELLEY PAYNE (Agricultural) [2.16 pm]: I want to start by thanking Hon Peter Foster for bringing this motion forward today to talk about tourism. It is something that is very important to our state that we need to work on. We are one of the most remote cities in the world and we also do not have a huge population here in Western Australia. However, fortunately, in the last decade we have seen the advent of social media and the ability for us to really market ourselves through images to the world. Wow, what an amazing array of images that we can use to showcase Western Australia to the world—from our amazing landscapes and coastal environments to our unique wildlife and marine species.

I want to quickly make a comment. Hon Samantha Rowe talked about some of the major events like the WWE Elimination Chamber that was held in February and the fact that it was shown to a billion people all around the world. I recently had a chance to catch up with my sister-in-law. She is in Canada. She said "Shelley, have you

seen the WWE in Perth?” and I said “No, I haven’t.” She put it on the television because I was there visiting her. It was just amazing to see Optus Stadium. It had the city of Perth in the background and the sunset. It was just amazing. Through all the commercial breaks, it actually went to different places in Western Australia. It showed Rottnest Island and the south west and it even showed Esperance. I just think if this reached a billion people around the world, it shows that our good fiscal management and the fact that we can invest in some of these larger events really helps bring Western Australia to the world. We need that considering, like I said, that we are remote and do not have a huge population. We need that kind of coverage to be able to attract people to us and link us with the rest of the world. I acknowledge the investment of the Cook Labor government and Tourism WA to promote our state.

I will get back to social media. I remember when tourism first started to take off in Esperance. We had a lady named Fiona Shillington who had recently moved to Esperance. She had family history in Esperance, but she had spent quite a lot of time working in Sydney. She invested in tourist accommodation in Esperance, which is the Esperance Chalet Village. She has done an amazing job of it. She was the first one to come to an Esperance tourism meeting and say “Hey! You guys need a Facebook page.” She set up Experience Esperance and was posting amazing images of our white beaches and turquoise water every day. That was really when our Esperance tourism started to take off. That effort and that initial push really got us going with our tourism. Last year we took out the honour of the world’s best beach at Lucky Bay. With climate change, the south coast is becoming more appealing to travellers. Esperance is already full for the next summer season. For the last quite a few years the shire has had to open overflow caravan parks so it can handle all the visitors. This year, the caravan overflow was open for 119 days—one-third of a year. It saw 13 000 visitors, with up to 889 people in one night. That was on New Year’s Eve. I shout out to Esperance Shire for accommodating all the visitors who want to come to Esperance. It shows the need to keep up with the growth it is seeing there.

We are working on the Esperance airport upgrade. Jetstar has written and it wants to provide direct flights to Esperance. Unfortunately, the airstrip is not big or solid enough for bigger planes to land. This is an important project. Albany also has a project underway to upgrade its airport. It will allow both regions on the south coast to receive larger planes.

Our rental rate, like everyone else, is below one per cent. There is no room for hospitality workers so again I commend the shire on the work it is doing to develop workers’ accommodation and its work with the Development Commission. Thank you to the Development Commission for helping the shire with that project so it can provide places to stay for people who have jobs or while they seek longer term accommodation. We lost our youth hostel during COVID; however, we gained a brand new RAC caravan park, which is fantastic. Even though it is new, it is undergoing a huge expansion to nearly double its area so that it can accommodate some of the extra demand.

I acknowledge Marcus Falconer from Australia’s Golden Outback, which runs under Tourism WA, for all his great work supporting Esperance. I also thank Annabelle Hender who is our new Esperance tourism development officer. It is great to have someone fill that role. She has found somewhere to live, which is fantastic.

I want to talk about our investment in tourism. Through COVID, the most people ever came out to the regions. I commend the government on its WA recovery plan, which was launched during COVID, and the huge investment in the tourism industry as part of that. Hon Louise Kingston said earlier that we are not investing in it—but this was a \$150 million investment for state tourism to make sure we were ready for tourists to come back after COVID and to help create jobs. The investment included affordable airfare packages to promote tourism and move people around the state, enhancing Aboriginal cultural tourism, improving roads for better access to tourism offerings and national parks and supporting bringing unique attractions to Western Australia.

In last year’s budget, there was a \$17.7 million initiative for creating new, environmentally sensitive accommodation and experiences in national parks. Many members talked about our diverse range of natural attractions—our national parks are a strong drawcard for our tourism industry. Tourism WA is working with industry to develop new tourism experiences across our national parks. Tourism WA is helping to develop workforce skills for the tourism and hospitality industry. It has partnered with the Regional Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia to provide a series of tourism and hospitality training workshops. They did some last year and they are continuing this year. For example, in Esperance next month there will be workshops to help develop our hospitality capacity. Those will include responsible service of alcohol, barista courses, first aid courses and front-of-house service skills. This is running now and is helping us to prepare for the increased demand for next summer.

We talk about regional economic development quite a bit, but one thing I will mention are the regional economic development grants, which are fantastic. There are nine regions around the state and the RED grants help small businesses, no matter what the need is, in the different regions. For Esperance, the need was tourism and making sure there are good tourism offerings. The RED grants have done a fantastic job of helping Esperance provide a range of tourism and hospitality options. It has been great for the locals as well. The grants helped Lucky Bay Brewery with its relocation project. Esperance now has a great brewery. We have Esperance Distillery, which has received funding. Yirri Grove Olive Farm also received some money. It has a great restaurant and has two new Heyscape properties to provide more upmarket accommodation. An investment in Tiffany Brown’s Bread Local, a community favourite, has allowed it to get a new oven, a new mixer and increase the power capacity to its site. It allows Bread Local to provide more yummy food for more visitors.

Many people know Jaimen Hudson for his promotion of amazing marine wildlife. He received a RED grant for his company to build accessible units for tourism. A couple of other Esperance businesses, Esperance Honey and Southern Sardines, also received RED grants. People can go to Lucky Bay Brewery and the honey seltzer is made with honey from Esperance Honey. The fish tacos there come from Southern Sardines. It is great how the community is working together.

I focused earlier on big events, but I will mention some of the regional events as well. They are helping to bring people to the regions but also help regional communities. I commend the government for its investment in this. Lotterywest is a great promoter and provides assistance to local communities and projects. The Narrogin Hay Bales concert was held at the end of last year. It followed a whole year of efforts by the community. It was a unique experience under the stars on a farm, in a custom-designed hay bale arena consisting of 6 000 hay bales. It was a pilot program with the Green Shoots program with the Perth Symphony Orchestra. As I said, it was a yearlong collaboration with Arts Narrogin, Narrogin musicians and the local community. It was supported by Lotterywest and culminated in a great community concert. There is a lot of potential from the project to expand to other regional communities in Western Australia. It brings communities together, brings people with musical talent out of the community and gives them help and support to create regional musical events. I shout out to Catherine Henwood and the team at Perth Symphony Orchestra for taking on a regional project and doing a fantastic job with it. More than 140 people participated, guided by the Perth Symphony Orchestra professionals. There were 12 different ensembles put together. The concert was sold out and was broadcast online so people could watch it if they were unable to get a ticket. The people who participated were from age 15 to age 92, so we covered almost the whole community.

Talking about music in Esperance, I want to give a shout-out to Kyron Smithson and Kyza Presents. Since he has come to Esperance he has done work to help build the music community in Esperance. He gets live music every week at Lucky Bay Brewing, and he puts on great events that tourists, as well as locals, love going to at Club 75 at our Cannery Arts Centre. I give a big shout-out to him for all his work in bringing out the music community. We have a great music community in Esperance.

I want to focus on national parks as well. I talked a bit about our investment in national parks—creating new environmentally friendly tourist attractions and national parks being a strong drawcard for our state's tourism industry. I talked as well about climate change, and how great the weather is along the south coast. In my area we have three really fantastic national parks. I suggest that anyone who has not been to visit them go. Fitzgerald River National Park can be accessed from Bremer Bay or Hopetoun. Cape Arid National Park is a really fantastic place to see whales and so is Fitzgerald River National Park. Cape Le Grand National Park is really our jewel in the crown, with beaches like Lucky Bay. Over 200 000 visitors a year are attracted to see our beaches at Cape Le Grand. What a great opportunity we have to do more work in these parks. We can add more walking trails and upgrades to provide all-weather access to these parks so people can enjoy the whales and have more walking opportunities. I was there during the summer and I ran into a guy from Perth hiking the coastal trail of Cape Le Grand. He said how amazing it was that he was there outside having a hike when he did not even want to go outside of his house in Perth. He was really pleased to be somewhere where there is generally cool weather during summer, although we get the odd hot day. I think Esperance is increasing its tourism because it is an appealing place to go to get out of the heat during summer.

Speaking of hiking, Esperance will have a hiking festival in September. I commend Annabelle for her initiative in getting that hiking festival together, with support from Tourism WA and the Shire of Esperance. This will be a great event showcasing what we have to offer to hikers in the south. Western Australia has a lot of potential for hiking and we can do a lot more marketing. When we see how fantastic and well known places like New Zealand are for their walking trails, I think we have a lot of potential to promote that a lot more in the future.

I have one more comment on agritourism. The regional economic development grants have helped develop agritourism. Given our big agricultural regions, this is really taking off. When people visit, they really have an interest in looking at what is happening in agriculture and how farming works. There are opportunities now for some of these farming properties to have accommodation on them. There are some awesome places with great views of the Stirling Range, Fitzgerald River National Park or Cape Le Grand National Park looking at putting up some really great upmarket accommodation. Tourists can have privacy with great views and be close to the tourism attractions. One of the RED grants that the Wheatbelt Development Commission gave was to Armstrong Farmlands, which is outside Narrogin, to help put some upper-class tourist accommodation there. Justin Armstrong has done a really great job putting a mountain bike trail through the farm so people can experience being in the country on a farm and do some activities while they are there.

I thank Hon Peter Foster for moving this motion today, the other government members for their contributions and the Cook government for investing in tourism and helping to connect people to all the great natural assets around our state.

HON SANDRA CARR (Agricultural) [2.34 pm]: I rise in support of the motion moved by Hon Peter Foster. I thank him for providing us with the opportunity to talk about some of the fantastic investments by the Cook government. I was really pleased to hear my colleagues speaking about some of the great investments, programs and

initiatives happening across regional WA. I also found myself quite baffled by some of the comments from opposition members across the floor. To me it was reminiscent of the expression “all sizzle and no steak”. Then I thought it transformed into “all whinge and no way forward”—finding problems where they do not exist or talking about problems that are perhaps not even really problems. It is “all sizzle, no steak” and “no meat on the bone”. The Cook WA Labor government is putting the meat on the bone for our tourism industry.

Hon Louise Kingston mentioned the Gloucester tree climb being closed, which I found really bizarre. Then she flew us over to New York and said the Brooklyn Bridge did not get closed. Firstly, I find it bizarre that there is a relationship between regional WA and New York. I cannot see it. I think, yes, the Brooklyn Bridge would be closed if it were unsafe; it would be closed if it were not a safe experience. Secondly, Hon Louise Kingston talked about the Gloucester tree, which is profoundly ironic coming from a woman who lamented the closure of logging in our native forests. On one hand she wants to celebrate our beautiful old-growth trees and on the other hand she wants them to continue to be chopped down. I think she is flip-flopping all over the place like the death rolls of a harpooned whale, and I cannot understand why someone would try to draw that relationship and not find inconsistency. That is indicative of the problem with the opposition, particularly its stance on initiatives across regional WA. It is very difficult to deny facts, and the fact is that we are investing a lot of time, money and effort into growing our tourism industry. I make the same comment about Hon Neil Thomson lamenting the closure of boating through Horizontal Falls. There are two core issues related to the closure: respect and safety. Say no more. They are two things Hon Neil Thomson could spend a lot of time exploring and understanding. That was a fundamental flaw in his discussion, and he is not really acknowledging the core issues behind the closure of Horizontal Falls. We need to keep people safe when they experience things. Sometimes it is okay to look and not touch. Sometimes it is okay to be respectful of others. I have visited Ayers Rock, as I am sure many members in this chamber have done. It does not have to be climbed. I walked around the outside. It is a beautiful, magical experience to spend a whole day walking the lap, and we can do similar things in our own environment.

Let us talk about how we are putting the meat on the bones of our tourism industry. In February this year, Minister Saffioti, our amazing Minister for Tourism, announced the Western Australia visitor economy strategy, a 10-year plan for the sustainable growth of WA’s visitor economy—a real-time, real-effort, real strategy designed to improve and cultivate a thriving, sustainable tourism economy. The Cook government has committed \$530 million to tourism for the next four years—substantial spend, substantial commitment. It is irrefutable evidence that we are doing a lot to support our tourism industry. It has set an aspirational target to increase our visitor spend to \$25 billion per annum by 2033. Last financial year visitor spend was \$16.8 billion thanks to efforts by the Cook Labor government. It was responsible for more than 89 000 jobs.

The minister also announced the Tourism Investment Committee of Cabinet, a committee in cabinet explicitly established to work on ensuring that we cultivate, grow, renew and keep alive and vibrant our tourism sector. It provides strategic guidance and oversight to all the major tourist attractions and infrastructure project proposals. It is strengthening collaboration across all of the various agencies involved in developing and establishing projects. It is removing barriers to tourism investment. It is working on ways to expedite and improve approvals processes to make sure that things happen in a timely way so we do not miss out on any of the fabulous tourism opportunities as they arise.

In April this year, we also announced tourism and hospitality training. In partnership with the Regional Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia, we have set up a series of job-ready training workshops in regional Western Australia to ensure that we have a tourism workforce. We can have a tourism industry and we can have all the opportunities in the world, but it will not be sustainable if we do not have a workforce ready to support and supply that industry and people to provide the services that our tourists want. These programs are happening across regional WA. In my own patch of the world, in the Agricultural Region, some are being held in Geraldton in April and in Esperance in May. These programs cover things like barista training and responsible service of alcohol, and there are some other programs around linking people to employers and connecting them with employment opportunities as well. We are making sure that we provide timely training opportunities for people to ensure that they can fulfil the needs of our tourism industry.

Another initiative that we announced in February this year is support for tour operators. We are making sure that people who are involved in delivering tourism experiences and opportunities for visitors and people touring intrastate and interstate can provide them effectively. We have waived the annual licence fee to use national parks and conservation areas. More than 400 tourism operators will benefit from the four-year trial of waiving that fee from July this year. It is a great initiative. It means that people who conduct boat and bus, mountain bike, hiking and walking tours in WA’s national, marine and conservation parks and reserves can provide those tours without having to worry about that annual licence fee. It will provide some respite for those people who perhaps have been feeling the impact of things like COVID on the tourism ventures and opportunities they have been providing.

There are some fantastic events happening in regional WA—some of them are happening right now—that have been supported by the Cook Labor government. Let us take a little trip down south, because it is a lot quicker to get there than to get to New York to see a bridge that has no relationship with Western Australia. Let us talk about

the Margaret River Pro that is happening right now down in Margaret River. Surfers from across the world are participating in that event. It is supported by the Cook government, and that support is guaranteed until 2028. It is the central, pivotal event of the World Surf League Championship Tour.

I am very sad. One of my personal favourite surfers is Kelly Slater. We are the same age. He looks a lot better. Well done to him; perhaps I should have been a surfer! Unfortunately, just recently he did not make the cut, and he said that might be the end of his career. My personal message to him is to please come back again next year because surfing still needs him in any capacity. He is a great drawcard. We still have a lot of amazing Australian surfers in that event. It is a fantastic tourism boost for the Margaret River region. Last year, it attracted about 3 500 people and injected about \$8 million into the south west economy, all supported by the Cook Labor government.

The diversity of events across our state we have heard about from my colleagues that are being supported is incredible. The calibre and standard of some events that are being attracted is incredible. Back in the day, the Margaret River Pro used to be called the Margaret River Masters. The event was held in WA every year, and I used to take a trip down there when I was quite young. It was not just to look at all the gorgeous surfers; it was a great trip with my girlfriends. Yes, it was quite aesthetically pleasing as well! It is a really great event. It is really vibrant. Obviously, anyone who lives down south knows that their patch of the world is an absolutely stunning, beautiful part of WA. We are very lucky to call it part of our backyard. It is quite stunning. It was a real tragedy when that event stopped running for a while. I am really thrilled to see the Cook Labor government is investing in the event. Australia has so much coastline and surfing is a huge part of our cultural identity, so I am really pleased to see the Cook government is supporting that event.

A little closer to home for me, next week is the Shore Leave Festival in the midwest. It is held in Geraldton predominantly. It is an amazing event that is coming up for its third year that highlights the importance of Geraldton and the midwest to WA and in particular to our food and cuisine economy. It celebrates lots of local produce—things like our crayfishing and fishing industries, and some of our farmers and producers out there. We have a developing oyster industry over near the Abrolhos Islands. We also have the Mid West Food Industries Alliance, which is a group that supports all the products that are being created by all our primary industries. There are people making things like beautiful canola oil and growing olives; Chally Bridge Farms, which makes beautiful wildflower arrangements; and the Illegal Tender Rum Co.

Different producers from around the midwest create amazing products, and they are all celebrated as part of the Shore Leave Festival, which has a combination of free and ticketed events. There are things like long lunches; a stargazing event all the way up in Kalbarri; a long lunch in Dongara, and one in Denison as well; back-of-boat cray sales in Dongara and Denison; and a beautiful food event out at Yanget Farm for people travelling east from Geraldton. The festival celebrates the whole midwest region and gives people an opportunity to engage in events for families and single tourists who are out to party in the evening.

It attracts people from outside Geraldton as well, which is fantastic. When I was there last year, I bumped into a couple from Sydney who were enjoying walking around the markets. We chatted about the event. They talked about what a fantastic event it is and what an undiscovered gem Geraldton was for them. They were really quite amazed by our beautiful foreshore. A lot of the event takes place on the foreshore, and it is a great opportunity to showcase the stunning coastline of the midwest and Geraldton and some of the beautiful cuisine and food products we have to offer; they really are world-class.

Another event I will mention just to finish off is a fairly new event in the midwest, which is again supported as part of the regional events scheme by our Minister for Regional Development, Don Punch—that is, the Backroads Gravel Fields of Gold event. This event is a stunner. When it started out, in its first year, about 2 500 people participated. Last year, 5 000 people turned up, and this year they are expecting even more. The investment keeps building momentum, and the event continues to grow. It is in August this year, in Nabawa in Chapman Valley. It is called Fields of Gold because it happens when all the canola fields are in flower. People participate by cycling on gravel and there is a running event as well. All the gravel roads are surrounded by stunning canola fields, and people go to just watch and enjoy, support or be a part of the event. People camp out there. There is an opening event, which happened in Geraldton last year. It is a beautiful way to celebrate the stunning midwest when it is in full bloom and really showing off its absolute green and gold best. It is a scene that invokes a great sense of parochialism in most of us when we head out there.

Events are for all the family. There are 10, 20, 60, 100 and 160-kilometre rides. I am exhausted just saying it! There is then a five-kilometre run and a 14-kilometre run, or, if people are like me, there is a bar where people can sit and watch it all. I just had one drink, by the way—just one ginger beer! It was a beautiful day out in the sunshine. Some of the farmers open their paddocks or big sheds for the runners and cyclists to go through. One of the pit stops was one of the farmer's sheds, and cyclists would ride off the gravel, go through the shed and stop and grab a glass of water, or, if they are like me, stand and have a cup of tea and a scone or a biscuit made by some of the local farmers and high five the riders. Young blokes there make signs to support all the runners and cyclists.

We even had local members of Parliament there. Chris Tallentire, a member of the house that shall not be named, the other place, was riding in the event as well. He came off his bike, but it was not his fault and not a comment

on the quality of the track; it was an inexperienced rider who gave him a bit of a bump and knocked him off his bike. He still spoke really highly of the event. It is an incredible event and I am really proud to say that it is supported by the Cook government.

Lastly, I refer to the Geraldton Heritage Precinct, Ngurra Barlunggu. The Cook government—many thanks to Minister Templeman for this one—invested \$7.6 million for conservation works at the Geraldton Heritage Precinct. For those who do not know, it is a beautiful old building. It was the original hospital in Geraldton. It has incredible cultural heritage value and there are displays. The old prison is at one side and there are craft stalls within the old prison cells. It is a beautiful precinct, and we are very lucky to have it. I am really pleased to say that the Cook government is injecting funds to support and conserve that beautiful precinct in the midwest.

I am mindful that my colleague Hon Peter Foster would probably like a right of reply, so I shall finish my comments there and allow him his moment.

HON KYLE McGINN (Mining and Pastoral — Parliamentary Secretary) [2.49 pm]: Thank you, Hon Sandra Carr. I appreciate that and will take the opportunity to talk about this fabulous motion, put before the chamber today by Hon Peter Foster. I am not surprised he is talking about tourism because—with Hon Stephen Dawson, Hon Rosie Sahanna and me—he has one of the most fantastic electorates in this state, which holds some of the best events to be found in Western Australia. An event close to Hon Peter Foster is obviously the Karijini Experience, which I missed this year. I heard it was fantastic and brought tourism from all over the world and all around Australia, as it does every year.

Hon Stephen Dawson: We have the Shinju Matsuri.

Hon KYLE McGINN: I was going to get to Broome and talk about the Shinju Matsuri, which I know Hon Stephen Dawson and Hon Rosie Sahanna are huge fans of. I think a lot of members of this Parliament are huge fans of it. It is a fantastic event that brings people from all around the world and Australia to Broome, a beautiful part of the world. For a bit of a motorhead like me, even the speedway gets a go. The festival does some speedway on one of the nights. Broome has a great mix for all tourists up there, and that is throughout the year, to be honest. Shinju Matsuri is a great event.

Unfortunately, I will touch on Hon Neil Thomson's contribution. I feel I need to kick a few things into touch there. I think that Hon Rosie Sahanna handled that perfectly and put the truth on the record. She put on the record what it means to consult as a member of Parliament and what it means to talk to all parts of the community, not just the keyboard warriors who like a member's Facebook posts. Hon Neil Thomson would learn a lot by trying to model himself on Hon Rosie Sahanna and how she operates in this chamber. Hon Neil Thomson should take some notes because Hon Rosie Sahanna is doing a fabulous job representing her community in the Kimberley region. I take very seriously what she has to say on the serious issues that happen in the Kimberley, unlike when he talks about them.

I want to touch on a couple of things. We can talk about so many great things in tourism, but everyone in this chamber is aware that I am a massive fight fan. I once again thank the Labor government. We cannot say that any other party, except for the WA Labor Party, has ever made this possible. In 2017, the Labor Party took to the election bringing the octagon into Western Australia and allowing mixed martial artists to perform their sport. At the pinnacle of the sport is a local organisation, Eternal, that runs some fabulous events here. Since 2017, we have found out that we have been creating homegrown MMA legends who are now fighting in the Ultimate Fighting Championship.

Hon Wilson Tucker: When is the next fight?

Hon KYLE McGINN: I will get there, Hon Wilson Tucker. The first event was UFC 221, which was fantastic and absolutely brilliant. Recently, we saw UFC 284, in which Alexander Volkanovski fought for a belt above the belt he held. It was not the heavyweight belt; mind you, he will probably go up there at some point. That event was spectacular. All the hoteliers in town said that they could see it for the whole week. The city centre was vibrant and full. That is what these events are about: bringing people from around the world and from around the country into Western Australia so we can show them what we have got and what we can deliver. We delivered one of the best UFC events I have seen either on pay-per-view or in person—so much so that I believe this is the reason we are about to see UFC 305 back in Perth once again in August. We can pretty much say that the home of the octagon for UFC in Australia is now Perth. Perth has delivered two spectacular events and will deliver another one, and this one will be big, members.

We have a young man who has fought his way into a huge position. His name is Jack Della Maddalena, and he fought at UFC 284. I say "fought" loosely because it only lasted a few minutes, but he did very well in front of his local crowd. He is from Perth, and if he wins the fight at UFC 305, there is no denying him a chance at a world title in the UFC. To have our very first Western Australian UFC champion will be absolutely spectacular, and I am really, really excited to see that happen. We also have Astro Boy, Stephen Erceg, who is another Western Australian who is fighting for a title at UFC 301. They are two Western Australians who I think have benefited from this government being forward-thinking and bringing back the octagon into Western Australia in 2017. That decision has created a sport and a following that we can absolutely be very proud of as members of this place and as members of the Labor Party.

I was not a huge fan of this—I will be honest—but I must say that it will put us on the map in Australia. Perth will now also be the home of the World Wrestling Entertainment event. For Hansard's assistance, I am holding up the Elimination Chamber booklet, which features the amazing Australian Rhea Ripley, who is from South Australia. She held onto her title at the Perth Elimination Chamber event at Optus Stadium.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon Steve Martin): Will you be tabling that document, honourable member?

Hon KYLE McGINN: It is not mine. Hon Stephen Pratt might be a little bit upset.

Hon Stephen Dawson: He is only asking because he wants to have a read.

Hon KYLE McGINN: Look, it was interesting. It is not necessarily my flavour of tea, but you should have seen the crowds down at Optus Stadium. It was spectacular. I think over 55 000 people packed in to see the Elimination Chamber. We had Australian wrestlers there. The fan base was unique. They all had shirts on, and they all bought merchandise. They had flown from all over the world and Australia to come here to Perth to watch it. It got televised to millions and millions of viewers. The reach of the WWE is massive, and the benefit to the state of seeing Perth on the world stage is fantastic.

My hat goes off to all the Ministers for Tourism from our government since 2017. They have done a fabulous job of working tourism into this state in such a way that we now get the major events. We are competing. We have got the test matches coming up. We have got all these things coming up. We have the Kambosos fight; we have an Australian fighting for another world title at the RAC Arena. It is fantastic. This is the sort of stuff that would only ever be over east. We are no longer just competing; we are now leading the way on events people want to travel to. They travel around the world to see these types of events. I hope that we start to see more of the WWE in Western Australia. That would be fantastic. I am not sure that I will necessarily go to them all, but I think it will be spectacular for the people who will.

I also want to touch on the solar eclipse, which happened last year. Hon Wilson Tucker was up there as well or was going to come up for it.

Hon Wilson Tucker: I was coming.

Hon KYLE McGINN: That is right. He would know that it was unbelievable for tourism throughout that area of our electorate. All the way up through Carnarvon, Tom Price and Onslow, it was spectacular. This is an event that people can capture and see, but tourism events were created and put around it. They were spectacular. We saw the eyes of the world on Exmouth. People were on the sides of the roads. They were on the oval. They were everywhere. All the local businesses capitalised on that, and Tourism WA did a spectacular job supporting it. That is what tourism is about; if an event is coming and will naturally be in our area, we have to make sure that we invest in it. That is what this government did, and it did a really good job of it.

I am a huge supporter of the regional events scheme and the regional events grants. They are a huge boost to tourism in regional Western Australia. They allow small organisations or small sporting groups to get a bit of money to put on an event and potentially raise more money, which they can reinvest into their sporting club. That has happened quite a lot.

I also want to touch on an event outside of my electorate. I represented the Minister for Regional Development at the Margaret River Cape to Cape. I think I really underestimated the interest in mountain bike trail riding and racing. It was a huge event. At the tavern, there would have been over 300 people who were there for the awards on the first day. There were broken collar bones and wrists and all sorts of things, and they were going to go riding again the next day, which was really interesting.

Hon Wilson Tucker interjected.

Hon KYLE McGINN: No, it was the mountain bike ride.

Hon Wilson Tucker: They do the run as well.

Hon KYLE McGINN: It does the run as well. The same organisation that runs the Cape to Cape event runs the Goldfields Cyclclassic in Kalgoorlie, which is, I think, even crazier. They ride 135 kilometres from Kalgoorlie to Menzies. They get a big feed from the Menzies locals that night and then ride to Leonora, where they are greeted by runners of the Leonora Golden Gift, which is a spectacular event that was created and is run on the main street. These are great schemes.

Tourism is alive and well in WA, and the Ultimate Fighting Championship in Western Australia is alive and well. That is thanks to a government that cares about tourism, invests in tourism and gets it. It does not sit on its hands. It makes sure that Western Australia competes for some of the best events in the world so that the world can see what Perth and the regions of Western Australia have to offer, and people visit us so that our small businesses can thrive.

HON PETER FOSTER (Mining and Pastoral) [3.00 pm] — in reply: I rise to make a few brief remarks in reply to members' contributions. I acknowledge and thank everyone who contributed to this motion today. It has generated some discussion about the importance of investing in events and in tourism. I think members today have given great examples of how our government is doing that.

Hon Louise Kingston raised some good points about growing and sustaining tourism. I absolutely agree with those comments. I am very aware of the issues she raised about Cossack, in particular. I know that the Minister for Regional Development is working on addressing those issues. I will not add anything to what Hon Rosie Sahanna said about the issues of Horizontal Falls, because I think she answered that quite well.

Following Hon Louise Kingston, we heard from Hon Klara Andric, who is obviously very passionate about football or, as some of us call it, soccer. It was great to hear her contribution about that and her acknowledgement of the flights that have opened up Perth to the rest of the world. She also highlighted the importance of those flights because people who visit Western Australia spend money while they are here.

Hon Neil Thomson spoke next. Not unusually, he was negative again today. I am still waiting to hear his positive vision for our great state. Every day he gets up in this place, he trashes our great state. I hope that one day we will hear something positive from him. I disagree with absolutely everything he said. I do not think that listening to First Nations people is divisive. I think that ignoring First Nations people is divisive. I will leave my comments there.

I thank Hon Rosie Sahanna for her contribution. I heard her passion for the Kimberley in her contribution. She raised the valid point that we do not walk all over Stonehenge and the Pyramids, so why is it okay for us to walk all over places of significance to our First Nations people? That is a really important point and is something I will take away from the motion today.

I acknowledge and thank Hon Samantha Rowe for her contribution in giving the government's response. I absolutely back her comments about the state government keeping the finances strong. By keeping the finances strong, we are able to make solid investments in tourism that will be sustainable and grow the number of visitors to our state. She mentioned the Perth Festival. I attended one of the events at Perth Festival last year when Björk came to Western Australia. My partner and I are big fans of Björk and we got to watch her in Perth, which was fantastic. She had just performed in Sydney, so it was great to see her perform here in Perth.

I thank Hon Shelley Payne for her contribution. The passion she has for her electorate in Esperance is evident when she talks. She raised good points about social media. It is important when we market destinations like Esperance and the north west that we do so on social media. Everyone is on social media such as Instagram, TikTok or Facebook. They share their pictures and pass judgement on our attractions, so we need to get it right. As we know, social media can go anywhere when people post their comments, so we need to make sure that we get our marketing right and that people talk about our state in a favourable way. Hon Shelley Payne also talked about the regional economic development grants. That made me think about one in Exmouth that we supported for Dive Ningaloo. That business refitted a ferry into a floating hotel—a “floatel”—so people can go to the gulf or further out in the ocean for diving. It is a package. People do not go on the boat for just a day; they spend a couple of days diving. That is an extra experience we are able to offer in Exmouth.

I acknowledge Hon Sandra Carr's comments. Thank you very much. It is always interesting to hear about all the events that are held in the midwest. I have not been to the Shore Leave Festival, but I have seen the photos and it looks fantastic. Maybe one year I will be able to go there. The member for Geraldton also speaks very highly of that event.

Lastly, I will talk about Hon Kyle McGinn's contribution. As he said, we have great events in the north west. The member had a unique experience during the total solar eclipse. I did not have that. I was just down the road in Onslow.

Hon Kyle McGinn: Onslow was great.

Hon PETER FOSTER: It was. We had 99.7 per cent coverage. We did not quite have 100 per cent coverage. The member is absolutely right. We knew that the eclipse was coming, and we built a series of events around that, including concerts, markets and tours.

Hon Kyle McGinn: What was the band?

Hon PETER FOSTER: I think The Waifs came.

Question put and passed.

COMMITTEE REPORTS — CONSIDERATION

Committee

The Deputy Chair of Committees (Hon Steve Martin) in the chair.

Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations — Eighty-sixth Report — Consideration of the 2020–21 annual reports — Motion

Resumed from 20 March on the following motion moved by Hon Peter Collier —

That the report be noted.

Question put and passed.

*Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs —
Sixtieth Report — Petition No. 020 — Dog Act 1976 — Motion*

Resumed from 21 June 2023 on the following motion moved by Hon Peter Foster —

That the report be noted.

Hon MARTIN PRITCHARD: I want to spend a couple of minutes talking about the sixtieth report of the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs. It is based on petition 20 into the Dog Act. I will spend a couple of minutes talking about the committee, its role and on its expanding workload before I get to the report itself.

I thank the committee members, Hon Peter Foster, Hon Sophia Moermond, Hon Stephen Pratt, Hon Tjorn Sibma and Hon Shelley Payne. The reason that I highlight this is that we have moved to a situation in which we now accept e-petitions. I have mixed views on e-petitions. It is absolutely evident that it will increase the workload of that committee maybe a hundredfold. The reason I have mixed views on e-petitions is that petitions are an absolute necessity and something that should be offered to our constituents. They should be able to petition this place and have their petitions considered and often inquired into and reported on. In the past, that has been based on the old-fashioned way of people writing a petition, standing out the front of a shopping centre and physically getting signatures. It seems to me that that shows a degree of investment in the issue that requires that commitment. When it gets to that point, it naturally filters out the issues that may not be—I do not want to use the word “important”; that is not the right word—more generally felt.

The other thing I have a concern about regarding petitions is that often the petitioners identify an issue that people identify with, but then go on to put a resolution within the petition. Often a person can identify with the issue—in this case, with regard to petition 20, about dog attacks—but may not necessarily agree with the resolution that is also put forward by the petitioner. I think we have a long way to go to work out how petitions can work. They are a very important device. It will be interesting to see what other people’s views on e-petitions are and whether we continue with that. I stress that I think it is important that constituents are given that opportunity. I do not want to denigrate them in any way, but in my view e-petitions seem to make it easy to increase the workload of the committee without necessarily increasing the import of those issues. That is just a personal view. I know there is some thought about how we might continue with e-petitions. They probably need to be continued because it gives that opportunity, but in what format they continue is something this house should look into.

The petition in this report is about attacks by dogs, which is a horrendous experience for anybody. Basically, the petition identifies the issue—I will talk more about that further in my contribution—and also puts forward suggested resolutions, one of which is stronger penalties for dog attacks. The petition suggests that dogs should be removed and destroyed and that there should be a compulsory education program for owners of dogs. That is probably where my thoughts lay.

Significant penalties exist within the Dog Act 1976—a penalty of \$10 000 for a dog attack that causes injury and a maximum penalty of \$20 000 if the attacking dog is a declared dangerous dog. Obviously, for those dogs that are declared dangerous, there should be a higher penalty because more care should be taken with them. My concern is that those penalties are significant, but there continues to be a lot of dog attacks and bites.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: The question is that the report be noted, Hon Martin Pritchard.

Hon MARTIN PRITCHARD: Thank you very much; I appreciate the indulgence of the house.

I turn now to how many dog attacks are reported. It is suggested that over 100 000 dog bites are reported annually, with an average of 2 061 requiring hospitalisation for treatment each year. That is significant. Further, dog bites account for 10 000 emergency department presentations by children; again, that is significant. Those are the reported dog attacks. There are a number of reasons it is viewed that the number reported is much lower than the real figure. The committee inquired into that through local governments. Local governments gave feedback that there are a number of reasons people do not report a dog bite or attack. One of the reasons is that the attack is minor in nature with no serious injury. A dog may have a propensity to bite but may not cause serious injury, so those instances are not reported.

Often families will not report their own dog biting as it is part of their family; they tend to deal with it themselves. Often the people involved—the owner of the dog and the person who is attacked—resolve the matter themselves in some way. The payment of medical expenses and those sorts of things may be worked out. If that does not occur, a person who has been bitten or attacked often does not want to pursue court proceedings as it is a horrendous process in itself. Often dog lovers will not report it because they fear that the dog will be euthanised. Particularly if they are next-door neighbours, or within the same neighbourhood, they may be concerned about reporting because there may be repercussions from the owner of the dog.

The committee also suggested that people may not have a good understanding of what a dog attack is. If a dog scares someone, is close and barks but does not bite, is that a dog attack? The other issue is whether there is an ability for people to report. People are not aware of the ability to report, or where to report, dog attacks.

The committee talked about how it may address these matters. I made a passing comment at the beginning of my presentation that I believe, as the committee does, that education is the way these matters need to be resolved. I say that because the penalties are quite significant. I do not think a person would say that if the penalty was a maximum of \$10 000, or \$20 000 if it was a declared dangerous dog, they would not take much care, but that they would take more care if it were a \$15 000 fine or anything more than that. It does not tend to work if the penalties are increased. Obviously, penalties have a role to play—I understand that—but people do not take less care with a view to what the penalty is. In most cases, dog owners will not know what the penalties are, so in my view increasing those penalties will not work. The path to resolving this is teaching dog owners their responsibilities and providing more education about the existence of penalties and how people can report and to where they can report. This is supported by local governments, which have responsibility for administering these regulations.

I want to touch on two other aspects. I mentioned whether it is an attack if a dog jumps on a person and barks or whether an attack is only when it bites. I have done a bit of doorknocking in my time and have come across home owners who have dogs. It is not always the fact that they bite; they can be very loud, very close, and can jump on people, and the trauma that causes can be horrendous and can stay with someone for a long time. One of the suggestions the committee made was that local governments either provide services for people to deal with that trauma or at least point them in the right direction so they can seek that support themselves. I think that is quite important.

There is only one issue that I want to take up with the committee, and it is the suggestion that the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation should set some standards for the guidance of securing dogs. For the education of this committee, the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation does not have that responsibility. The Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation is more about making sure that local governments and government departments use the powers that this chamber gives them in an appropriate way, rather than being the judge and jury. Setting guidelines is more of a policy decision, and the committee is loath to get involved in those policies. The Western Australian Local Government Association does a particularly good job in setting down guidelines, and it may be appropriate for it to turn its mind to it. I am sure that it probably has, but the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation does not.

All in all, I thank the committee. I think it was a very balanced review of that petition and a very well written report. It gave some very good suggestions in a situation in which, I am sure, the introduction of e-petitions has increased its workload greatly and put it under constant stress. Again, I thank the committee.

Hon DAN CADDY: It gives me pleasure to rise to speak on the sixtieth report, *Petition No. 020—Dog Act 1976*, from the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs. This is a report into a petition that was tabled in this place by my good friend Hon Tjorn Sibma. I listened intently to the contribution by another good friend of mine, Hon Martin Pritchard. I have to agree with him on most of the things he said. I listened to the bit about e-petitions and have taken that on board. I think e-petitions are definitely something that we need to explore, but my opinion on the whole is that they are a beneficial addition to the way we go through the process. I agreed with what the member said about compulsory training and also that the penalties are significant.

The definition of a dog attack is an interesting one. It is not something I was aware of, but from what I read in this report in chapter 2, it is aggressively rushing at or harassing any person or animal. That is one definition of a dog attack. It is interesting because there are many people who would not consider that an attack unless some sort of injury was caused. He also said something about families not wanting to report. I grew up with German shepherds—lovely dogs. When I was a youngster, one of the dogs turned on me rather quickly. It did not actually bite me, but its paw hit my face. I had to have stitches in my face. The immediate reaction from my father was not “poor you”. It was “Were you teasing the dog?” I said, “Well, yes, I was,” and that was that. That was the end of that discussion.

Hon Jackie Jarvis: Do you reckon it affected your modelling career?

Hon DAN CADDY: It did, Hon Jackie Jarvis! My modelling career was shot from that point on. It was interesting. Anyway, this is the first time I have spoken on this report, so I will very briefly acknowledge the hardworking Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs and its staff, and thank them for their work on this report. They are a busy committee. Although this report is about one particular petition—I see my good friend, the chair of that committee, Hon Peter Foster, nodding his head—there are many reports that they are putting out that cover many, many petitions. The scope, if I may call it that, of this petition—the ask, if you like—was pretty specific. I am not going to read it all out, but essentially the petition read —

We, the undersigned ...

... ask the Legislative Council to investigate the introduction of:

stronger penalties to deter owners from disobeying regulations ...

the removal and destruction of a dog where it has caused serious physical injury ...

a compulsory education program for dog owners where an animal in their control has caused nuisance and fear to the general public.

As is noted in chapter 1.4 of this report, there was a comprehensive number of submissions. I have gone through and looked at some of them as this is something that interests me. I refer to the specific scope, or ask, of the petitioners. The report, and clearly the research done, by the committee, expanded greatly on—one may say complemented—the scope, or ask, from these people. I do not mean that in a derogatory way; I mean that in a very positive way. Sometimes, when someone is tasked with looking at these things, they need to go a lot further than just what the ask is in order to understand the context. An analysis of the registration system was in chapter 4 of the report, and the bulk of chapter 5 looked at dog enclosures for dangerous dogs. They were both very worthy topics to investigate that were not called for in the words of the lead petitioner but were extremely important to provide context.

One thing I picked up in chapter 4 under the heading of “Centralised registration system” was that it refers to the Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Act 2021 that we put through, which was assented to in December 2021. It states here that it is not yet fully enforced, which is true. The main purpose to amend the Dog Act 1976 was to prevent and stop puppy farming by regulating the breeding and sale of dogs in Western Australia. This is indeed the case. Our fantastic new Minister for Local Government and her department are working on it as we speak.

Just down from that, one thing that this report noted was that the department confirmed to the committee that muzzling requirements for greyhounds had been removed. I must say that, in the history of this state, that was well overdue. This is something that is important to me, and that I want to touch on briefly. When this particular piece of legislation referred to in the report was going through the other place, I know there was a heated debate about whether greyhounds, once they had finished their careers as racers and were being rehomed, should be required to wear a muzzle. I am not here to mock their concerns, but I am here to repeat some of the things that were said. I struggled with some of what I heard at the time. The muzzling of greyhounds once they finish their career, from what I can tell, came from a real misunderstanding that people have, that these majestic dogs are somehow born to run down “furry objects”. These were the words used by the former member for Darling Range, I think she was at the time, and echoed by the current Leader of the Opposition. He went so far as to ask why we would change something that has been in place for, “the last hundred or so years.” He is clearly not a student of history.

I am noticing that things change. At the moment, we are going through this process of changing from copper wires to fibre optics on the NBN. I am sure the Leader of the Opposition may well be happy to have the steel wires that were in place 100 years ago as well, but I digress. However, I come back to the muzzling and the change of provisions in the Dog Act for greyhounds. The reason I wanted to touch on this and speak about it today is we need to remain cognisant when it comes to these dogs of one extremely important fact, and that is the fact that like many large dogs—Great Danes spring to mind—they like to spend the bulk of their time lazing around, despite their incredible speed.

If members know anyone who owns one of these dogs, they will know that the dog will spend most of its time laying around on a couch if they let it. The critical thing that we absolutely always need to remember is that greyhounds love to run, but they are taught to chase. That is something I think was missing from the narrative in the Dog Act and in the way that we have treated greyhounds for so long. It is comforting to know that greyhounds that have finished their racing careers are basically being returned as pets. They do go through retraining, if you like. Greyhounds as Pets is one organisation that does this.

When we used to muzzle them, their second most defensive mechanism if they were attacked by another dog was taken away from them. Their main defensive mechanism, speed and getting from anything that attacks them, had already been taken away because greyhounds still had to be on a leash when in public. That was a problem. There was also the problem of public perception. When they are the only dogs, other than the five described breeds, that need to be muzzled, it gives the impression that these dogs are dangerous, and that is simply not the case. There are those restricted dogs; they are required to be leashed and muzzled along with other regulations. Greyhounds are not, nor have ever been, in the same category as those dogs.

Hon SHELLEY PAYNE: It gives me great pleasure to talk on the sixtieth report of the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs, of which I am one of five members, entitled *Petition No. 020—Dog Act 1976*. I would just like to thank our chair Hon Peter Foster; Hon Stephen Pratt; Hon Tjorn Sibma and Hon Sophia Moermond, who is on urgent parliamentary business at the moment, for their work and help on this report. As members have mentioned, this report is the result of petition 20, which was about dogs and dog attacks. I have to say, when I first had this petition, I was like “Is this really a problem? Is this something that we really want to spend our committee time on?” It was during the beginning of Parliament and there were so many issues. We were making decisions about what our committee should take time on. However, the more I read into this issue the more I realised that it is a real problem and is an important issue.

I will go through what happened last week in Perth with dog attacks. On 10 April, a dog was shot at Trigg Beach after it attacked an officer and two other dogs. On 8 April in Innaloo, two dogs attacked a woman who was walking a little Maltese Shih Tzu. Then on 7 April, a child’s dog was mauled to death by two other large dogs. This is something that is ongoing and is something that I think a lot of local governments struggle to deal with. Hon Martin Pritchard talked earlier about the number of attacks happening across local governments in Perth. Once I had a look at the statistics, it was pretty staggering. I am pleased that the government has stepped up to look at it and that it reviewed the Dog Act in 2019.

This report that we put together was not the result of a formal inquiry, but we did hold a few hearings. This report was tabled on 24 November 2022. The petition tabled in the house asked the Legislative Council to investigate stronger penalties for dog attacks, the removal and destruction of offending dogs and a compulsory education program for owners of dogs that have previously attacked people. As I mentioned, we had a number of hearings to collect information. We had hearings with Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries and also invited four select local governments. We wanted to have regional local governments as well as metro ones. We had the City of Albany and the City of Broome come to talk to us as well as the City of Swan and the City of Mandurah.

As I said, it was not a formal inquiry, but after we held these initial hearings, we decided that we did not need to hold a formal inquiry. On the basis of the evidence we received, we felt that an inquiry was not necessary but that the issue did warrant a report to Parliament on what we found out. Local governments are responsible for administering and enforcing the Dog Act. They can actually provide penalties of up to \$400 for dog attacks. However, if there is a prosecution as a result of that, there are penalties up to \$10 000 for an attack that causes injury and up to \$20 000 if the dog has been declared a dangerous dog. The act also provides for prison sentences of up to 10 years if a dangerous dog kills or threatens the life of a person.

We looked at these penalties because the petitioner asked us to look at stronger penalties. We decided on the basis of the evidence that the penalties were already significant and that increasing them would not likely act as any further deterrent. However, we felt that we really needed to push responsible dog ownership. There are a few local governments that are doing quite a few good things with education programs, and it was shown that their dog attacks were actually decreasing. One of the things we encourage to help with this issue is education and public awareness campaigns. We also encourage local governments to find ways to encourage participation by dog owners in such campaigns and dog training courses as well.

The other thing that members might remember is the Stop Puppy Farming Act that was passed in 2021. Part of that act was the creation of a new centralised dog registration system. It will allow for the uniform storage of information on dog attacks across the state. Currently, local governments are required to store information about dogs in their local areas, but if one dog moves from one local government to another and happens to have some issues, that information is not recorded. This new centralised dog register will be very good for making sure that we can track dogs and dangerous dogs as they move around the state.

Another issue that was raised was enclosures for dangerous dogs. That is something else that the committee looked at. When we looked at what was happening in other states, the requirements in Western Australia were found to not be sufficiently detailed or robust to guide people on what their dangerous dog enclosures should look like and how strong they should be. That is another area that we suggested could be strengthened and that perhaps some uniform guidelines could be created for local governments on these dangerous dog enclosures.

The committee wanted to thank the petitioner for bringing this issue forward, as well as the local governments that participated in those hearings. I might just quickly go through some of the areas that we looked at in the report that I have not had the chance to talk about as well as some of the comments that the committee made on this report. Some of them I have sort of briefly talked about already. The first section of the report dealt with penalties as a deterrent. As I said previously, the committee was of the view that there are sufficient protective measures available to local authorities to ensure that offending dogs do not pose a risk to the community if returned to their owners pending further action.

The second area we looked at was the registration system. As I mentioned, the centralised registration system will be developed by the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries. It will be a really good system. We suggested that consultation should be done with local governments in developing the new centralised registration system. It should be out this year. Work and consultation has already been done on that. As I said, a lot of work has been done on that centralised registration system since the report was tabled in 2022.

The next section in the report, which I talked about briefly, is about dangerous dogs and dog enclosures. Some of the committee's recommendations included having support across local governments for more uniform and detailed dangerous dog enclosure requirements. We suggested that the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries consider producing uniform guidelines to pass around to dog owners, so they have more guidance on developing dangerous dog enclosures.

The next part of the report discussed community education and training programs. The committee agreed with evidence given by local governments that greater participation in training for dogs and their owners will cause a greater reduction in the number of dog attacks than by increasing fines. We suggested that local governments should investigate ways to encourage dog owners to attend training courses, including reward-based incentives. They should also investigate ways to offer attendance of dog training courses in lieu of infringement notices. We know that we ask a lot of our local governments and I thank the local governments and rangers who are doing their jobs to implement this act. I thank them very much.

I will make one final comment on trauma services and looking at what we can do to provide information and access to trauma services to those involved in attacks. It is obviously very important to help people because attacks, as Hon Dan Caddy said, can be traumatic. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to this report.

Hon KYLE McGINN: I am happy to speak to this report today. I have found this committee interesting over my two terms in Parliament. I have not had a chance to be on the committee; however, I have tabled petitions and received responses from the committee requesting whether or not I would like to make a submission. As a member, I think that process is good. It is good that I was contacted after tabling a petition and was given the opportunity to tell the constituents who requested me to table the petition that there is an opportunity for them to write to the committee. I think people sign a petition and some people forget about it and are not interested after that, but others want to engage a bit further and find out what happens to a petition—whether or not the committee has reasoning behind why it did not pursue what was requested. I noticed in today’s debate that we have found two slightly different opinions on e-petitions. I join Hon Martin Pritchard’s view of e-petitions. I have reservations about whether it is a better process or whether it will create a better system. I think of the interactions with community with paper and people having to physically sign it—every time I have done a petition I found that I have engaged further with a community member because of that interaction.

Hon Neil Thomson: What about the vast regions, where you can’t—it’s all right in regional cities.

Hon KYLE McGINN: I take that interjection because, as I say, I am on the fence. I accept that the Mining and Pastoral electorate is massive. Yes, I might be able to get that one-on-one connection in the Kalgoorlie region, but if it is a statewide petition, I am probably not going to get that in Kununurra or Halls Creek. Other members in that area might. We have representation of lower house members in every electorate. There are members in that electorate who travel around and they go to events and meet people. I think there is an opportunity for it to be successful. It has been proven in the past; it has worked. Whether we can say the sheer number of signatures that go on the e-petitions compared with the old system is a result of better interaction—I think the jury is still out on that.

Hon Martin Pritchard: I take you to the interjection you took before with regards to distances and such. I do not have any particular problem with the fact that you might have petitions that have 10, five, three—I can put forward petitions with one. I think they are just as valid.

Hon KYLE McGINN: Hon Martin Pritchard makes a very valid point. I think with this committee, it is noticeable that when a petition is tabled, there does not seem to be much difference between a small petition—I do not know whether that is different in the committee room about the weight of the petition. I would not ask the member to tell us that, because he is not allowed to. I have seen serious petitions that have had minimal signatures, but it was important for them to be brought to the house. It was brought to the house and it was raised in the house.

I get called a Luddite quite a bit on a few things, particularly automation a lot of the time. I still line up in Woolworths and Coles, even if it is an hour and I have only got two things. I do not use the automated machines. I will not do it, despite my partner not being impressed by having to wait for an hour to get a loaf of bread. To me, that interaction and that one-on-one experience people get with the member asking them to sign the petition and explaining to them the process, rather than only the words that are there and a mass email that has been sent out to people in which who knows if they live in the electorate half the time or whether they are even in the state. I question whether we can fully understand that. I know it is new and we have to work through that process. Who knows, five years from now there might be proof that that is the case that they are 100 per cent legitimate. No worries—happy to do that. Right now, we cannot say that. That is why I hesitate to go down that path.

I remember a former member of this place, Hon Robin Scott—I have not said that name in this chamber for a while. He was a member for One Nation, who chased me down Hannan Street with his petition. I do not know if it was for nuclear power—it was for something —

Hon Neil Thomson: Did you sign it?

Hon KYLE McGINN: No, I did not!

Hon Wilson Tucker: Did he catch you, member?

Hon KYLE McGINN: Easily! Excellent call. Hon Robin Scott may have been old, but he was fit. What I saw was Hon Robin Scott sitting at St Barbara’s Square with a table and a petition and sitting there all day. I have done that myself. That, to me, was really good engagement with the community. That was an opportunity to talk to the community about wideranging issues, but also an opportunity for members to get out there into the grassroots of the community and force that engagement a bit more. Sitting back on your computer and sending it out and saying, “Sign it”, is not the same to me. I am not knocking it. I just think that if we were to add it up on the value side, I would still be inclined to go to the hard copy and see that engagement brought back. In my view, that would get members back out in their electorates and travelling around to the areas if they want to get a petition fully chock-a-block. It will be interesting to see how that progresses as the Parliaments progress and to see what other Parliaments do—whether they stick with the e-petitions or divert back. It has been heavily debated. At the start of this speech, I said there are mixed views. People do not 100 per cent want to see e-petitions, but I take on board Hon Wilson Tucker and Hon Neil Thomson’s view of the vastness. Of any electorate, we would say Mining and Pastoral is one we would take into account for geographical challenges for travel. To get from one end to the other in a car would take two-and-a-half weeks, I think. That is without stopping and actually talking to the community.

Hon Neil Thomson interjected.

Hon KYLE McGINN: Hon Neil Thomson cannot help himself. We were having a lovely little debate that was not at all antagonistic, and the member just had to go there. I could see Hon Neil Thomson out there with a hard copy petition getting signatures.

We will hopefully see things change, morph, with some more rules and security put in place. Hon Wilson Tucker will probably be able to tell me some of the digital things that could be upgraded on e-petitions that would give more protection. I know nothing about computers, but I know that security and that stuff is important, remembering, again, that people have to put personal details down. We have to take into account that the details are stored digitally. It is very intriguing to know that we are not immune to scams. I would be very concerned if there was a petition with 10 000 signatures signed digitally that had addresses or email addresses on it and it got scammed all of a sudden. It is a bit harder with a hard copy. The member hangs on to it and brings it into the chamber.

Hon Neil Thomson: We can talk about the Airbnb register.

Hon KYLE McGINN: I am not talking out of the realms here, am I? I think what I am saying is realistic. Would Hon Neil Thomson agree?

Hon Neil Thomson interjected.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY CHAIR (Hon Stephen Pratt): Order, members!

Hon KYLE McGINN: Once again, I am trying to engage in a decent debate and I just get nothing but political noise.

Hon Peter Foster: And negativity.

Hon KYLE McGINN: Exactly, Hon Neil Thomson runs down everything he can and does not talk about what we are talking about.

That is what I want to say about e-petitions. I look forward to hearing the rest of the debate.

Hon MARTIN PRITCHARD: Just to clarify my views, I would hate people to think that I disregard e-petitions; I do not. I put that on the record. I do not think anybody in the chamber is disregarding them at all. I know we are meant to be discussing a particular report, but e-petitions came up. As I said, I just want to clarify.

First of all, I think the clerks check the eligibility of each person who signs a petition, whether it be e-petitions or others. Where I was more coming from was that with the introduction of e-petitions, people would still feel aggrieved about issues and take the opportunity to do an e-petition. I was raising the concern that the committee can only deal with so much, and to give all petitions, e-petitions and physical petitions, the due respect and time they should get may be overwhelming because of the ease of doing an e-petition. I do not think the issues raised in e-petitions are any less heartfelt, but I think people would accept that it is easier to do an e-petition and garner signatures. I think the comment I made as an interjection was very valid; that is, I do not think the committee necessarily gives weight to the number of signatures on a petition. The members may do it subconsciously, but I do not think they consciously give weight to that. I presume they have a discussion about the issue at hand and whether it would further the interests of our constituency if an investigation and report was put together and tabled in this place.

I just wanted to make sure that people did not think that anybody in this place would suggest that an e-petition was not valid. They are valid. It is just that the ease with which they can be done could soon overwhelm the committee. It would be a pity if all of the petitions that were brought before the committee were not given the time and due process that they should get. The chamber will have to work through this to make sure the processes we have in the future are appropriate for our constituency. I think everybody in this place does their utmost to engage with their constituency. It can obviously be more difficult when there are vast distances between constituents, and for that reason Hon Neil Thomson's view might be correct: an e-petition may very well assist regional people to discuss issues of common interest across those distances. But, as I said, I do not think it means that if one town has a small petition about something close to its heart, the committee will give it less weight. But it may assist in a commonality of issues across a vast distance.

I have done a few physical petitions in my time and that is no easy thing either, because we might gather signatures at a shopping centre but there are a lot of people in our constituencies. We all have large constituencies. Even the North Metropolitan Region is a significant area going from Perth through to Butler, so getting signatures through the whole area is still significant, even though I do not have to drive as far.

As I said, e-petitions may be the way of the future. I am certainly happy that they are being given a trial. They may prove to be the most expedient way of doing things. We may have to consider what assistance we give that committee if it is to deal with the extra number of petitions that come forward.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: The question is that the report be noted. I point out that we have had a broad-ranging debate about e-petitions, and I remind members that the report we are discussing is *Petition No. 020 — Dog Act 1976*.

Hon KATE DOUST: I think this is the first time in a while I have spoken during consideration of committee reports. I note that we are dealing with the sixtieth report of the Standing Committee on Environment and Public

Affairs Petition No. 020 — Dog Act 1976. I missed the beginning of the discussion. I walked in when members were talking about the value of an e-petition, and I am making the assumption that this petition was delivered in that way.

I have been in this place for a while and spent my first 12 years on the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs. When this discussion about e-petitions erupted, I remember Louise Pratt, currently one of our highly valued senators, did some work in this space on behalf of our committee while she was the chair. This matter first came up in the early 2000s, and I must say there was a high degree of opposition from the opposition of the day, which is still the opposition of the day. I was almost thinking that Hon Simon O'Brien's spirit had ventured back into this chamber this afternoon because even during the last term of Parliament, he was one of the most vehement opponents of e-petitions and was always very concerned about their impact. Any negativity about opportunities to modernise always concerns me.

When we mooted e-petitions during the last term of Parliament and we initially trialled them, it was all about changing the way we do business and how we can better communicate with our communities and enable them to let us know what their concerns are. Having that hybrid model of both paper and online petitions is a really great way to afford our constituents whatever option they want, and that is what we should be about. I hate to see where those who oppose e-petitions will be one day when we have to have a hybrid Parliament if we ever go back into a COVID-type arrangement, as was experienced in other Parliaments around the world. I think there are lots of challenges and we just have to be prepared to give things a go and let our stakeholders, our constituents, trial things to see whether they work for them and they can let us know how they feel about things in a different way.

Turning to the committee, the manner in which it does its work will hopefully evolve. I do not know what volume of petitions goes to that committee these days. When I was on it, it was essentially just a petitions committee and significant inquiries quite often arose from them. I note that perhaps we do not now have the volume or number of petitions. We might have the volume of individual petitions numerically with the number of signatures, and I do not know whether that places any influence on whether a committee bothers to inquire or seeks to close. There are a whole range of reasons why that happens. But petitions serve as a very important vehicle for our communities to have a direct say about issues in their communities and individual problems. I pick up that Hon Kyle McGinn talked about small numbers of signatures on petitions. Of course, a petition needs only one signature. I have seen a petition of last resort happen a few times. It may be that if we are coming back and looking at changes to something like the Dog Act, we might not have volumes of numbers; we might have only a few. That is my reference back to the petition, chair! We cannot just be a Luddite on these issues. We have to be prepared to be open to change. I think we are at a particular point in Parliaments all around the world at which people are trying to adapt and adopt technology and work out how best to utilise the technology that we have in play to better communicate with our constituents. In a state like Western Australia—we have just had that discussion about the tyranny of distance—why would we not be looking to engage with technology to better engage with our constituents? It is much better than driving for two and a half weeks across part of the continent.

Although we are coming back and talking about the benefits of a petition in relation to the Dog Act 1976, which perhaps needs to be looked at in its own way, I think it is very valuable. I am going to say I think it is important that this chamber has an opportunity on a regular basis to look at how it functions, how it manages its business, how it needs to change its business practices and how it engages with its constituencies. I do not know whether we get a genuine opportunity to have those debates in this house. It is a rare thing, and quite often it is maybe only once every four or five years, when we might review a standing order. I think that for every part of our process, perhaps we need to have an opportunity every once in a while, maybe during the committee stage, when we might throw up an issue like e-petitions and talk about the validity of the process, how people in the community are engaging and whether they like it. The success of this whole process will depend on whether people choose to go down the pathway of e-petitions. I tabled one myself today, and it means that someone in my electorate has raised an issue; they may not have wanted to afford the time and energy to go out and physically get signatures on a hard copy, but it might have been easier for them to raise the issue and get people engaged online. We should be doing what is in the best interests of our stakeholders to enable them to raise issues to communicate their concerns and views and to get the Parliament to respond in an appropriate manner.

Whether we are talking about the petition I tabled today about feral dogs, dingos or whatever it was, or this petition about the Dog Act, or any other matters we deal with, I genuinely hope that when this e-petition trial has ended, we fully support having e-petitions as a permanent option. I am not saying that we should get rid of hard copy at all—I like hard-copy petitions—but I think we need to enable people to have whatever options are on the table. If there are additional security measures, by all means, we will have a look at those, whether it is about validating access or individuals inputting the data, but they are the same problems we have had in the past. I remember taking up an issue with a past Clerk whereby we had people based in France signing petitions here in Western Australia. I remember asking whether we could restrict our petitions only to people who live in Western Australia. Apparently, we could not at that point in time. Maybe there are some other considerations that need to come into play about who can and cannot sign a petition, but I do not think we should be narrow-minded about how people can access them or how they utilise the opportunities that are available to them.

If we had not had an e-petition to deal with this concern around the Dog Act, would people have bothered to go through the physical timeliness of getting up a petition in hard copy? I think those are challenges for us as a chamber in how we become an enabler for our community. If e-petitions are one positive change, that is great; we should keep them. Perhaps what we need to think about is how we can do other things in this chamber to make us more open and accessible to our communities. Is that perhaps something we need to have a conversation about? I know it is probably a bit of a misappropriation of this time to talk about those things, but we do not have too many other opportunities, because everyone is so busy with legislation and other matters, so I thought I would push the envelope, if you like, and add my two bob's worth to my colleagues' comments in support of e-petitions.

Hon WILSON TUCKER: I note that I do not have much time. We are talking about the Dog Act, I believe, but I think the dog is out of the kennel —

Hon Kate Doust: He's off the leash and out of the yard!

Hon WILSON TUCKER: Yes—when it comes to e-petitions, so I thought I would wade in on the topic. I am a big supporter of e-petitions. I put it in the form of direct democracy, maybe direct democracy light, but within our system of representative democracy, or perhaps it would be more accurate to label it as public interest technology. It is using technology within the public interest to serve the public interest. I think that any pathway whereby we can encourage representation and democracy is really a good thing.

I take the points made by Hon Kate Doust. I do not think we should be getting rid of the more traditional paper-based means by any stretch, but we should be looking at other options and methods of encouraging people to participate.

There were some comments previously about e-petitions potentially lowering the barrier of entry.

Consideration of report postponed, pursuant to standing orders.

Progress reported and leave granted to sit again, pursuant to standing orders.

DISALLOWANCE MOTIONS

Discharge of Order

On motion without notice by **Hon Martin Pritchard**, resolved —

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

1. Shire of Kondinin Amendment Local Law 2023 — Disallowance.
2. Shire of Wyalkatchem Bush Fire Brigades Amendment Local Law 2023 — Disallowance.
3. The University of Western Australia Lands By-laws — Disallowance.

TREASURER'S ADVANCE AUTHORISATION BILL 2024

Second Reading

Resumed from 16 April.

HON NEIL THOMSON (Mining and Pastoral) [4.09 pm]: Noting the time, I must say that I will have three goes at this. Is it not great! I still have 33 minutes left, and we have only 20 minutes until question time.

We were in the process of explaining the most profligate Treasurer in the history of Western Australia. My encouragement to members opposite is to bring the profligate Treasurer to heel in the party room and in the cabinet, particularly for the incredible overruns on the Metronet project and some of the other major capital expenditures in Western Australia. When all those capital expenditures are put in place, a massive transport subsidy will still have to be maintained year on year to maintain that system. My understanding is that that could be up to \$2 billion a year. This will be a really serious challenge for Western Australia if we go through any changes in the broader economic environment. As I said earlier in my previous contribution, this Labor government has been the beneficiary of the \$400 billion record level of private investment that occurred under the Barnett government. That led to a massive increase and expansion in private investment in the mining sector and a massive expansion in mining capacity, particularly in iron ore, over that period. The government has then been, of course, the beneficiary of all the changes to royalties.

I was speaking about some of the challenges in the economy. I will not go over some that I have already mentioned because people can avail themselves of that in *Hansard*. As the budget comes down, we will have plenty more opportunities to talk about some of the challenges that could potentially face Western Australia. We spoke about the challenges from the rapacious federal government and its aims to curtail Western Australia's really important resources sector. Hon Tanya Plibersek, the minister who is on the front page of *The West Australian* today, changed her mind about Nature Positive. I must say that I was concerned by the comments of Graeme Samuel, who was the architect of some of it and is now saying that it will not change. This is yet to play out.

Our business competitiveness is a serious issue and is one of the challenges. This government, under pressure from the resources sector, initiated the Vogel–McFerran review, which has made more than 30 recommendations to make

sure that our environmental approvals are streamlined to deliver a fit-for-purpose outcome across Western Australia. So far, after almost six months, all this government has done is acquire another office in Perth for officers who are based in Joondalup to come down and be closer to industry. My goodness! That is all it can do!

We have set up an office in Canberra. We will spend \$200 000 or so a year there, according to the answer to the question I asked in Parliament. We flew four ministers across to Canberra the other day, and we had the director general and the deputy director general attend the \$6 000 soiree for the opening of the hub, where the poor executive officer will sit in the office by themselves. Not a single federal member of Parliament, outside of Western Australia, turned up. That was part of my question yesterday. That is how much of a great engagement hub it is not for Western Australia. It certainly is not.

Of the 30-something recommendations from the Vogel–McFerran review, all we can do is set up another office in Perth. We cannot deal with the substantive elements that Mr Vogel and Mr McFerran pointed to get to the changes that need to be implemented so we can unpack the blocked pipeline of work. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia says \$300 billion worth of potential projects is in the pipeline for approval in Western Australia, and many of those projects are being held up unnecessarily due to red-tape complications. These are some of the challenges we face.

We see an impact on the demand for infrastructure. Our hospital system is groaning. Some of our schools are groaning because of the massive population increases in Western Australia and the weight of increased student numbers. We have a system in which our hospitals are not coping because we do not have enough investment. We have not invested in a tertiary hospital in Western Australia since this government came into power. The Barnett government did so much in that space to invest and drive forward into the future the important needs of Western Australians. We see that as a challenge.

We have the challenge of climate change, which this government is so excited about because it is an opportunity to spend taxpayers' money on its great vanity projects without being really clear about where the value for money is. Of course, I will repeat the comments from Premier Roger Cook because I find them incredibly offensive. He said that only a loser would oppose taxpayer support for clean energy and manufacturing sectors.

That was sort of “make Australia great again”! I do not think that was the exact logo, but the Prime Minister says, “A future made in Australia”. Here we go! The federal government will pour in taxpayers' dollars to subsidise industry to get some ribbon-cutting moments. The chair of the Productivity Commission asked some simple questions: What is the value for money for that? Where is the transparency? Where is the independence in that? All we got was a very childish response from our Premier Roger Cook: “Only a loser would oppose taxpayer support.” It was not that the Productivity Commission was opposing it; it was questioning the value of it, and that is exactly what we do. That is why the opposition comes into this place, day after day, questioning what is going on with the value for money of the investment of our taxpayer dollars.

I will give another example of this; it is a daily occurrence. Yesterday, I asked a question of the profligate and secretive Treasurer, who is out there spending up on projects without any accountability. I encourage members opposite to ask questions in their party room if they are worried about their communities, the service delivery for health, housing and police, and the cost of living. If they are worried about those things, they would be challenging their Treasurer. If they are a member of cabinet, they would be challenging their Treasurer. I hope the Treasurer, Hon Rita Saffioti, will be much more forthcoming than she was with the answer she gave to my question about the Perth–Byford line upgrade. I asked the question very genuinely because I have had an officer go through the budget papers and every single item on them to try to add them up and work out where the changes have occurred and try to understand where the growth in that expenditure has come from. From what we can tell, we are talking about an almost doubling of expenditure—at least from the original budget expenditure—over the delivery period. It is still not yet delivered, and I do not think the good people of Armadale will have the train working before election day. I am sure that will not happen. Who knows? I say this as a challenge to the Treasurer; Minister for Transport to make sure that we have an operating train line on 8 March 2025.

Yesterday, I asked —

- (1) What is the current fully budgeted cost for the Perth to Byford line, including rail crossings, stations and line upgrades?
- (2) When was this first costed?
- (3) For (2), what was the first estimate of cost?
- (4) Has a cost–benefit analysis been undertaken on the value for money of this expenditure?
- (5) For (4), what was the expected benefit cost ratio, with range if it exists?

The answer shows the complete arrogance of the unaccountable Treasurer, who just says whatever she likes to say. I would like to have seen the advice from the Department of Transport, the Public Transport Authority or whoever is responsible because, as a former public servant, I know that there is no way that a public servant would write an answer like this. There is no way.

I know the process and I know that those very diligent public servants would want to provide the information, but instead we got this answer —

The following answer has been provided to me by the Minister for Transport.

(1)–(5) Estimated total costs of the projects comprising the Armadale line transformation are contained within the state budget ...

I already knew that. I had already looked at those costs over previous budgets and had an officer go through the last five years to try to understand it each time, but there was no accountability to this Parliament or to the people of Western Australia on the full cost of that project and particularly on the value for money of that investment and the changes in the cost estimates. We know that the Auditor General has looked at some of these things and did a short summary of a number of the projects for the Building for Tomorrow program. That program is spending millions of dollars on advertising in the lead-up to the election to provide the Western Australian Labor Party with free advertising on what the Western Australian Labor Party is allegedly doing. Some of those things are vitally important, but the basic standard of government is to provide accountability on the expenditure of taxpayer funds to the people of Western Australia, who are the taxpayers. It is their money, not the government's. We know that challenges arise and we must be cautious about that expenditure. We must be direct with that expenditure in a very efficient way because there are structural weaknesses within the Western Australian economy. We have seen how this government has allowed the massive boom in revenue to be completely soaked up by costs that will be difficult to unpack if some of the headwinds that I referred to that are in the budget papers and in the midyear review head the government's way before 8 March. If they hit the government before then, the government will be in trouble. If they hit a Liberal–National government after 8 March, we will have the difficult job of unpacking the mess that this Labor government is putting in place and is structurally building into the Western Australian economy in such a way that it will be difficult to unpack.

Several members interjected.

Hon NEIL THOMSON: If members on the other side would just listen. We have seen the growth in revenue over the last four years, which I mentioned is 135 per cent more than before. Importantly, at the same time, we have seen for the different categories of expenditure some very unusual growth trends that will make it harder for Western Australians to manage if we face some headwinds. We are now seeing projected in the midyear review future record debt levels again escalating, despite the windfall gain in revenue. I will tell members the most stunning number. Western Australian public servants' wages have not really kept up with the pace of inflation. There was a time when there was a one per cent wages growth policy. The government alleged that it would introduce great reform through the machinery-of-government reforms presented by former Treasurer Hon Ben Wyatt. The government was going to create efficiencies within the Western Australian economy. However, given those issues, in the last four years, there has been a 25 per cent growth in wages, salaries, supplements and superannuation. I am sure that the teachers of Western Australia probably would have been very delighted if their pay packet grew by 25 per cent. However, we have instead had growth in the bureaucracy of Western Australia, not growth in the delivery of services. We have had growth in the bureaucracy at the expense of declining police numbers, at the expense of a failing health system and at the expense of a declining number of social houses being delivered. We have had growth in the bureaucracy while we saw massive growth in the inefficiency of the delivery of our major projects because this Treasurer is reckless, careless and profligate. She is unable to manage a rising budget. We saw payments for goods and services also increase by 24 per cent but, overall, the most important factor is the hardwiring into the Western Australian economy over the last four years of the 29 per cent growth in costs. We know that is very important. I said yesterday that despite our debt going to record levels, the one legacy of the Barnett government is that it did not have the debt of some of the other jurisdictions, despite the massive challenges and investment in the productive capacity of Western Australia over that time. That was the strategic focus of the Liberals and Nationals, and that will be the strategic process going forward if we are on the Treasury bench in the future.

We know that there are amazing sensitivities within the Western Australian economy that give us a unique set of vulnerabilities when compared with the vulnerabilities of some other Australian jurisdictions. We know that one of the greatest vulnerabilities is the exchange rate. The vulnerability is that for each \$A1 increase to a \$US1 decrease, every cent affects the variables. It was \$57 million in revenue at the end of the Barnett government, but it is now \$174 million because of the changing nature of our revenue streams. We are much more dependent on royalties than we were previously. Every 1¢ change in that balance equates to \$174 million. We have been lucky because, as I said in my previous presentation, there has been a massive expansion of windfall gains year after year due to the good fortunes of the international economy and the amazing work done under the auspices of the former federal coalition government to underpin our GST revenue, which previously was not the case.

Several members interjected.

Hon NEIL THOMSON: Members opposite should listen to the detail. I know that they do not consider the detail. I doubt whether even the Treasurer considers the detail because I do not think that the Treasurer understands the detail. That is certainly the feedback I get back from industry; the Treasurer is not really interested in the detail.

The issue is the iron ore royalties at the time of the Barnett government. Every \$US1 per tonne increase in the price of royalties equated to \$73 million, but now it is \$93 million. We know that for every \$US1 increase in the price of a barrel of oil, it affects our estimates by another \$8 million. That is not very much, but those key things—the exchange rate and the iron ore royalties—have a flow-on effect on payroll tax. There is a \$55 million impact for every one per cent increase in taxable wages and employment growth in Western Australia. These things can work in our favour in good times but work very much against us in bad times. Although there is always the probability that the good times will continue—my hope for Western Australians is that they will—I hope that after 2025, there will be a Liberal–National government to make the structural changes to the Western Australian economy that will deliver a better outcome for police, housing, the cost of living and our health system. That is my hope. We have a massive problem of increasing debt in Western Australia, which is currently costing us almost \$1 billion a year in interest, and that continues to expose us, given the vulnerabilities that we face and that are unique to Western Australia.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 1532.]

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

FREDERIK SUHREN — MEETING

299. Hon PETER COLLIER to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:

- (1) Has the Premier had a meeting with Mr Frederik Suhren since 1 January 2023?
- (2) If yes to (1), when was the meeting and what was its purpose?
- (3) Has the Premier met informally with Mr Frederik Suhren since 1 January 2023?
- (4) If yes to (3), what was the date and nature of this informal meeting?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

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

- (1)–(4) No. The Premier has not met with Mr Frederik Suhren since becoming Premier.

TOM JONES CONCERT — ATTENDANCE

300. Hon PETER COLLIER to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:

- (1) Did the Premier attend the Tom Jones concert in Kings Park and Botanic Garden in March 2024?
- (2) If yes to (1), did the Premier attend as a guest of an organisation or individual?
- (3) If yes to (2), what is the name of the organisation or individual?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

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

- (1)–(2) Yes.
- (3) Mellen Events.

WESTERN POWER — STANDALONE POWER UNITS

301. Hon COLIN de GRUSSA to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Energy:

I refer to the standalone power units currently being installed by Western Power and complaints of their unsuitability and poor reliability.

- (1) Are the units equivalent in specification to those being installed by Horizon Power?
- (2) If no to (1), why not?
- (3) If yes to (1), how does the minister account for the high number of complaints and poor reliability of the units compared with those installed by Horizon Power?

Hon DARREN WEST replied:

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

The answer to that question has not come through yet, so I will provide it at the end of question time.

RAILCARS — ALSTOM — LOCAL CONTENT

302. Hon TJORN SIBMA to the minister representing the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the minister's answer yesterday on local content inputs into the C-series railcars project and his reference to Alstom's six-monthly participation plan report.

- (1) How many participation plan reports has Alstom submitted?

- (2) Can the minister please table each report Alstom has submitted over the life of the project?
- (3) With respect to the report or reports being reviewed by representatives from the Public Transport Authority and the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation, can the minister explain the nature of the review process?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. This answer has been provided to me by the Minister for Transport.

- (1)–(3) Alstom has submitted eight participation plan reports since the commencement of the design, supply and maintain—DSM—agreement.

TEACHERS — PUBLIC SCHOOLS

303. Hon DONNA FARAGHER to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Education:

I refer to teachers employed in public schools in Western Australia.

- (1) How many teachers resigned from positions at government schools in 2023?
- (2) How many teachers retired from positions at government schools in 2023?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

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

- (1)–(2) It is not possible to provide the answer in the time given; therefore, I request that the member put this question on notice.

TOURISM — HORIZONTAL FALLS — MINISTER'S COMMENTS

304. Hon NEIL THOMSON to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Environment:

I refer to comments made by the minister on 6PR regarding community and industry reaction to the government's decision to ban commercial boat crossings through the world-famous Western Australian attraction called Horizontal Falls.

- (1) Did the minister request the Broome Chamber of Commerce and Industry to facilitate the meeting on 22 March 2024 referred to in his comments to the media?
- (2) If yes to (1), did the minister's office make recommendations as to who would be invited?
- (3) Has the minister received any correspondence from any organisations present at that meeting regarding the minister's mischaracterisation of their views on the closure of the falls?
- (4) Does the minister still stand by his assertions made on 6PR on 25 March that there is consensus from the Shire of Broome, tourism operators, the chamber and the Broome Visitor Centre that supports the minister's decision, when those organisations have subsequently expressed that this was not their view?

Hon DARREN WEST replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question. On behalf of the Minister for Environment, I provide the following answer.

- (1) The minister's office and a representative of the Broome Chamber of Commerce and Industry discussed the opportunity for the minister to meet with key local businesses and stakeholders that have an interest in the future of tourism at Horizontal Falls.
- (2) The Broome Chamber of Commerce recommended which local businesses and stakeholders should be invited.
- (3) Here is the kicker. On 26 March, the minister received correspondence from the Shire of Broome advising that it did not have a formal position on the government's decision to phase out traversal of the falls.
- (4) The meeting of businesses and local stakeholders on 22 March was respectful, positive and productive. During that meeting, attendees overwhelmingly supported the need to work together in partnership with government and traditional owners to develop new tourism products that would ensure that Horizontal Falls remains a world-class tourism destination into the future.

BIRD FLU — GOVERNMENT STRATEGY

305. Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT to the Minister for Agriculture and Food:

I refer to the current strain of avian influenza H5Nx clade 2.3.4.4b that is decimating seabird colonies, along with sea lion and dolphin populations, around the world.

- (1) Is the minister aware of stakeholder concern for a potential outbreak in Western Australia that could gravely affect little penguin, black swan and sea lion populations, and spread to poultry farms, potentially decimating industry?

- (2) What is the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development doing to plan for a potential outbreak in Western Australia?
- (3) Is DPIRD coordinating with the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions to ensure plans are in place to protect little penguin, black swan and sea lion populations in Western Australian in case of a potential outbreak?
- (4) If no to (1), (2) or (3), why not?

Hon JACKIE JARVIS replied:

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

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development has robust plans in place to respond to exotic disease outbreaks and regularly engages with state and national partners to review and revise preparedness and response arrangements for the highly pathogenic avian influenza. The avian influenza AUSTVETPLAN manual, which describes how Australia will respond to an outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza, was reviewed in 2022 and is now being updated to consider the effects of new strains of avian influenza on both wildlife and poultry industries. DPIRD is closely engaged in this work.
- (3) Yes. DPIRD chairs the Western Australia Wildlife Health Reference Group, which facilitates a coordinated cross-agency approach to wildlife health surveillance and responses to wildlife disease events in the state. It has a representative from DBCA, other government agencies, Murdoch University, Wildlife Health Australia, Perth Zoo and WA Wildlife. Recent meetings have devoted significant time to the discussion of issues surrounding highly pathogenic avian influenza in wildlife.
- (4) Not applicable.

CANNABIS — IMPORTATION AND CULTIVATION

306. Hon Dr BRIAN WALKER to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Health:

I refer the minister to recent reports by the ABC suggesting that a loophole is allowing importers to bring foreign-grown cannabis into Australia, to the detriment of domestic growers, with the final product often being labelled as “made in Australia” when it is only packaged here.

- (1) Is the minister aware of this loophole?
- (2) Is the minister further aware of claims that up to 30 per cent of imports from Canada, the largest supplier of cannabis to Australia, do not match the strength of the active ingredients listed on the label?
- (3) Will the minister raise this issue at the next Australian Health Ministers’ Meeting in the hope that an Australia-wide approach can be implemented to protect both patients and local growers; and, if not, why not?

Hon PIERRE YANG replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. The following answer has been provided by the minister.

- (1)–(3) The importation, cultivation, manufacture and labelling of medicinal cannabis products is regulated by the commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care through the Office of Drug Control and the Therapeutic Goods Administration.

WA CANBERRA HUB

307. Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:

I refer to the opening of the WA Canberra Hub.

- (1) By what method of transport did the Premier; Ministers Whitby, Michael and Beazley; and the director general and deputy director general of Department of the Premier and Cabinet travel to and from Canberra?
- (2) What was the cost associated with the travel identified in (1)?
- (3) Can the Premier please table the list of persons invited to attend the event regardless of whether or not they attended?
- (4) In relation to the full-time receptionist/administrative assistant, what employment level have they been engaged at and is the position permanent or a fixed-term contract?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

- (1)–(2) The Premier travelled to Canberra for various meetings by commercial air. The total cost of the travel was \$6 631.32. Questions relating to the travel of other ministers should be directed to the appropriate minister.
- (3) No.
- (4) The full-time receptionist/administrative assistant has been engaged at a level equivalent to level 3 under the Public Sector CSA Agreement 2022 for an initial six-month period.

FERAL PIGS — SOUTH WEST

308. Hon LOUISE KINGSTON to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Environment:

I refer to feral pig pest management in the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions' south west region managed reserves.

- (1) How many feral pigs have been destroyed in the year to date?
- (2) How many feral pigs were destroyed for each of the last five annual reporting periods?

Hon DARREN WEST replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. On behalf of the Minister for Environment, I provide the following answer.

- (1) In the 2023–24 financial year, monitoring of high-value conservation sites for pig damage by Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions staff has been undertaken, but no pigs have been destroyed.
- (2) The answer is in tabular form and I seek leave to have it incorporated into *Hansard*.

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

During the five-year period, a variety of pig control techniques including shooting, trapping and baiting have been implemented across multiple reserves and DBCA- managed lands in DBCA's South West Region. It is not possible to quantify the exact number of pigs killed with baiting techniques.

Financial Year	Estimated numbers of pigs killed
2018/19	9
2019/20	15
2020/21	8
2021/22	21
2022/23	3

The figures provided do not include any pig control activities that may have been undertaken on DBCA-managed lands by other organisations such as Regional Biosecurity Groups.

VICTIMS OF CRIME ACT — REVIEW REPORT

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

I refer to the Attorney General's response to my question without notice 1196 on 22 November 2022 in which he stated that the Department of Justice anticipates providing advice to the Attorney General in mid-2023 following its consultation on the recommendations in the statutory review of the Victims of Crime Act 1994.

- (1) When did the department provide the advice to the Attorney General?
- (2) Will the Attorney General table the advice?
- (3) Noting that almost three years has passed since the statutory review report was published, which of the recommendations will be implemented, or have they all been abandoned?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question. The following answer has been provided by the Attorney General.

- (1)–(3) The recommendations of the statutory review of the Victims of Crime Act 1994 are being considered in light of the significant reforms arising from the Family and Domestic Violence Taskforce and the report on legislative responses to coercive control. This will need to be further considered in relation to the findings of the review of criminal justice responses to sexual offending, which is still underway. The government is taking a thorough and coordinated approach to reforming the Victims of Crime Act 1994 in this wider context and the Department of Justice will provide its advice to government in due course.

PUBLIC HOUSING — EVICTIONS

310. Hon STEVE MARTIN to the minister representing the Minister for Housing:

I refer to the disruptive behaviour of tenants in public housing.

- (1) Is the Cook government still utilising the policy commonly referred to as the “three-strikes policy”, which was designed to prevent repeatedly troublesome tenants from continuing to negatively impact the local community?
- (2) If yes to (1), will the minister table any documents that show how many strikes can be gained at each level of severity before a removal process is triggered?
- (3) How many people have been removed from public housing under the policy in the past 12 months?
- (4) If no to (1), why not?

Hon JACKIE JARVIS replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. The following response has been provided by the Minister for Housing.

- (1)–(4) The Department of Communities’ disruptive behaviour strategy is designed to address and manage incidents of disruptive behaviour at public housing properties that may impact on neighbouring properties. The publicly available *Disruptive behaviour management policy* ensures the response applied is proportionate to the severity of the behaviour and encompassing circumstances. The action taken depends on the severity of the incident. The decision to terminate a public housing tenancy agreement sits with the magistrate, who will grant an order for vacant possession only if satisfied that there has been a breach of the tenancy agreement and that the tenant has been given every opportunity to rectify the breach and has failed to do so.

Communities continues to focus on sustaining tenancies. This is consistent with recommendation 13 of the report *Funding of homelessness services in Western Australia* to increase the focus on prevention and early intervention in homelessness, which was supported by the majority of members on the committee, including the honourable member.

BANKSIA HILL DETENTION CENTRE AND UNIT 18 DETAINEES —
SUICIDE ATTEMPTS AND SELF-HARM INCIDENTS 2024

311. Hon PETER COLLIER to the minister representing the Minister for Corrective Services:

I refer to Banksia Hill Detention Centre and unit 18 at Casuarina Prison. How many (a) suicide attempts and (b) self-harm incidents have there been at both facilities thus far in 2024?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the Leader of the Opposition for some notice of the question. The following answer has been provided by the Minister for Corrective Services. The answer is in tabular form and I seek leave to have the response incorporated into *Hansard*.

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

The Department of Justice advise:

Attempted Suicide	3
Self-Harm – Serious	0
Self-Harm – Minor	255

RECREATIONAL FISHERS — BUNBURY

312. Hon COLIN de GRUSSA to the Leader of the House representing the Minister Assisting the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the permanent closure of the Bunbury service jetty to recreational fishers, especially those with a disability.

- (1) Will the WA government commit to building a replacement accessible jetty?
- (2) If no to (1), why not?
- (3) If yes to (1), will the minister provide details of the location, estimated cost and time for completion of the new jetty?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

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

- (1)–(3) For the member’s information, access has been closed to the pilot boat jetty, not the service jetty. The Transforming Bunbury’s Waterfront project is currently investigating options for the location and scope of a new fishing platform.

JURY TRIAL COURTROOMS — FEASIBILITY STUDY

313. Hon TJORN SIBMA to the parliamentary secretary representing the Attorney General:

This question is to my friend the parliamentary secretary. I refer to the long-running Department of Justice-led feasibility study into requirements for additional criminal trial courtrooms in the CBD.

- (1) Has the feasibility study concluded?
- (2) What are its recommendations?
- (3) Have the recommendations of the study been canvassed with stakeholders?
- (4) Will the government commit in the state budget to building new courtrooms?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN replied:

I thank my friend for his question!

Several members interjected.

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: The following answer has been provided to me by the Attorney General.

Several members interjected.

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: Hon Nick Goiran is still my learned friend; it is okay.

- (1)–(4) The work on the feasibility study into the expansion of criminal trial facilities in the Perth central business district for cabinet’s consideration is ongoing. Addressing this issue is a priority for the government.

COMMUNITIES — EDUCATION AND REGULATORY CARE UNIT

314. Hon DONNA FARAGHER to the minister representing the Minister for Early Childhood Education:

Will the minister advise the total number of breaches issued by the Department of Communities’ education and care regulatory unit to childcare and day care centres operating in Western Australia for legislative and/or regulatory noncompliance issues in 2023?

Hon JACKIE JARVIS replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. The following response has been provided by the Minister for Early Childhood Education.

The Department of Communities advises that the answer is 2 373.

MINISTERIAL STAFF — PUBLIC SERVICE TRANSFERS

315. Hon NEIL THOMSON to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:

- (1) How many former ministerial staff members have transferred from ministerial offices to senior public service roles since 2017?
- (2) How many of those staff members were permanent public servants prior to entering and who retained their permanency while working in the ministerial office?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

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

- (1)–(2) No term-of-government ministerial officers employed since March 2017 have transferred from ministerial offices to positions in the senior public service. It is important to note that term-of-government ministerial officers are prohibited from applying for positions in the public service. As the member would be aware from his own personal experience of transitioning between positions in the public service and ministerial offices, public servants commonly undertake secondments or placements in ministerial offices for temporary periods.

DEFENCE INDUSTRY — AUKUS SUBMARINE FLEET

316. Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT to the minister representing the Minister for Defence Industry:

I refer to the AUKUS hearings in Henderson on Thursday, 4 April 2024 at which the WA government was scheduled to appear.

- (1) Why did the WA government fail to appear at the hearing?
- (2) When did the WA government inform the committee that it would not be attending the hearing?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. The following answer has been provided by the Minister for Defence Industry.

- (1)–(2) The state government welcomes the federal government’s draft naval nuclear power safety legislation and we will continue to work closely with the federal government as local industry prepares to deliver maintenance and sustainment work on the AUKUS nuclear-powered submarine fleet.

NO-INTEREST LOAN SCHEME

317. Hon Dr BRIAN WALKER to the minister representing the Treasurer:

I thank the Treasurer for her response to my question yesterday about delays in the implementation of the government’s no-interest loan scheme for the building industry, and, in the hope that I can better understand the government’s commitments in this area, I ask the following.

- (1) Is the Treasurer aware that as many as six building companies here in WA have ceased trading in the past seven weeks?

- (2) Can the Treasurer tell us how many of the 41 companies she referenced yesterday as having current applications for a no-interest loan have gone out of business while waiting for a response from the government?
- (3) Is she aware that other small to medium-sized builders are currently in desperate financial circumstances and will she consider a financial assistance package to help them immediately, rather than waiting until June, when many more may well have been forced out of business?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

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

- (1)–(3) The Cook government is aware of the challenges being faced by residential builders and that is why we are working to assess loan applicants and process payments as quickly as practicable.

CONSOLIDATED EMERGENCY SERVICES LEGISLATION

318. Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE to the Minister for Emergency Services:

I refer to the proposed consolidated emergency services act.

- (1) Has the interagency working group formed to provide advice on the proposed consolidated emergency services act been exposed to the draft bill?
- (2) Since November 2021, on what dates has the interagency working group met?
- (3) Can the minister identify which external stakeholders have been exposed to the draft bill to date?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

The following is advice from the Department of Fire and Emergency Services.

- (1)–(2) No.
- (3) Selected state government agencies have been exposed to versions of the exposure draft bill as part of regular drafting protocols.

FIREARMS — BUYBACK PROGRAM

319. Hon LOUISE KINGSTON to the minister representing the Minister for Police:

I refer to the minister's response to question without notice 100 regarding how many firearms have been voluntarily surrendered to the Western Australia Police Force.

- (1) Can the minister provide an update on how many firearms have been voluntarily surrendered to date?
- (2) How much of the allocated \$64.3 million has been expended to date?
- (3) Of the total firearms surrendered to WA Police, how many were unregistered?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

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

The Western Australia Police Force advise that it is not possible to provide an answer within the required time frames. A response will be provided for the honourable member tomorrow, Thursday, 18 April 2024.

JUSTICE — PRISONER EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

320. Hon NICK GOIRAN to the minister representing the Minister for Corrective Services:

I refer to the minister's response to my question without notice 1496, asked on 16 November 2023, in which he was made aware of the research report entitled *Let them work: How criminal justice reform can help address Australia's worker shortage*, published by the Institute of Public Affairs in March 2023.

- (1) Is the minister aware that following previous parliamentary questions, the previous Minister for Corrective Services requested a briefing from the Department of Justice on the report?
- (2) Is he aware that the department failed to brief the then minister?
- (3) Now that the minister has been aware of this report for more than five months, has he requested a briefing from the department on this report, and will he table the information provided to him in that briefing?
- (4) If no to (3), has the minister given up on addressing current worker shortages, on reducing incarceration rates and the state's prison expenditure, and on enhancing the rehabilitation of nonviolent offenders?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. The Department of Justice advises the following.

- (1) Yes.

- (2) The Department of Justice was not able to brief Minister Johnston on this report in his capacity as Minister for Corrective Services prior to his change in ministerial responsibilities.
- (3) No.
- (4) The department provides a number of employment opportunities to prisoners in addition to industries. Some of these include the prisoner employment program, the Carey Bindjareb program and the Breaking Through program. Further information on these programs and their beneficial outcomes can be provided on request.

PUBLIC HOUSING — WAITLIST

321. Hon STEVE MARTIN to the minister representing the Minister for Housing:

I refer to the answer to question without notice 289 asked on Tuesday, 16 April in which the minister advised that answers should be read with caution due to double counting in the public housing waitlist.

- (1) What is the extent of double counting in the public housing waitlist?
- (2) Why are multiple applications from the same persons added to the waitlist?
- (3) How long has this double counting been occurring?

Hon JACKIE JARVIS replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of this question. The following answer has been provided by the Minister for Housing.

- (1)–(3) Double counting is present as part of the waitlist’s composition, given that an individual may be listed as a householder on more than one application at any one time; this is why it does not form part of regular verified reporting. Examples include when there are householders who are listed on multiple applications or children who may be counted as householders on the applications of each of their caregivers. It is not possible to confirm the extent of double counting without a manual review of individual files.

YOUTH DETENTION — INFRASTRUCTURE REVIEW

322. Hon PETER COLLIER to the minister representing the Minister for Corrective Services:

I refer to the \$1 million allocated in November 2023 for the planning and development of a business case that will assess options for the construction of a new youth detention facility at Banksia Hill Detention Centre to replace unit 18 at Casuarina Prison.

- (1) When will the business case be completed?
- (2) Once the business case is completed, will it be made public?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the Leader of the Opposition for some notice of the question.

- (1) Detailed planning and development of a new purpose-built therapeutic youth detention facility to replace unit 18 continues. Business case work is progressing and is expected for government review later this year.
- (2) No. The business case is cabinet-in-confidence.

METRONET PROJECTS — FOREIGN WORKERS

323. Hon TJORN SIBMA to the minister representing the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the labour component of Metronet projects.

- (1) How many foreign workers have been employed to date?
- (2) How many foreign workers are presently employed?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

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

- (1)–(2) To date, over 10 000 workers have been employed across Metronet projects. “Foreign worker” is not a category by which employees are defined or counted.

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

324. Hon DONNA FARAGHER to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Education:

I refer to the Department of Education’s school psychology service.

- (1) What is the current ratio of appointed school psychologists to students in both primary and secondary government schools?

- (2) Will the minister provide a breakdown by service of the number of psychologists employed by the department in other service areas, outside of support provided directly in schools?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

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

The answer is not possible in the time given; therefore, I request the member put this question on notice.

Hon Donna Faragher: Are you serious? You cannot answer that?

Hon SUE ELLERY: If I may, by way of explanation, particularly in respect of the second part of the question, because you are asking for other service areas outside of what is directly provided in schools, that will take some time to collate.

BLUE ROOM THEATRE — STATEMENT OF SOLIDARITY

325. Hon NEIL THOMSON to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Culture and the Arts:

I refer to the anti-Semitic hate speech published by the Blue Room Theatre organisation in its so called “statement of solidarity”, which quotes the anti-Semitic hate chant, “From the river to the sea”, which is a call for the destruction of Israel and the elimination of the Jewish people’s homeland.

- (1) How much funding from the state government did the Blue Room Theatre receive in 2023–24?
- (2) Will the state government commit to sending a clear signal to all organisations that it will not tolerate those who foster anti-Semitic hate and division in our society by withdrawing funding from this organisation and reallocating those funds to an inclusive arts organisation?

Hon SAMANTHA ROWE replied:

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

- (1) The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries provided \$350 000 in funding to the Performing Arts Centre Society, or Blue Room Theatre, through the arts organisations investment program in the financial year 2023–24.
- (2) Following the issuing of a pro-Palestinian statement by the Blue Room Theatre on social media, DLGSC is reminding recipients of government funding to be mindful of the policies and guidelines relating to the requirement to act in a fair and equitable way that underpins the funding agreements. The state government expects arts and culture organisations and venues that are publicly funded to promote a safe and inclusive environment for all artists and audiences.

DIESEL SPILL — POINT SAMSON

326. Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT to the Leader of the House representing the Minister Assisting the Minister for Transport:

I refer to a diesel spill in Port Samson that allegedly took place on Sunday, 31 March.

- (1) When was the spill first reported to the maritime environmental emergency duty officer?
- (2) What has been done to remedy the spill and when did this response occur?
- (3) Given the fragile and ecologically significant mangrove ecosystem in Johns Creek, why was there a delay in acting to report and remedy the spill?
- (4) Will the minister commit to restoring permanent onsite management of Johns Creek boat harbour at Point Samson to ensure that future incidents are responded to in a timely and effective manner?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

Honourable member, this has been referred to me, as I represent the Minister Assisting the Minister for Transport. I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1) An initial report was made to the Department of Transport Pilbara region’s on-call number on 31 March 2024 at 1428 hours. A subsequent report was made to the maritime environmental emergency duty officer on 3 April 2024 at 1226 hours.
- (2)–(3) Pilbara-based Department of Transport officers attended the site on 31 March 2024 and did not observe any sign of a diesel spill. During a subsequent visit on 4 April 2024, a minor slick was observed within the harbour. The Department of Transport officer’s assessment was that natural degradation would be the most appropriate response strategy.
- (4) A harbour contractor position based in Point Sampson is being re-established and is expected to be in place in the first quarter of the 2024–25 financial year.

SCHOOLS — WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECKS

327. Hon NICK GOIRAN to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Education:

My question without notice of which some notice has been given is to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Education. I refer to a WAtoday article of 29 May 2023 entitled “WA schools told to stop asking contractors for Working With Children Checks”, which demonstrates a high degree of confusion amongst schools as to who does and does not require a working with children check.

- (1) Has the minister been briefed on the difficult situation that schools and principals are placed in when determining who does and who does not require a working with children check?
- (2) Is there a hotline or other efficient means by which a school can obtain immediate answers to questions?
- (3) If no to (1) or (2), why not?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

Honourable member, I am the Leader of the House and I represent the Minister for Education. Thank you for some notice of the question.

- (1) No.
- (2) The department provides dedicated support to schools via phone and email during business hours regarding working with children check compliance matters. On 31 January 2023, all department staff were provided with information regarding the different types of visitors to school requiring working with children checks. A link was provided for additional advice to ensure working with children compliance. Schools have not raised concerns to the department on this matter.
- (3) In regard to question (1), no briefing has been provided, as schools have not raised concerns to the department on this matter. In regard to question (2), not applicable.

GOVERNMENT REGIONAL OFFICERS' HOUSING — CITY OF BUSSELTON

328. Hon STEVE MARTIN to the minister representing the Minister for Housing:

I refer to the Government Regional Officers' Housing program.

- (1) How many public housing properties are allocated to GROH in Busselton and Dunsborough, the City of Busselton's jurisdiction?
- (2) How many vacant GROH properties were there in Busselton and Dunsborough as of 31 March 2024?

Hon JACKIE JARVIS replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of this question. The following response has been provided by the Minister for Housing.

- (1) No public housing properties are being utilised by the GROH program in Busselton and Dunsborough.
- (2) As at 31 March 2024, there were five vacant GROH properties in Busselton and Dunsborough, all of which were allocated to client agencies. As previously advised, properties may be vacant for a range of legitimate operational reasons, including agencies rotating staff on fixed-tenure arrangements and staff leave—for example, maternity leave for regional teachers or police.

JOBS — C-SERIES RAILCAR MANUFACTURING — BELLEVUE

329. Hon TJORN SIBMA to the minister representing the Minister for Transport:

My question without notice of which some notice has been provided is to my other friend, the Minister for Emergency Services representing the Minister for Transport!

I refer to operations at the Bellevue facility where C-series railcars are assembled.

- (1) How many FTEs are employed at the Bellevue facility?
- (2) How many of these are Western Australian residents, and in what roles are they employed?
- (3) How many are foreign workers, and in what roles are they employed?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. The honourable member may have his preselection, but Hon Matthew Swinbourn and I do not, so if he could please refer to us as “honourable members” as opposed to his friends as we still need to get our preselection sorted!

On behalf of the Minister for Transport, I provide the following answer.

- (1)–(3) There are 162 full-time equivalents employed by Alstom at the Bellevue facility. The Metronet C-series railcar program is also supporting jobs at 15 local businesses across Western Australia that supply railcar components. Alstom has indicated that most employees are Western Australian residents, with workers from overseas only used depending on skill requirements at any given time.

FIREARMS ACT — REFORM*Question without Notice 288 — Answer*

HON STEPHEN DAWSON (Mining and Pastoral — Minister for Emergency Services) [5.04 pm]: I would like to provide an answer to Hon Nick Goiran's question without notice 288, asked yesterday.

- (1) Consideration and review commenced once received and continues to be ongoing.
- (2) Division 2, sections 148 and 153.
- (3)–(4) This is cabinet-in-confidence.

WESTERN POWER — STANDALONE POWER UNITS*Question without Notice 301 — Answer*

HON DARREN WEST (Agricultural — Parliamentary Secretary) [5.05 pm]: I now have an answer to question without notice 301, asked earlier today by Hon Colin de Grussa. I would like to thank the honourable member for some notice of the question and wish him a happy birthday! On behalf of the Minister for Energy, I provide the following answer.

- (1)–(3) Technical specifications on individual units differ due to operating environments and customer needs. Ninety-eight per cent of standalone power system customers who experienced an outage in 2022–23 had fewer outages than the average grid-connected rural customer, with the majority of SPS sites experiencing an 80 per cent reduction in outage frequency. Western Power is aware of a small number of customers who exceeded the capacity of their SPS and is working to rectify and address other minor issues.

TREASURER'S ADVANCE AUTHORISATION BILL 2024*Second Reading*

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

HON NEIL THOMSON (Mining and Pastoral) [5.05 pm]: Thank you, President.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Maybe you could perhaps focus on the content of the bill.

Hon NEIL THOMSON: Yes, President. Thank you for your guidance. I appreciate it.

We are looking at structural weaknesses in the Western Australian economy and some of the challenges we face. Under this government we seem to be building structural challenges into the future. We are creating a situation in which some of the weaknesses and headwinds that might arise in the future and are referred to on a regular basis in the budget papers will actually occur within the next 12 months and into the term of a future government. This will create additional challenges. We have seen from this government a pattern of not really being absolutely transparent going forward, in terms of the costs it is building into the future of Western Australian government expenditure. An enormous provision of \$2.8 billion was included in the budget as part of the midyear review because of expiring key public sector industrial agreements.

That will be very interesting to see during an election year, given that there are so many expiring agreements. I must say that I recommend a level of caution and care to the government. Yes, our teachers and police deserve more, but the dissatisfaction we see in the public service is multifaceted. It relates to wages, of course; we have seen wage caps being put in place for many years and many of our key workers have fallen behind the average salary rates of other jurisdictions. That creates massive challenges in terms of attraction and retention. I hope there is very careful deliberation from the government going forward.

The \$2.8 billion was put into the budget to cover a range of agreements, including PTA transit officers; schoolteachers; TAFE lecturers; VenuesWest; the Arts and Culture Trust; Main Roads; salaried officers; prison officers; public servants; government officers; social trainers; Insurance Commission of Western Australia employees; school support officers; miscellaneous employees; and police officers. The challenge here is having a balance. The path the government has let go of is making sure we have those frontline services delivered in a way that is effective with the results and the outcomes we need. That is a massive challenge. We have to make sure those officers are respected and provisioned with the sufficient level of security in their roles. That is a massive challenge. It is probably the area on which I have the greatest sympathy for the government, because it is difficult to manage. Every time there is an underlying wage increase, it will be hardwired into future budgets. This government has liberally used cost-of-living top-ups in a way that has not been done before. The general addition last year was \$3 000. That is really kicking the can down the road for the long-term cost impact on the budget's bottom line. During estimates I raised the question of whether, when the ratings agencies look at our books and ask about risks of our future of public sector expenditure, they counted that extra \$3 000 as a recurrent cost. These one-off cost-of-living measures and boosts to salaries mean that the expectation is set that they have to be built into future cash flows. Either that happens or at some time the government will have to bite the bullet and say, "Sorry, folks, you'll no longer get those cash handouts or those additional amounts." Of course, that would cause a lot of dissatisfaction across the community.

This brings me to the issue on page 316 of budget paper No 3 of 2023–24, which I raised at the last estimates hearings. I put the minister representing the Treasurer on notice that I will come back to this at the next estimates hearings because it is very, very important. In the table on page 316 I picked up the estimated impact of those government fees and charges on the representative household and the claim by the government in the budget papers that there was only 2.4 per cent growth in those fees and charges, which I do not believe stacks up.

I certainly questioned it, and I did not believe that I got a satisfactory answer about why it was not included. There is a figure for stamp duty on general insurance, for example, at the 2023 level, but there is a footnote. Footnote (j) states —

Stamp duty in 2023–24 has been estimated using 2022–23 insurance premiums to isolate the price impact.

I know that sometimes public servants are very good at sneaking around the truth when there could be pressure not to present something in a more transparent way. Maybe we can go to some more detail about why it was not done consistently in the previous year just using the year-on-year amount. Why was it not done? In the 2022–23 midyear review—last time, not the most recent one but the one before—there was this massive windfall on life insurance premiums. From memory, the amount was over \$600 million—it might have been \$603 million—in insurance premium windfall to stamp duty. Stamp duty on general insurance went up by over \$600 million. Using any kind of rule-of-thumb calculation of the number of people in Western Australia who might have insurance and pay premiums, it is certainly a big number. It would have significantly impacted that percentage change for the representative household. I do not want this issue skipped somehow in the next budget papers and the impact of that massive increase in insurance to be hidden. That has been a significant factor on the cost of living in Western Australia.

I would like us to start to move away from these one-off cash payments. I do not think they are a genuine, sustainable way to reduce the cost of living. All they do is say, “You get an electricity credit of \$400.” They are very badly targeted. People who just have an electricity connection get \$400. They might have a large family or a small family. They might have huge costs. The payment is not well targeted. The best thing the state government could do would be to reduce the impact of some of these underlying price rises on the people of Western Australia—we are seeking genuine, sustainable changes to the cost of living.

Point of Order

Hon TJORN SIBMA: There are a number of unruly interjections that might be quelled. I know government members are enthusiastic, probably overexcited. They are learning a lot but not responding well. If, Acting President, you could draw their attention to hearing the member in silence, I think it would do them well and the chamber an enormous good service.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon Dr Brian Walker): Thank you for the reminder. I have to point out that I can actually hear that quite well. I appreciate the point. I draw the attention of members to the fact that it would be wise to hear things in silence.

Debate Resumed

Hon NEIL THOMSON: In reference to the comment made by my honourable colleague —

Point of Order

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Acting President, I am not sure that you ruled on the point of order that was raised by the honourable member. I understand the advice you have given, perhaps you might tell us what your ruling is.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon Dr Brian Walker): Very well, there is no point of order. I thank you for the advice.

Debate Resumed

Hon NEIL THOMSON: It is getting confusing whether they are points of order or not. Anyhow, I will continue.

Hon Tjorn Sibma made a very good point that government members could just listen and learn because I have taken the time to work through a lot of detail. People would note that this is not just negative commentary; this is about detail within the budget papers. For the wellbeing of Western Australians, I would like to make sure that we have some long-term, sustainable change to cost-of-living pressures.

Not that long ago, I raised in this chamber the additional fee at the WA Museum, which is such an important facility. I would like to see more transparency on how these fees were introduced when they have such an impact on attendance. That is just a personal view. The problem is that the state invests billions of dollars into infrastructure, and some of it is very important cultural infrastructure like the Museum. The problem is that when we just want a few dollars of revenue, we reduce the overall benefits. It would be nice to see a bit more analysis done on these decisions and the merits to the overall community of a few extra dollars that go into the coffers of the state. So much ongoing benefit to the community could flow through some opportunities there. If the government wants some gratuitous suggestions, that might be something it could look at. I would be very delighted to support the Treasurer if that were to come through at the next budget. We will watch and see.

I have given a lot of advice to the Treasurer about how to structure the budget. As I said, we could see fewer of these one-off yearly cash handouts. If they are to be handed out, they should have some proper analysis so we know the long-term impacts. The expectation is given that this is an ongoing thing so I would rather see it honestly hardwired into the budget's future projections so we know what the impact on debt will be, but obviously we need to do some of those structural changes and get on with the job that was promised way back in 2017 that has never been delivered.

In the closing moments of my speech, I want to recap on the fact that this is a tired, tired Cook Labor government that has no plan to fix the mess in our hospital system. This is a hospital system that we see year after year is on life support. How can it be that children have to wait two years to see a paediatrician? How can that be in Western Australia, the richest jurisdiction in Australia? Potentially, if we were a nation on our own, we could be the richest jurisdiction in the world.

This is a tired government with no plan to fix our housing affordability crisis. We always see these tiny little announcements that give a little bit of a bang; it is run by this whole media cycle. How can it be that we do not have a real plan to solve our housing crisis or our ailing and struggling school system? How can it be that we see in this state the worst crime statistics, particularly of violent crime, in Western Australia, the richest jurisdiction in the world?

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon Dr Brian Walker): Hon Dan Caddy.

HON DAN CADDY (North Metropolitan) [5.20 pm]: Thank you, Acting President. Are you sure you have finished, member?

Hon Neil Thomson: I have!

Hon DAN CADDY: Okay; that is good.

Hon Tjorn Sibma: Are you filibustering your own bill?

Hon DAN CADDY: Honourable member, I am looking forward to educating those of you on that side about exactly what this government is doing. There is a massive picture of what this government is doing. That is why I will be —

Hon Martin Aldridge interjected.

Hon DAN CADDY: Are you still here? That is why the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill 2024 intrigues me so. I will have immense pleasure in explaining to members opposite exactly what this government is doing—all the things the Cook government has done and is still doing. Let us be clear on risk, because right towards the end of the honourable member's speech he talked a bit about risk. As my extremely good lifelong friend Hon Pierre Yang said, members opposite are the greatest risk to this state. Members opposite being in government is the greatest risk that this state faces.

I will talk for a bit, and I will try to be balanced. I am going to cover a few areas because we are doing so much. I will talk about jobs and the cost of living. I will get to housing, police, health, law and order—there is a lot to talk about. There is a lot that this government is doing. I will talk about social policy, education and training and the economy. Obviously, I will touch on Metronet so that Hon Tjorn Sibma has something to interject on. He does like interjecting when we talk about Metronet and the environment, and also regional Western Australia.

Where am I going to start? Do you know what, I will start with Metronet because there is a lot to talk about. It has been in only the last couple of weeks that we have seen the arrival of the very first of the new C-series trains in use on the line. I am an avid —

Hon Tjorn Sibma: Imported from India! Assembled in WA!

Hon DAN CADDY: My friend, I remember when trains arrived when members opposite were in government, and they put a lick of paint on them —

Several members interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT: Order! Jocularly is very much appropriate, but this is going too far. Hon Dan Caddy.

Hon DAN CADDY: Thank you for your guidance, Acting President. I remember when railcars arrived when members opposite were in government, they put a lick of paint on them, and what was the headline? It was "Two per cent local made." It was hilarious! It would be sad if it were not so funny, but I will get back to Metronet.

Hon Tjorn Sibma: Will you take an orderly interjection, member, just at this point?

Hon DAN CADDY: Only from you, member, and just this one.

Hon Tjorn Sibma: If you really want to substantiate your claims around local content, I think you might encourage the minister to actually table these mysterious participation plans, which actually codify how much local content has gone in. There are eight of them that the minister has refused to table so far. I am very happy if you're achieving what you say you are achieving. I just don't believe you, and I don't think anyone should believe you, either.

Hon DAN CADDY: I thank the member for his interjection. If those plans are not being tabled, there will be a very good reason for that being the case. The minister, the Treasurer and the Premier would know that reason, but it would be well above my pay grade, and I am very comfortable with that. But if the member wants to talk about local content, how about we look at the questions that were asked in this place today? There was a question I think from the honourable member to the minister representing the Minister for Transport. He was trying to infer in his question that some of the 160-plus employees out there were not actually Western Australians. The answer came back that as well as 162 full-time employees, the Metronet C-series railcar program is also supporting jobs at 15 local businesses across Western Australia supplying railcar components, and it indicated that most of the employees are actually Western Australian residents, with workers from overseas only ever used depending on specific skill requirements. The member may ask leading questions and infer a whole lot of things, but when the answer came back, I notice that he did not refer to it, because it is an answer he did not like, because it goes to exactly what I am saying.

Hon Neil Thomson: Will you take an orderly interjection?

Hon DAN CADDY: I might run out of time. I only have 40 minutes left!

Hon Martin Aldridge: We'll give you an extension!

Hon DAN CADDY: I appreciate that! I want to go back. I had not stopped telling members about this. I am an avid user of rail not just here, but when I have lived overseas. It is the only way to travel. I have been on the new C-series, and it is an exceptional locomotive—exceptional.

Hon Neil Thomson: Can you say, hand on heart, because I cannot see—I will check the modern slavery register.

The ACTING PRESIDENT: Honourable member —

Hon DAN CADDY: Really? That sort of —

The ACTING PRESIDENT: Order! Hon Dan Caddy, I take great interest in hearing what you say, but you asked for interjections from one person only. Are you accepting interjections elsewhere?

Hon DAN CADDY: No, I do not think I will. I may well run out of time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT: You will indeed.

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

It is a fantastic new train. It was interesting. I remember being out there, getting on the train, there were people out there, the minister was actually out there as well, and a lot was said about rail infrastructure and infrastructure in general. One thing struck me, and it is something that I have said before, but probably not quite as eloquently. Having lived in many major cities around the world, as you have, Acting President, it struck me that there are no great cities in the world that do not have great infrastructure. That is an absolute fact. It does not matter about the history of a city, where it is geographically, or when or how it was built; unless that city has great infrastructure, and part of that is great public transport infrastructure, it cannot be a great city.

I will go to the railcar procurement. I have a few notes here that I made some time ago, when I believe I spoke in this place about jobs and procurement and what we were doing with Metronet, bringing the building of railcars and that industry back to Australia. The reason I got up and spoke was I recalled being at a breakfast at which the former Leader of the Opposition said that it was—I may get her words wrong—a dead and dying industry, and why would we bring it back. I thought that epitomised everything we on this side need to know about what those on the other side think about these sorts of industries, and the importance of these industries in Western Australia. Another interesting thing I found is there is often an argument that there is a cost to local manufacturing when compared with overseas manufacturing. The cost per railcar of the last B-series was over \$4 million each; the cost of the new C-series under this contract was well below that.

As has been mentioned earlier today, the Bellevue plant is where Western Australia's biggest ever order of railcars is being built, tested, and will be maintained for decades to come. This is not just a shoot-up industry where we build these railcars and that is it.

There is maintenance, future testing and training to go with them. Within what we are doing at that facility, there is the opportunity to train Western Australians in jobs that some of them will hold, if they choose to, probably their entire lives. It will serve as the permanent maintenance facility for the expanded Metronet fleet, and it will or possibly already does—I am not entirely sure—include a dedicated diesel railcar maintenance facility. As I said, we made the commitment to build railcars in Western Australia because we made a promise to the people of Western Australia that we would bring back railcar manufacturing after members opposite, when in government, closed the Midland railway workshops, and we are delivering on our promise. I know that I am going a bit back in history and I was very young, but the Liberal–National government closed the Fremantle rail line as well.

Here we go! I found it. The former opposition leader said that it was a failed manufacturing industry and a waste of money.

Hon Martin Aldridge: Who was that?

Hon DAN CADDY: That was Liza Harvey, in fact. I was not going to talk at length about Metronet because, as I pointed out to the Acting President, I do not want to run out of time, but what we are doing in that space in building infrastructure for Perth is unprecedented and absolutely possible only because of sound economic management. Let me tell members that WA deserves a government that builds the infrastructure that is needed for the future, and we can do that only because of our economic credentials. The two terms of this government—the McGowan and then Cook governments—have created more than 300 000 jobs since being elected, despite the pandemic. In my inaugural speech in this place, I remember standing up and talking about the approximately 80 000 jobs that had been created at that point. We still continue to create jobs in Western Australia. Before I was elected to this place, we passed the Western Australian Jobs Act, and that maximised opportunities for WA businesses on government projects. Obviously, the railcar manufacturing has helped. This government has a vision and has always stuck by its vision and not dropped it, unlike those opposite who dropped the Metro Area Express light rail and all that other stuff. We have continued to deliver the things that we said we would deliver. We have a proven track record of doing this, of doing what is right for all Western Australians and of creating and protecting Western Australian jobs.

Hon Neil Thomson mentioned the cost of living, and I was surprised to hear him say that. This government has delivered at least \$1 400 in electricity credits to Western Australian households over the time.

Hon Neil Thomson interjected.

Hon DAN CADDY: I heard the honourable member when he spoke. He does not need to interject, because I heard him say that it is not something he would have done to relieve the pain and pressure felt by Western Australian families. That is what I heard him say. If I am wrong, I am happy to read *Hansard* and be corrected. We have made travel in our suburbs cheaper through the two-zone fare cap, which also helps people who are struggling with the cost of living. A couple of members spoke about the regional airfare caps earlier. Hon Peter Foster went to town about that earlier today, and I believe Hon Shelley Payne also spoke about how regional airfare caps make airfares more affordable for regional Western Australians.

Obviously, there is also the rent relief program to help with the cost of living. Why do we do it? Because WA deserves a government that is prepared to help when times are tough, and that is what Western Australians have in the Cook Labor government.

I will talk a little bit about police, and law and order. This morning, my good friend Hon Peter Collier, Hon Samantha Rowe and I —

Hon Stephen Dawson: What's with the love energy?

Hon DAN CADDY: There are a lot of good friends in this place, Deputy Leader of the House. We spent time with senior members of the Western Australia Police Force, and we talked at length about its last annual report. This government has opened the new state operations centre, which provides enhanced management and tactical intelligence, and a genuinely improved technical capability to support frontline officers and agency staff, not just in Perth but also right across the state. We introduced and extended Operation Heat Shield and Operation Regional Shield. I asked at our meeting this morning where things were at with Operation Regional Shield. It continues to deliver. The Deputy Commissioner of Police said to me that it continues to deliver and is a fantastic program.

Hon Neil Thomson interjected.

Hon DAN CADDY: Once again, member, these sorts of programs and the funding for these programs are only possible because of the sound fiscal management of the Cook government. I know that is a bitter pill for him to swallow, but that is the truth. That is why we can afford to roll out these programs.

I give a shout-out to all police officers out there, and I am sure that all members will agree with me. I give a shout-out to everyone from Col Blanch to the new recruits and those in the academy, and not just to them but also to the many public servants who are not sworn police officers but work in that area, such as intelligence analysts. I give a shout-out to them for the very important job they do to keep Western Australians safe.

I will pick a few pages from the *Western Australia Police Force annual report 2023* because we have done a couple of really important things with police in just the last 12 months. To put it in perspective, we have to remember that—if I am not wrong—Western Australia, at over 2.6 million square kilometres, is the largest policing jurisdiction in the world. What makes that even more difficult is that 80 per cent of the state's population lives in less than one per cent of that area. Police have real constraints on how they can operate.

This morning, I touched on one of the silver linings that has come out of the COVID pandemic, and that is the border search areas. There has been some negativity about them and what they have achieved. What specifically has been achieved at the border search areas? I was fascinated to listen to the Commissioner of Police as he explained how important the new laws and border search areas are. It is not about what happens specifically at the border search areas; it is about the flow-on effects that disrupt criminal organisations. Once we understand the reasons we have set up these areas and their success in the disruption of what I would call, in my words, the criminal supply chains, we understand how important it is to properly fund police to do that work. Once again, this comes from sound financial management.

Earlier, I mentioned the new state operations centre. Technical innovation is really important to the police force, and the Western Australia Police Force has partnered with the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission and the Department of Home Affairs to develop a national criminal intelligence system to provide law enforcement agencies with a more comprehensive view of organised crime and organised crime activity right across Australia. Once again, these are great things that will not happen and cannot happen unless we have sound financial management. If the government is in a good place and the state is in a good place, these are the sorts of innovative things that flow from that.

It is not just that; it is also about police equipment and police stations. Hon Samantha Rowe and I were talking about the new station that is being built at Baldivis, I think. As a government, we continue to build new police stations and to refurbish existing police stations.

It is not just the stations; it is also about providing vehicles that are technologically enabled to give our officers simple and fast access to real-time criminal information. That helps to not only apprehend criminals, but also protect our officers. This government is investing in the Western Australia Police Force through investing in not only police stations, but also technology. We did not talk about police helicopters this morning, but I am aware that the police have two new Airbus helicopters. Once again, that is a pretty major investment for the state police force. That is possible only because of the good economic management of this government. The people of Western Australia deserve a government that recognises how important our police force is and that provides it with the latest equipment and technology. That is what this Cook government is delivering. It is not just that; it is programs as well. I will not speak at length about them because I have spoken before in this place about the fantastic work of the police and community youth centres. They are right across the state. There are more of them in the regional areas than in the metropolitan area. They are a fantastic front line for the youth in Western Australia. I have a page on Operation Regional Shield, which I have already spoken about.

Another thing the government recognises is the importance of high-visibility policing and the importance of our police officers spending as much time as possible in the community. High-visibility policing is the number one strategy to deter offending. We also have officers on the ground wherever they happen to be, so we have real-time intelligence coming in. We can then put officers in place where the intelligence says they need to be to target and deter offending and those sorts of things. I am pleased to say that I noticed in the police annual report that the percentage of sworn officers available for frontline policing is at 69 per cent. That is very impressive. Another thing I noticed, which impressed me a lot and is an increase on last year, is that the population of Western Australia is somewhere just below three million and the number of traffic breath alcohol tests was over two million. That is outstanding work getting done right across the community. The police who are out there doing what we call RBTs—random breath tests—are amazing. A few years ago I was in Albany and fortunately I was driving a LandCruiser because the police officer who stopped me for the RBT was on horseback. She had to lean over her horse to administer the test to get me to blow through the little pipe. I asked her what she would have done if I was driving a Ferrari. She looked down the road and pointed to a whole lot of her colleagues in police cars. It was interesting to be stopped by a police officer on horseback on York Street in Albany and asked to blow into the bag, as they say.

Hon Darren West: What was the name of the horse? I think it was Trigger!

Hon DAN CADDY: I do not know the name of the horse or the officer, but she was very nice. I felt a bit bad because I asked her whether I could take a photo. I was stopped at the time. It was a good laugh. I have laughed about it with many friends since.

While I am talking about police, I also want to talk about the Road Safety Commission and the road trauma trust account, but I will probably run out of time because I want to get to quite a few other things. However, I want to outline the fantastic work that has been done there. All modern societies deal with road trauma. We have a fantastic commissioner in Adrian Warner. He is absolutely passionate about road safety. I saw an article recently, I believe in *The West Australian*, in which he lamented the number of motorcycle accidents we have. He made the very valid point that a lot of the motorcycle accidents that are occurring these days, to use his words, involve older riders. I am in that category. As someone who has ridden motorbikes my whole life and gone through the whole gamut of sports bikes and who now rides cruisers, I am very well aware of the vulnerability of motorcyclists. We used to say that if we made it to 40, we were good, because I had friends who lost their lives when I was young. Motorcycle accidents are predominantly seen as a young man's issue, but that is not always the case. Adrian Warner is very passionate. I am not sure whether he was writing about it or they were comments in an article in *The West Australian*, but the Road Safety Commission has run some fantastic education campaigns, and those campaigns make a significant difference.

What else did I say I would talk about? I will talk about social policy and the amount of money we are putting into homelessness and the outstanding work that has been done by Minister Carey. On Wednesday, 3 April, if I remember my diary correctly, I was in Joondalup. I was fortunate to walk about three minutes from my office to see Uniting WA's new offices. I was there to present a grant on behalf of Minister Winton. That gave me a chance to speak to the CEOs, Jen and Michael, whom I have met on a number of occasions. We went through the new offices, which are fantastic. A lot of the workers are outreach workers so there were not as many workers there then as there

may have been at the start of the day. The grant we gave them was to help support vulnerable Western Australians who could use the money for the provision of food, bill payments, fuel, clothing vouchers and the like. The Cook government has always been very clear that we will always support community sector organisations, whether it is through direct grants or through Lotterywest community grants programs, and help build a better Western Australia. WA deserves a government that has that type of empathy and compassion. We, as a government, and certainly the Premier, recognise the impacts of the cost of living and that many Western Australians are doing it tough. We had a pretty substantial conversation at the end. I sat down with Jenny, who is a teen facilitator, and Marlene, who is one of the emergency relief officers. I sat there for probably about 45 minutes and listened to their accounts of not what they are dealing with, but what the people they are helping are dealing with, which was harrowing. It is super important for this government to put money towards helping those people when we can.

While I am talking about Uniting WA, I will also quickly take the opportunity to outline a fantastic program it launched last year, which is The Together Program. That program is a collaboration between Uniting WA and Homeless Healthcare. I had a long chat with one of the co-CEOs, Michael Chester, about this program around the time it was launched. From memory, that was in November last year. It is an innovative three-year pilot program to support pregnant women who are at risk of experiencing homelessness. It is designed to provide mothers with a safe and nurturing environment and a comprehensive support system during the first key years of their child's life. That support includes stable and affordable housing for up to 12 months with a real focus on tenancy management and wraparound supports tailored to unique needs that some mothers and babies have—essential medical and health support that is coordinated by Homeless Healthcare. I also give a shout-out to the University of Notre Dame's Home2Health team that is doing the research and program evaluation that goes along with this pilot. The Together Program is aligned with strategy 3 of the sustainable health review, which states that a focus on support during pregnancy and the baby's first 1 000 days of life will see children and families achieve the best start in life to become physically and mentally healthy adults. This program aligns also with *All paths lead to a home: Western Australia's 10-year strategy on homelessness 2020–2030*. This is a low barrier and very innovative service conceived through a whole-of-community approach.

Specifically, having been on the homelessness inquiry, I point out that recommendation 45 of the inquiry into the financial administration of homelessness services in Western Australia encouraged the allocation of funding for crisis and supported accommodation for pregnant women and mothers with newborns experiencing or at risk of homelessness. I remember when I was sitting there with Michael that he told me that this would make a truly significant impact on the lives of vulnerable women in Western Australia—that it is able to help and would absolutely demonstrate, without a doubt, the power of early intervention. This is a fantastic program. Once again, I give a shout-out to all the people involved. I cannot list all the similar organisations, but to all those doing work within those organisations, what a fantastic job they do.

I return to my list that I said at the start I would talk about. The economy: the McGowan government and now Cook government has returned the fair share of GST to Western Australia. We regained our Aaa credit rating, which was lost under the previous Liberal government. We have delivered consistently strong economic growth. We are now seven years into this government and it has not stopped. We will put a record \$44 billion into infrastructure over the next four years, delivering jobs and benefiting all Western Australians for generations to come. At the same time, we will reduce debt. We are diversifying the WA economy. I have already spoken at length about railcar manufacturing coming back in-house. Members spoke in this place for a couple of hours today about tourism so I will not go over that again. I mention international education and defence industries. Defence industries is a massive opportunity for this state. Minister Papalia and Premier Cook have been at the forefront of making sure we get everything we can out of what is happening at the moment in defence industries for this government. When it comes to our economy, WA deserves a government with the strength and the smarts to defend our GST.

Education and training: I was chatting with the Minister for Education just the other day. In partnership with the Albanese government, we are boosting funding to public schools in Western Australia by \$1.6 billion. We have partnered to deliver 130 fee-free TAFE courses across a range of key industries, and 160 high-priority courses have had their fees reduced by up to 72 per cent through the government's Lower Fees, Local Skills initiative. As a government, we are investing in the biggest TAFE capital works program in Western Australian history, with 15 major upgrades at TAFEs across the state to create world-class learning facilities.

Hon Ben Dawkins interjected.

Hon DAN CADDY: I am not taking interjections from you.

Since 2017, we have delivered 32 new primary schools and nine new secondary schools, and there are more on the way. We have absolutely delivered in education for Western Australians. As well as that, we are upgrading and refurbishing schools across Western Australia with early childhood learning facilities, performing arts centres, sports halls and over 330 new science labs to prepare our young Western Australians for the jobs of the future. We are investing heavily in education and training, which is an investment in the future of our young people and in the future of this state. Western Australia deserves a government that continually invests in education and in the future of this state.

The environment: we have committed to net zero by 2050 and to making it law. We are unapologetic for this: we are retiring state-owned coal-fired power stations and will reduce state government carbon emissions by 80 per cent by 2030. We are implementing the nation-leading Plan for Plastics initiative, which will phase out single-use plastics, and we ended the logging of our magnificent south west forests because WA deserves a government that cares about the environment and our children's future. I could go on and on but I know that other members wish to speak, so I shall take my seat and let someone else contribute.

HON MARTIN PRITCHARD (North Metropolitan) [5.56 pm]: The Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill 2024 is a fairly short bill, but usually during these types of debates, a fair bit of latitude is given with regard to the content. As I get into my contribution, I will take advantage of that with your guidance, President.

Before I do that, I want to make a comment. I have been in this place now since 2015 and through most of that I can remember making an unruly interjection once—I think. Yesterday I made two unruly interjections during the contribution of the shadow Treasurer. The reason I did that was just sheer frustration. The shadow Treasurer was not not telling the truth, but was asserting things that would give a normal constituent reason to believe that this government was to blame for the debt we have—and that simply is not true. I was here during the latter part of the Barnett government. I think Premier Barnett did some good things. I was a big proponent of maintaining the football ground at Subiaco Oval, and I argued that strongly. However, the decision to move it to Burswood has ultimately been an extremely good decision. Unfortunately, it had some effects on Subiaco, and that is the reason I was opposed to it; small business around that area has suffered greatly. Ultimately the decision was great, so I do not say that when Colin Barnett was Premier, he did all things bad. I thought his fighting to maintain the level of gambling in this state was very good. However, to suggest that he was a good Treasurer or managed the finances of this state is laughable. The previous Treasurer, Hon Eric Ripper, left Western Australia in what most would suggest was a pretty good state. Debt was around \$3 billion but was very manageable. Both sides of Parliament would suggest that he was a good Treasurer.

When Colin Barnett won the 2008 election—I was not here at the time but I know about it and I think the shadow Treasurer should know about it—he took a debt for this state of about \$3 billion and increased it to somewhere in the region of \$37 billion.

Hon Neil Thomson interjected.

Hon MARTIN PRITCHARD: I know, because I debated the bills that came before this place seeking additional funds.

Hon Neil Thomson interjected.

Hon MARTIN PRITCHARD: I am not taking interjections, thank you. I do listen to the honourable member quietly, except for those two times yesterday, so I would appreciate similar respect. If my figures are incorrect, members have every opportunity at some point to correct me.

I believe the Barnett government took the debt in this state from about \$3 billion to around \$37 billion. One of the things the shadow Treasurer said yesterday is that we have a very big interest bill—and we do. We had \$30-odd billion worth of debt delivered to us by the Barnett government. When a new government takes over, it does not take over a clean sheet. We do not say, "That is Colin's debt." It is not; it is the government's debt. When we take over the seats on the government's side of the chamber, we do our best. Since that time, I think the Treasurer has managed the finances of this state extremely well. During this time I often made references to how I understand debt, accounting and such with regard to home accounting. When I was young—I think I was 18—the Bankcard came out and I thought it was the best thing since sliced bread. I used to go to the automatic teller machine and pull out another 20 bucks to get some more beer. I did that every time, and I think my debt at that time—I am going back a few years—got into the region of about \$3 000. It was impossible for me to pay back. I could not keep on top of the amount of interest I had to pay, as well as paying down the principal. I ended up having to get a loan, and it took a long period of time to repay that money. I cut up the Bankcard. When a new government takes over debt, it has to service the interest on that debt, and that was one of the Barnett government's legacies. Again, I balance that by saying he did some good things too. He built some infrastructure, but spending was not one of the good things. People within government at that time knew what he was like with spending because he did the same when he was the Minister for Education; he loved to spend. That was the legacy he left to this government to tidy up, and I think we have done a very good job of it.

I mentioned that I wanted to take a bit of latitude and talk about something else. The second reading speech on this bill mentioned that some additional money was going towards health, so I want to talk about health very briefly on a very personal basis. I will preface this by saying that when we debated the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill, I made some comments about general practitioners, and many general practitioners around the country hauled me over the coals. The comment I made was that they do not all keep up to date. The ones who hauled me over the coals—it was not on Teams, but one of the other platforms—obviously care very deeply and kept up to date and would be the crème de la crème of general practitioners. I still maintain the view that not all general practitioners stay completely up to date and we would not expect them to. Like the general population, they are only human, so I preface what I will say with that.

My wife had a heart attack 20 years ago. The symptoms came in the form of reflux. We went down to the general practitioner. We could not see her normal doctor because he was away, so we saw one of the relief doctors, who said, “No, you have got some reflux. Go home, take Mylanta or whatever, fix yourself up.” We went home that night, and she had a pretty bad night. We went back to the doctor in the morning, and the doctor said it would settle down. We ended up going to the emergency department at the Joondalup Health Campus a while later, but it was too late to be dealt with properly and so she has a damaged heart. We could say that that was the doctor’s fault, but it was not really. I think the doctor may have even said that if we were really worried, we should go to the emergency department. However, we did not, so we have to take some of the blame for that, and I accept that.

I have a good news story for health. A lot of people come to the fore when they are concerned about the treatment that they have had. The ones who get good treatment are not going to go to the papers, and the papers probably will not print it anyway because it is a good news story, and the papers are looking for conflict. If we had gone there 20 years ago, the papers might have printed it because they said it was all the doctor’s fault and we should sue the doctor—all that sort of stuff.

A few weeks ago on the 4 March public holiday, my wife had a conscious VT. Hon Dr Brian Walker will know what that is.

Hon Dr Brian Walker: Ventricular tachycardia.

Hon MARTIN PRITCHARD: That is why I say VT!

She had a conscious VT, which happened when we had the grandkids over. I was with her and what do you do? I rang the ambulance. Within 12 minutes, I had two particularly good paramedics in the bedroom looking after her. On the 4 March public holiday, they were inside 12 minutes later. During that time, the person stayed on the phone with me to talk me through it and make sure I did not panic. The paramedics got there and assessed her. They initially took her up to Joondalup, and then to Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital because it had a particular unit that looked after the heart and such. By the time I got to Charlie Gardiner, they had assessed her and sorted her out. That afternoon, they checked to make sure everything was fine, that the arteries were not blocked and that she was not having another heart attack. They determined that there was a blocked artery, but it was an old blockage, so they were not going to do anything about it because the heart had sorted itself out. She now has a defibrillator. That operation was on a Monday, and by Thursday lunchtime she was out and back at home.

The reason I tell that story is that there are always problems with health. There are always problems with education. No matter how much money the government throws at these things, situations will always come up. Although I am part of the government, I do not have a decision-making role within it, but I believe this government has its priorities right and is doing everything it can to fix the issues that we have. The opposition obviously has a role to try to disrupt, but I think that it is important that it is able to disrupt and take ownership of its history as well.

This is a good news story about health. There will be hundreds of stories that are not quite so good. Hopefully this good news story balances that a little bit. When someone needs the health system in this state—there may be mistakes made because people are human—I would rather be in Western Australia than anywhere else in the world. For what little credit the government can take—it basically sets the policies and such—the people who work there do the best they can. It will not be solved by sending more and more money at it. There will be mistakes, but I congratulate the minister on the policy decisions that this government makes in health. I think she is doing an extremely good job and this is a particularly good story that I wanted to tell.

I wanted to particularly thank those two, because St John’s has obviously had a bit of a rough time over the last little while. I tried to find out who the paramedics were, but St John’s has a policy in which it does not put out that information. I publicly want to thank those two because they saved my wife’s life. Apparently, there were some situations in the ambulance on the way to Joondalup. I can quite truthfully say they saved her life. She is a lot better now. The treatment that we received was efficient and quick. All the people involved were not just caring of her medical situation, but of how she felt as well. They reported to me on an ongoing basis, so I was not left in the dark. I want to thank those two paramedics and St John’s. I want to thank the Joondalup emergency department as well as the Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital coroner unit and ward 401. Everything there was extremely good and she is healthy. I am thankful for that.

We have a short bill here that deals with finances. I do not think there should be any queries about the way in which the Treasurer and Treasury are dealing with the issues of this state. I think she is doing a marvellous job. There particularly should not be any queries raised by the opposition, because it is not on solid ground. The shadow Treasurer may not have been there at the time, and I understand that, but being shadow Treasurer, I would expect him to know the history. He probably knows it better than me. If he does not know the figures better than me, then what he said yesterday was at the very least misleading. He knows how debt works in this state. The interest on the debt is a problem, but it is not a problem of this government’s making; it is a problem of the previous government, and this government is doing everything it can to remedy it. He should be cautious in how he puts things. As I said, it is not often that I want to interject. I did yesterday. I will try to contain myself for the following year that I will be here.

HON DARREN WEST (Agricultural — Parliamentary Secretary) [6.12 pm]: I would also like to make a few comments about the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill 2024. I was prompted to do so by the contribution by the shadow Treasurer. I sat here in disbelief and at times mirth at that contribution. All I can say is that I hope there is an alternative to the alternative Treasurer. That would be a disaster for Western Australia.

I have a benefit that previous speakers do not in that I was in this place during the Barnett Liberal–National government years. Hon Dan Caddy was a staffer at that time and was here as well. We had the best seat in the house, if you like, to see how not to financially manage a government. It was fiscal carnage. It was absolutely disastrous.

Hon Kate Doust: That is being polite.

Hon DARREN WEST: I am being polite, member, thank you. This is the Legislative Council. Of course we are polite in here.

It was an absolute debacle. We would sit there in the opposition benches and just shake our heads at the decisions of the government that made no sense and duly delivered deficit after deficit. There was infighting and \$1 billion was being spent annually outside of Treasury processes. What could possibly go wrong? That is what we sat back and watched. We watched the government spend \$300 million on refurbishing coal-fired power stations in Collie to then not use them. We saw around \$800 million spent to transfer year 7s from primary to high school—a decision that has decimated many of our regional communities. It was one of the worst government decisions that I have ever seen that I rallied against.

Hon Peter Collier: No.

Hon DARREN WEST: I did rally hard against it, member. I did! I tabled a petition with 4 000 signatures that was totally ignored by the Barnett government.

That decision offered no educational advantages, decimated our regional communities and was too expensive. That was the kind of decision-making that we sat back and watched in our time in opposition. There were seven Treasurers in seven years at one point. Hon Ben Wyatt, who went on to become Treasurer, coined the phrase “Colin Barnett and the Seven Treasurers.” I think members can get some idea of what a chaotic rabble the then government was at the time. I do not think there is any doubt anywhere that this was the worst financially managed government not only in Western Australian history, but I think you could say in Australian history.

I remember when Western Australia was doing okay early in Colin Barnett's premiership that Tasmania was at the bottom of the table in the State of The States and he said that he would go to assist Tasmania with its financial management when he retired from politics. I am quite sure that he never got a call from the government of Tasmania, because when he left office, Western Australia was ranked eighth in the Commonwealth Bank State of the States. That is where we deserved to be. We were a mess. We had eight deficits and debt from \$3.8 billion to a projection of \$44 billion. The spending was just out of control.

Let us not let the National Party off the hook in this either, because its members were running around like drunken sailors trying to buy votes with taxpayer money—\$1 billion a year. Let us not forget about them. Spending was increasing by 13 per cent a year—the Liberal–National government and its spending increase. Again, what could possibly go wrong? Well, it did go wrong. The iron ore price corrected. As Hon Dr Steve Thomas often reminds us, these booms do not last forever. The iron ore price corrected, and the government floundered.

Then it put assets up for sale. That was the first thing. It was a distressed seller in a depressed market trying to flog off state government assets, such as Western Power. That was its go-to position. It had no mechanism to reverse the carnage that it enforced on the Western Australian taxpayer. There is one thing I will agree with that Hon Neil Thomson said, but it is the only thing: this is taxpayers' money. What we saw between 2008 and 2017 was a government that had no consideration for the fact that this money was taxpayers' money.

It was difficult to sit back and watch, but we did. When we watched this deplorable financial management, we actually learned. As an opposition, we were able to find out what not to do, how not to manage the economy and how we could do things better. Of course, on coming into government, Hon Ben Wyatt became the Treasurer. I think he is the equal best Treasurer in Western Australian history with Hon Eric Ripper. We turned things around. We have run a budget surplus ever since. We are the only state —

Hon Neil Thomson interjected.

Hon DARREN WEST: Member, I am not taking interjections at 6.19 pm. We turned things around. We have now run a surplus in every budget that we have delivered. We are the only state in Australia reducing debt. We kept Western Australians safe, our mining industry going and our economy strong during the COVID pandemic. We are rightfully proud of that. Of course, when the shadow Treasurer gets up and makes the comments that he did earlier, we in government are going to refute everything he says, and, more importantly, so are the taxpayers of Western Australia. They know it. They know who managed their finances better and who federally is managing their finances better. This tired old myth that only the Liberals can manage money has been absolutely busted in the last few years, as the records show.

In a few weeks, the state government will deliver the budget. We are getting a taste of things to come in the 2024–25 budget. For example, the Minister for Emergency Services has allocated over \$70 million to our fire services. There will be extra fires. We know that climate change is changing the way that we manage fire outbreaks. Fires are getting more serious and harder to deal with. They are the sorts of things that are important to us as a government because they are important to the taxpayers of Western Australia. This is a wise spend of taxpayers' money. That is not something we saw during the Barnett Liberal–National government years.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

RIGHTEOUS AMONG THE NATIONS — VAN REEUWIJK FAMILY

Statement

HON KATE DOUST (South Metropolitan) [6.20 pm]: I want to talk tonight about a really significant event I was very fortunate to attend yesterday. I received an invitation from the embassy of Israel to attend an event I was very pleased to represent our Premier at. I attended it with my good friend the member for Mount Lawley, Simon Millman, MLA. It was a ceremony called the Righteous Among the Nations to honour two Western Australians Johan and Adriana Hendrika van Reeuwijk, nee Kragt, for the role they played during the Second World War to protect Jews in their homeland. It is a very privileged acknowledgement of what they did. This ceremony was organised by the Israeli Embassy and Yad Vashem, which is the World Holocaust Remembrance Centre, with the support of both Carmel School and the Holocaust Institute of Western Australia.

This ceremony honouring this couple for their efforts during the war in their homeland was quite significant, given there has been a passage of time of about 80 years. Three generations of the family were present yesterday for them to receive the acknowledgement. I said to the family that I would read to the house their story so we would all be able to share it because it is not a common event for Western Australians to receive this very significant acknowledgement of their role. The rescue story that Johan and Adriana Hendrika van Reeuwijk were involved with was initially around a fellow called Walter Fein. I will read this story through, so members know. It reads —

Walter Fein was born in 1903 in Königsberg, Germany, as Walter Feinstein. He was just developing a successful career as an actor, when in 1933 he was fired due to his Jewish origin. He tried fleeing to Switzerland, but because also here he was threatened with eviction, he fled to Holland in 1934. Here he felt welcome.

In 1940 'neutral' Holland was invaded. Walter Fein started experiencing anti-Jewish laws by the German occupiers. In 1942 Walter Fein performed for the Jews in Westerbork, still unaware of the fate that waited them. But a colleague comedian explained to him that he was part of the Nazi strategy keeping the people happy and calm, so that they would enter the trains to Poland and Germany without making problems. This opened his eyes; when four weeks later he himself got an order to report for Westerbork, he went into hiding instead of obeying. At first, he wanted to flee abroad, but this was not possible. With the help of the resistance he went into hiding. A couple that was active in the resistance arranged him a hiding address and the man accompanied him during the first part of the journey to Beverwijk, in the Dutch province of Noord-Holland.

First, Walter stayed for a couple of weeks at with a family with four children. In the meanwhile, a permanent hiding place was prepared for Walter. When this hiding place was ready, he went to Johan (Jan) van Reeuwijk ... and his wife Adriana Hendrika (Miep) Kragt ... Jan van Reeuwijk was a house painter and the couple had five children; four of them were already married but one daughter was still living at home. Walter Fein slept in a room in the attic. He could never go outside and only once a day, at dinner, he went downstairs to eat with his hosts. He spent the time reading. Once the Germans came to search the house; according to the instructions Walter put the bed linens in a drawer, climbed upon the roof, where he was shaking with fear. He was not discovered. Walter stayed in hiding in Beverwijk for two years and ten months.

When Walter Fein asked Jan and Miep why they had hidden him, they answered: 'Because you need us, Mr. Walter'. They were Dutch patriots and loved their fellow men. Jan van Reeuwijk said to Walter: 'As long as the war continues, are you our guest'.

At the van Reeuwijk family stayed another Jewish hider: Elkan Barend Muller ... a stenography teacher from Amsterdam who was called 'Mr. Jan' by the children. He lived in the same room as Walter Fein.

Weakened due to lack of exercise, Walter Fein went into the streets with the van Reeuwijks to celebrate the liberation in May 1945.

After the war Walter Fein stayed in Holland until the sixties and worked as an actor, but later went back to Germany where he joined a theatre group. He continued visiting the van Reeuwijk family who had become dear friends, bringing presents for the children. Every year Walter Fein sent them a Christmas card. Elkan Barend Muller stayed in contact with the family too; he visited them on their birthdays.

In 1960 Walter Fein's story was written by Fritz Raab as a radio play called 'Attic room', in which he described Walter's hiding time with 'Jan and Miep'. Walter Fein recited the text. It was broadcasted on the German radio. On 7 July 2021 Yad Vashem recognized Johan & Adriana Hendrika van Reeuwijk ... as Righteous Among the Nations.

I just want to acknowledge their role in supporting those individuals. I want to thank their family who attended yesterday, particularly great-granddaughters Karen Cogoli and Jenny Jay, who spoke on behalf of the family, and their mother, who received their certificate on behalf of the family. I acknowledge the ambassador of Israel to Australia, His Excellency Mr Amir Maimon, and the wonderful speech he gave to the audience yesterday.

It takes a lot of courage to be able to step up and not be a bystander in uncertain times. This family that was acknowledged yesterday demonstrated that they were up-standers, not bystanders. The fact that they were prepared to take the risk to protect others in one of the darkest parts of our history is just incredible. It was not just risk to the person in hiding; it was risk to themselves and their families if they had been caught—courage indeed. If they had not been prepared to do that, what would have happened to these individuals? They certainly would not have survived and thrived and continued on with their lives. Yesterday an old Jewish saying was quoted that if you save one life, sometimes you save the world, and the view was that by saving those two individuals, the van Reeuwijks had indeed saved the world. These are challenges that others had to face during probably the most difficult and darkest period of our history. I sometimes wonder if we had to face that again, how many of us would be prepared to take that stand to defend others to the ultimate cost so they can survive and thrive.

I just want to say thank you and to acknowledge the bravery and courage of the van Reeuwijk family. I want to celebrate the fact that they were awarded the highest possible recognition from the Israeli government and Yad Vashem as the Righteous Among the Nations, and well deserved.

BIOLOGICAL SEX AND GENDER IDENTITY

Statement

HON BEN DAWKINS (South West) [6.27 pm]: Today, I believe that a bill was introduced into the lower house. It is the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Amendment (Sex or Gender Changes) Bill. It caused me to reflect on the fact that biological sex is a fact and that it cannot be changed.

Point of Order

Hon KATE DOUST: I have a point of order.

The PRESIDENT: Just before the point of order, honourable member, you are not able in your contribution to allude to debate that is occurring in the other place. That bill is currently being debated in the other place. You may comment broadly on the content. We do not have a standing order in relation to alluding to debate in the other place, and as the bill is not listed on our notice paper yet, my strong advice to you is not to discuss the specific content of the bill but keep your comments to very broad issues in relation to the matter rather than the bill itself.

Hon KATE DOUST: President, you have absolutely satisfied what would have been my point of order.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you. Hon Ben Dawkins.

Statement Resumed

Hon BEN DAWKINS: I will not make any references to that bill other than to say that, from the definitional point of view, what I am about to say may be useful, for reasons that will become apparent later. The Clinical Advisory Network says —

No. Humans cannot change sex, which was determined at fertilization (genotype) and during embryonic development (phenotype). People may change many features about their lives, such as their interests, hobbies, diet, friends or careers.

However, some facts are unalterable. A person's genetic inheritance, their biological sex, is an immutable characteristic. It is possible to change a person's outward appearance, including bodily features. Clothing, make-up and prostheses might be used by some people to modify how they look.

Generally speaking, there are two biological human sexes: males and females. There are exceptions, that being what is described as intersex. Intersex is a biological term that describes people with genetic anomalies. The number of people who fit this biological category is not entirely clear; however, estimates range from 1.7 per cent of the population, to as low as 0.18 per cent of the population.

Tabling of Paper

Hon Dr SALLY TALBOT: President, it is very unclear to me what the member is talking about, but I am wondering whether he is quoting from a document. Could I ask that the document be tabled please?

The PRESIDENT: Hon Ben Dawkins, the member has requested that the document you are reading from be tabled, unless it is extensive personal notes.

Hon BEN DAWKINS: I am very happy to table the document. I have the URL; I do not have the physical document. Maybe the staff can print it off once I get to the URL.

Hon Dr Sally Talbot: You are reading from a document.

Hon BEN DAWKINS: Sorry? That was a quotation that Hon Dr Sally Talbot picked me up on.

The PRESIDENT: It is not clear that that was a quotation. We will ask you to continue your contribution. At the end of the contribution you may wish to provide information for the tabling of that document. As you know, a URL cannot be tabled.

Hon BEN DAWKINS: No problemo.

Statement Resumed

Hon BEN DAWKINS: Thank you, President.

Now that we have addressed intersex people, we can focus on the two biological sexes—male and female. There are some differences between biological males and biological females. According to the US National Institute of Health, males and females differ in bone density. I can table this document if needed. It states —

In summary, despite comparable body size, males have greater BMC and BMD than females at the hip and distal tibia but not at the spine. Differences in BMC and BMD were related to greater cortical thickness in the tibia. We conclude that differences in bone mass and geometry confer greater skeletal integrity in males, which may contribute to the lower incidence of stress and osteoporotic fractures in males.

Another way that biological males and females differ is in brain structure, with males and females being wired differently, which results in men and women having different strengths speaking in general terms.

The last example I will provide is about the heart. The Cardiology Associates of Michigan state —

There are several differences between the size and function of men's and women's hearts. Following are several of the most notable ones.

Size: By ratio, a woman's heart and some of its chambers are smaller.

Density: The walls that divide some of the chambers are thinner, and the veins are finer.

Function: A woman's heart pumps faster than a man's, but a man's heart ejects more blood with each pump.

Stress Reaction: Stress causes a woman's pulse rate to rise, leading to more blood being pumped. For men, arteries constrict, leading to a rise in blood pressure.

There is a document that can be tabled. I have the URL here. Medicine can help someone to mimic the opposite sex, but not completely convert them to it. People can elect to have surgical procedures; however, they are merely cosmetic surgery procedures. Biological sex is important in medicine, otherwise how do we effectively and efficiently treat people? In medicine it matters if someone is male or female. It matters in relation to drug dosage, accurate and timely diagnoses and preventive care. The Singapore-based Clinical Advisory Network states —

It is important for healthcare practitioners to note that while a biological sex change is impossible, legal sex can be changed. Government and healthcare service policies do allow people to change their 'sex marker' or 'gender marker' on official documentation —

Point of Order

Hon Dr SALLY TALBOT: President, I would ask you to consider once again how it could possibly be construed that what Hon Ben Dawkins is trying to talk about does not have a direct reference to something that is happening in the other place. It is so obvious. The entire content of what he is talking about is about what is happening in the other place.

The PRESIDENT: Honourable member, the point of order that you might have been referring to was about allusion to debate in the other place. That no longer stands in our standing orders, but, again, I invite the honourable member—as that bill is yet to be debated in this place, although it does not appear on the notice paper to keep his comments to a broad nature, rather than the specifics of what likely will be contained in the bill. In addition to that, I will also invite the member to table the document from which he is quoting at the conclusion of his speech, as I am hearing that there is a substantial number of quotations. I am assuming what you are currently reading is still a quote. At the end of your contribution, I invite you to table the document from which you are quoting.

Back to Hon Dr Sally Talbot, there is no point of order, though I have invited the member to keep his contributions broad.

Statement Resumed

Hon BEN DAWKINS: Thank you, President.

I know that honourable members to my left like to talk about sport and the Matildas and things so we are getting onto something a bit lighter in my speech. That might satisfy a few people. Biological sex is important in women's sport in terms of safety and fairness in competition. Here are some examples. Some would argue that Serena Williams is the greatest tennis player of all time. When Andy Murray challenged her to a match, she declined, saying —

Because for me, tennis and men's tennis and women's tennis are completely almost two separate sports, so I'm like, if I were to play Andy Murray I would lose 6-0 6-0 in 5 to 6 minutes, maybe ten minutes. It's true; it's a completely different sport. The men are a lot faster, they serve harder, they hit hard. It's just a different game. And I love to play women's tennis, and I only want to play girls because I don't want to be embarrassed. So Andy no, I am not going to let you kill me.

The US national women's soccer team was beaten by an under-15 boys' team, 5–2, in an exhibition match. In the UFC, a transgender fighter called Fallon Fox cracked the skull of a biological female in the first 10 seconds of their fight. Biological sex is important in society, providing safe spaces for women, as well as privacy and dignity. Ancient cultures also recognise that biological sex is a critical fact, as evidenced by secret men's and secret women's business in many Indigenous cultures. People can dress and act however they wish and should be able to live freely, without fear. In some instances, biological sex and the way it helps our society operate is much more important than how an individual feels. Some people suffer from gender dysphoria; they should be treated with empathy and cared for. But there is also an element of social contagion happening here. Impressionable children throughout time have often sought out ways to rebel and seek attention, but the best way to deal with any difficult situation is to be honest and truthful. We need to be clear that one can identify in whatever way one wants, but one cannot change biological facts. Here we are. I am wondering why, when my motion on this same point came before the house, it was so controversial. Some of the more fragile members even were —

Point of Order

Hon PIERRE YANG: I refer to standing order 41, “Reflections on Vote of Council”. The honourable member is clearly referring to the motion previously before the house, I think during the last sitting week, and the member is now making reflections on the vote of the Council.

Hon Ben Dawkins: I didn't.

Hon PIERRE YANG: You did.

Hon Ben Dawkins: I said it became controversial.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! A point of order is not debatable, and we do not need cross-chamber intervention. I am going to seek some advice on this. Just one moment.

When you are ready, honourable member. In the contribution the honourable member made, I did not hear him reflect on the actual vote.

Hon Ben Dawkins: Yes.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Points of order are not debatable; nor is the President's ruling. What I heard was the word “controversial”. The allusion may be controversial in relation to in or out of the chamber. There is no point of order.

Statement Resumed

Hon BEN DAWKINS: Thank you, President. Yes, it was controversial. Some of the more fragile members of the chamber actually seemed to think that —

Withdrawal of Remark

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: I think that this point of order should stand. It is about reflections on other members. Name calling, in which the member has just engaged, is unnecessary and unparliamentary. I ask that he withdraw his remark, and if he refuses to withdraw, President, I ask that you rule on that.

The PRESIDENT: The honourable member is referring to standing orders 43 and 44, under which the member is required to refer to other members by their title, and/or that some members may consider the words used offensive. In this case it is clear that some members have considered the words used offensive, and I invite the member to withdraw those words.

Hon BEN DAWKINS: I will withdraw the word “fragile”, President. Is that okay—withdrawn?

The PRESIDENT: You used a number of other words. I invite you to withdraw all those words.

Hon BEN DAWKINS: I withdraw the offensive words.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you.

Statement Resumed

Hon BEN DAWKINS: It was controversial, and in fact some honourable members said they were disgusted by what was simply a statement of fact. There is a bit here that I will remove because it effectively may have been alluding to something that I am not allowed to allude to. Thank you.

Hon Dan Caddy: You don't need to tell us what you're leaving out.

Hon BEN DAWKINS: Hon Dan Caddy does not need to tell us any of the things he talks about in this chamber, but he does. Perhaps, instead of whining, a couple of weeks ago, people could look at the definitions that I am speaking about today, and it may assist in future debates, particularly where it relates to gender and biological sex.

Point of Order

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I understand that the honourable member is reading. Standing order 36 relates to the reading of a speech. I would ask that you rule on that and ask the honourable member not to be reading his speech today.

The PRESIDENT: The honourable member has been provided with advice in the past regarding the standing order. I also consider that the honourable member is ad-libbing on occasions, but I have noticed substantial referral to extensive notes. On this occasion, I will ask the member to consider that standing order and continue his contribution in as much as possible.

Statement Resumed

Hon BEN DAWKINS: I am almost finished. I am learning and being enlightened so much today, thank you, President, so we do not need to continue for much longer. Actually, I could just keep talking like Hon Dan Caddy, but maybe I will just cut to the chase. Yes, I have a minute. That is what we seem to do—use up time.

Anyhow, again, because of the misinformation that is perpetrated by an incompetent government, our children are left exposed to propaganda that is sending them down a path that is very harmful to these children, and it is potentially doing damage to these children because —

Several members interjected.

Hon BEN DAWKINS: Damage that is irreparable. An incompetent government is unable to get the terminology right and accept fact.

Several members interjected.

Hon BEN DAWKINS: It is unable to accept fact. Maybe if the government wants to be competent, it could make a distinction between gender, for which people adopt traits, and biological sex, which is immutable.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Honourable member, I invite you to table the document as discussed. I invite you to stand and table the document.

Hon BEN DAWKINS: I seek leave to table the document, President.

The PRESIDENT: You do not need to seek leave. That document is tabled.

[See paper [3080](#).]

LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY*Statement*

HON DR BRAD PETTITT (South Metropolitan) [6.47 pm]: I will try to leave time for my colleagues to also respond.

I was already going to give a speech on this topic. I would ask Hon Ben Dawkins to stay and listen to some of the stories that I am going to tell today, because these are stories —

Several members interjected.

Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT: In fact, I do say “shame on you” for not listening!

The PRESIDENT: Order, member!

Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT: Thank you. I am disappointed. I am going to read three stories tonight from people in this space on the very topic that Hon Ben Dawkins was talking about. I think we should all be very disappointed that he is not respectful enough or willing to learn from the real-life experience of these people. It is deeply disappointing when people are willing to frankly rant incoherently and not actually listen. These are real people with real lives. If the member really cared about people, he would listen. The last part of his speech was about damage done to children and people. I think we need to remind ourselves of the damage that is done in this space by those kinds of comments. I will leave it at that. I cannot not respond.

I had already prepared something to speak on this topic well before the member's speech; in fact, even before the announcement yesterday by the Premier and the Attorney General to remove some of the barriers for the LGBTQIA+ community and to abolish the Gender Reassignment Board. It has been 484 days since the Labor government first committed to do that. I am pleased we now have that announcement, and I look forward to seeing that bill here so that we can talk about it in more detail. I acknowledge that many in the LGBTQIA+ community have been campaigning for the abolishment of this board. That deserves to be celebrated, and I acknowledge their hard work in that space.

I also want to acknowledge that some have been disappointed and, I think, rightfully so because they wanted to see some other key bits. A couple of things are worth talking about here. I want to acknowledge the work of Rainbow Futures WA and TransFolk of WA, which have done some really good work in this space and were really keen to see what they hoped would have been a stronger focus on self-identification. I will leave that to a debate down the track, but that is certainly worth acknowledging.

I also think they share disappointment that the broader reforms to the Equal Opportunity Act and the like will not be seen during this government's time, because in its media statement the government said that these will be introduced in 2025 under a re-elected Cook government. I want to say that I share their disappointment. We have a strong progressive majority in this house, and it would have been very good to use that because there is a real danger that after the next election, as Hon Ben Dawkins said, we may not have that majority in this house to pass some key elements that need to be done, such as banning conversion practices and reforming the Equal Opportunity Act. I want to put that on the record.

The initial thing that I wanted to do was read three stories from members of our community, as I have been doing over the last few weeks and months. Today's stories are from Crystal, Daisy and Connor, and I thank each of them for sharing their stories. I also want to acknowledge Daisy, who is in the public gallery this evening; thank you for joining us.

The first story that I will share is from Crystal Shaw. I will be reading these because they are people's stories. Crystal writes —

I live my life as a woman, my family know me as a woman, my friends know me as a woman, every person I interact with knows me as a woman. I've transitioned medically, socially and legally, having my passport's gender marker changed. However, changing my gender ... on my birth certificate isn't something I have done yet. I've considered going through the process of the gender reassignment board but ultimately every time I think of it, all I can think of is how dehumanizing it is to have to prove myself with myriads of documents for something that I and every other person in my life already know to be true. The process of having to present myself to people I've never met and will never meet again to prove myself to be "woman" enough, not even by my own word and presentation but off of people I know is an utterly humiliating experience that I don't want to go through. The other women in my life didn't have to prove themselves like this and yet I have to go through this process if I want my birth certificate to reflect myself. If the legislature changed, I would change the gender ... on my birth certificate in a heartbeat, though, ... that doesn't seem to be happening anytime soon much to my dismay.

As I said, these stories were written before yesterday's announcement, but I want to thank Crystal for sharing that. Daisy, who is with us tonight, also shared her story, which goes like this —

I am Daisy, pronouns are she/her, and I am an online political satirist and civil rights activist. While I'm a woman, my birth certificate still describes me as male even after a legal name change. The requirements for the gender change have been hard on me as I have trouble getting letters of support from people who know me as most of my friends are online and not even Australian and my family isn't very supportive. The effects of the inability to have my gender corrected really hurt deep as I always read my pill boxes refer me as Mr despite my preferred name being there and I'm even prohibited from going to the ladies' bathroom at my own workplace. The lack of gender recognition also leaves me with a lack of protection from discrimination and I get lots of it. I've been stalked, verbally and sexually harassed, threatened with death, told to kill myself and accused wrongly and with no evidence of child molestation and violence against women all because of my identity. My own mother even told me I shouldn't be in women's spaces. I am certain that I am not alone in this even if it feels like I am sometimes and as we're all still hurting from the tragic death of Nex Benedict in Oklahoma, it's quite clear that there needs to be changes in how people like me are treated. The longer the wait, the more scared I become that something might happen to me. I worry that even when I get all the documents I need, the board might still reject or not even take up my case after hearing about the resignations. Something like this shouldn't be hard. I know who I am so why can't the law just listen to me when I say I'm my authentic self?

Thank you for that, Daisy. The last story is from Connor White, who says —

I have known I am a transgender woman for a good half decade, been seeking professional aid for about fifteen months, medically transitioning for almost four months, and as of very recently, I am out to everyone

in my personal and professional circles. With all this time and determination spent in asserting my identity to myself and others, I still fear it wouldn't be enough for the gender recognition board. Navigating legal documents is already considered a headache of red tape by the most privileged citizens of Western Australia, but even the most interrogative of procedures in Centerlink cannot compare to the mere idea of "selling" myself as a woman to a nameless board of supervisors, which can only seem superfluous in the face of several medical professionals acknowledging my gender, and all of my friends, family and colleagues accepting me just on my word.

This is to say nothing of the Board's current stagnation with its numerous "stop and start" controversies, which can only appear as an indication that it has outlived its usefulness. Logically, a reform to a gender recognition process akin to a informed consent model would give it greater parity with other bureaucratic processes. But speaking from the heart, the current model has caused no end of stress for me and many friends of mine. A change in the process would soothe hearts, mend minds, and save lives.

All these stories were written before the announcement yesterday, and I thank all three of these people for sharing their stories with me. I think it highlights a couple of things that I want to say in the last few seconds. One thing is the importance of these stories and the importance of the changes before us. We need a process in which we listen and care, and we need to not just speak on behalf of others, as we saw before us in the chamber tonight.

Statement

HON PETER FOSTER (Mining and Pastoral) [6.56 pm]: I was not intending to get up and make a members' statement tonight, but after listening to Hon Ben Dawkins' contribution—if we should call it that—I feel compelled to make a few brief comments, noting that we have a very limited time on the clock.

I want to acknowledge Hon Dr Brad Pettitt for his remarks, for his advocacy and for the stories he has shared. I also want to acknowledge Rainbow Futures WA, TransFolk of WA, Equal Voices, Living Proud and Equality Australia because I know that they have contributed to the processes that are underway. The Cook Labor government is committed to law reform to improve the lives of the LGBTQIA+ community.

I think it is really interesting that Hon Ben Dawkins' only contribution in Parliament this week has been about biological sex. I feel that it is a little bit like groundhog day because, when there was a motion earlier, those remarks were made by me as well. In his contribution, he talked about some URLs—I assume he meant websites—which he used as evidence and was quoting from. I look forward to looking at those websites and those URLs. As we know, people can post anything they want on social media, and people will quote that social media and use it everywhere.

I stand proudly with the LGBTQIA+ community. I stand proudly with the trans and gender-diverse community. I always will. I am a member of that community. I am proud to be a member of the Labor Party in which trans and gender-diverse people are welcomed as members of our party. They regularly get up and speak up on behalf of their community, and I am proud that they are members of our party.

I find the comments Hon Ben Dawkins made about social contagion quite offensive. I will have more to say about that at another stage. I found his contribution today to be disgusting, abhorrent and harmful. He talks about being harmful to children, but his comments are actually harmful to members of our community. There are countless stories of members of our community who have been bashed, have had their lives taken or have taken their own lives due to the vile abuse they suffer in our community. I strongly encourage Hon Ben Dawkins to reflect on his comments because they are quite hurtful. As I said, I will have more to say about his members' statement when I have had a chance to look it over. Thank you.

House adjourned at 6.59 pm

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Questions and answers are as supplied to Hansard.

SOCIAL HOUSING — WAITLIST**1931. Hon Steve Martin to the minister representing the Minister for Housing:**

I refer to the social housing waitlist, and I ask:

- (a) what is the total number of social housing stock as at 29 February 2024; and
- (b) what was the total number of social housing stock as at March 2017?

Hon Jackie Jarvis replied:

- (a)–(b) There is no joint social housing waitlist, the Member is mistaken. The State Government operates a public housing waitlist, while some Community Housing Providers may independently choose to maintain their own waitlist process.

The Cook Government has inherited significantly ageing and derelict stock from the former Liberal–National Government, including Brownlie Towers, where there was more than 160 derelict apartments counting to overall housing stock.

As at date:	Total Social Housing Stock
30 June 2017	44,087*
31 March 2024	44,201

* This figure includes significant uninhabitable stock such as 160 apartments in Brownlie Towers

As advised in previous responses, there have been counting changes within Communities since 2018 which affects the comparability of historical data.

