

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 October 2020]

p6656e-6708a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

**APPROPRIATION (RECURRENT 2020–21) BILL 2020**  
**APPROPRIATION (CAPITAL 2020–21) BILL 2020**

*Declaration as Urgent*

On motion by **Mr B.S. Wyatt (Treasurer)**, resolved —

That in accordance with standing order 168(2), the Appropriation (Recurrent 2020–21) Bill 2020 and the Appropriation (Capital 2020–21) Bill 2020 be considered urgent bills.

*Cognate Debate*

Leave granted for the Appropriation (Recurrent 2020–21) Bill 2020 and the Appropriation (Capital 2020–21) Bill 2020 to be considered cognately, and for the Appropriation (Recurrent 2020–21) Bill 2020 to be the principal bill.

*Second Reading — Cognate Debate*

Resumed from 8 October.

**MR D.C. NALDER (Bateman)** [3.17 pm]: I stand to respond to the 2020–21 state budget—the Appropriation (Recurrent 2020–21) Bill 2020 and the Appropriation (Capital 2020–21) Bill 2020. It is my job to provide an objective perspective on the finances and not simply parrot the public relations spin of the McGowan government. It seems like *deja vu* as I stand for another year disappointed in the lack of transparency and the heavy politicisation of this budget. In summary, this is a weak, insipid and lazy budget from the McGowan Labor government that lacks a clear, strong economic plan to create local jobs for more than 100 000 unemployed Western Australians. The government has been lucky with the windfall iron ore and GST gains, sneaky with the manipulation of financial data to manufacture surplus outcomes, and it has failed to prepare Western Australia for its economic future. We are in extraordinary times and Western Australia deserved an extraordinary budget, and this is not that. It is a business-as-usual, uninspiring budget with very little that was not already announced.

Nearly four years in, this government has run out of ideas. After increasing household charges by \$850 a year, the government has belatedly returned only \$600 to households but has done nothing to reduce ongoing household costs nor to support small business during a period of real need in our community. Mark McGowan went to the last election with his main platform being his plan for jobs; yet in this budget, there is no jobs target and no plan to grow the economy, while unemployment is forecast to average a very concerning eight per cent over the coming year. By the end of the forward estimates, at six per cent, it is still significantly higher than pre-COVID levels of 5.2 per cent in February 2020. The McGowan government has failed our economy. It has missed an opportunity to pivot the economy away from its heavy reliance on the mining sector and to diversify in areas such as agriculture, aquaculture, innovation and high-tech manufacturing. Where is the plan to diversify the economy that the Premier was so vocal about in opposition? The government has missed an opportunity to strengthen our supply chains and make Western Australia more self-reliant and self-sufficient in the areas of critical minerals, defence, space, medicine, personal protective equipment et cetera. The government has missed an opportunity to undertake economic and taxation reform for the long-term interests of Western Australia's prosperity. Rather, we see pork-barrelling with projects in marginal seats ahead of the election. The government has missed an opportunity to attract business investment to WA to sustainably grow jobs and our economy. The government has failed to address the high cost of energy; instead it is simply trying to appease voters in front of an election with a short-term, election driven sugar hit. The government has failed to deal with the crisis of record-level ambulance ramping and has also removed the budget for the promised redevelopment of King Edward Memorial Hospital. Unfortunately, this budget will impact on Western Australia's future for years to come and will be remembered as a missed opportunity.

The government has claimed that it has made a record infrastructure blitz with a \$27 billion capital works program. However, the reality is the 2008–09 budget committed far more in today's dollars following the global financial crisis when WA was a smaller economy. There is a significant divergence between the McGowan government's spin on the Western Australian economy and the data. Although the state government is claiming a budget surplus of \$1.2 billion this financial year, significant factors are driving that outcome that require highlighting: the manipulation of \$921 million in deferred dividends from last financial year to this year from public corporations such as the Water Corporation; the \$665 million from the Bell Group settlement that is funding the \$640 million Synergy and Horizon election sweetener; the 90 per cent higher or \$3.5 billion more per annum iron ore royalties this financial year compared with the average during the Barnett government's so-called mining boom years; and the commonwealth-funded GST floor top-up of \$1.457 billion this year, delivering more than the budget surplus in its own right. I believe that the Premier should be waking up every morning and saying a little prayer of thanks to the federal Liberal–National coalition.

This proves that it is not good financial management; rather, it has been good luck and manipulation of the financial accounts that has delivered a questionable budget surplus that should be of serious concern to all financial observers.

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 October 2020]

p6656e-6708a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

Although the budget is in surplus, there are a number of concerning factors, such as the government's lack of transparency around the specific costings of Metronet. We have seen a dramatic increase in funding for Metronet and specific provisions for projects under development have grown by \$880 million this year, which appears to be a cost blowout. However, there has been a lack of transparency through the government deliberately not providing specific details about individual Metronet projects. Therefore, we cannot see what the overall cost of Metronet will be and what level of operating subsidy taxpayers will have to contribute. It has become apparent that the McGowan government has failed to deliver on its major election commitment with time lines and costs blowing out on major Metronet projects.

Meanwhile, the level of state government COVID-related support still raises questions. The government committed \$5.5 billion to a COVID recovery plan and detailed the specific initiatives on page 27, of budget paper No 3. However, when we look closer at major changes in spending, under every agency, commencing on page 89 of budget paper No 3, we find that all the lines are titled "WA Recovery Plan and Other COVID-19 Related Spending" totalling \$4.1 billion and the only line items to lack commentary or any description. Why the secrecy? Is the \$4.1 billion part of the \$5.5 billion, or something totally separate? The lack of transparency is totally unacceptable.

A spotlight needs to be put on the burgeoning public sector under the McGowan government. Despite the government's election commitment to remove 3 000 full-time equivalent public sector employees, under a \$300 million redundancy program, this budget reveals that there has been a jump in the number of public sector employees from 113 387 in 2017 to 121 824 this year, an increase of 8 437 FTE. The real increase, when taking the redundancy into consideration, is 11 437 people, or FTE, during the McGowan government's term. Although the government promotes salary growth restraint; in fact, the total wage bill has grown eight per cent to \$14.192 billion or 43 per cent of the state's total expenses. We need our jobs growth in the private sector, not the public sector.

I now wish to examine the points I have raised in greater detail. Firstly, I will examine the budget surplus. It is a surplus; however, it is a politically manufactured result rather than one honestly reflecting our state's position. The government has been lucky with the GST. The federal government GST top-up this year of \$1.457 billion is greater than the budget surplus, but next year, it is scheduled to be \$1.849 billion with an operating surplus of just over \$360 million. In 2020–21, the share of GST has fallen to 45 per cent, primarily as a result of the increasing iron ore royalties, and in 2021–22 it drops further to 40.6 per cent. The floor put in place by the federal Liberal–National coalition has underpinned the financial security of Western Australia through these GST top-ups.

With iron ore, the state government has been lucky. Western Australia's reliance on iron ore has reached an unprecedented level. Last financial year, 26 per cent of WA's revenue was from mining royalties, compared with 15 per cent four years earlier. Four years earlier, the then opposition leader, now Premier, claimed there was a need for Western Australia to undertake a program to diversify our economy to remove future economic risks due to Western Australia being so reliant on the mining sector; yet, in that time, our share of mining royalties as a percentage of total revenue has grown from 15 per cent to 26 per cent. But what is of further interest to people is that during the four years of the McGowan government, it has averaged \$6.2 billion a year from iron ore royalties versus \$3.85 billion a year under the Barnett government mining boom.

I would like to share with the house a little chart that highlights the extent that the iron ore royalties underpin the state finances in Western Australia. It is fascinating that, on average, this government has received \$2.375 billion of additional iron ore royalties per annum over the four-year term of the McGowan government compared with the average over the eight years of the former Barnett government. Also fascinating is that with the capacity built into the state's economy we are now at 836 million tonnes of iron ore and growing, with the budget indicating that for every dollar per annum the price of iron ore stays up, it is worth an extra \$83 million a year to the budget bottom line. One cent change in the exchange rate is worth \$120 million. It is fascinating that the budget has forecast an average price for iron ore of just over \$96, yet at this point we are averaging \$US114, significantly higher than the budget forecast three and a half months into this financial year. Therefore, there is potentially a tremendous upside.

I support the need to retain conservative forward estimates on iron ore prices. However, it highlights the fragility of our budget situation. It is fascinating also that although there is upside on that, there is also upside on the exchange rate. The exchange rate in Western Australia is driven potentially by what happens in the mining sector. Although the government has forecast the fall, it has not forecast any change in the exchange rate, moving forward. Although there may be potentially upside in the iron ore price, there is also potentially upside in the exchange rate. I think the government has been lucky with the GST and the price of iron ore.

I turn to where I believe the McGowan government has been sneaky—its manipulation of the data. There is no justification for the deferral of dividends from public corporations. The step last year to defer \$921 million in dividend payments to be paid this year has greatly distorted the financial outcomes for the state. The annual report on the state's finances that was released last month reinforced and highlighted this specific event. We have heard no explanation

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 October 2020]

p6656e-6708a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

from the Treasurer about the basis of why the government would defer them other than to create a picture that the budget surplus last year was not as big as what it actually was or for this year to create a budget surplus that would be greatly diminished had that \$921 million not been deferred. Deferral of the dividends was a budget fiddle. There is no justification for making that decision. Of further interest—I have raised this with the Treasurer in the past—is the continued exploitation of provisions in the budget. There is a recurrent provisioning underspend and sometimes it is confusing about when it is up and when it is down. There was a \$300 million credit for the last financial year, \$250 million this year and \$50 million next year as a debit. Again, we see further manipulation in the accounts. I know that that can sometimes be argued away as something that has always occurred in budgets but it highlights, particularly with the recurrent spend, that at times that can be used as a source to undermine the true financial position of the state.

The next point I make is about the Bell Group settlement. I consider that the government has been lucky with this because, finally, funds have come back after a pretty dark and sorry time in Labor's past with what occurred during WA Inc. Eventually, the money has come back and it really is the people's money. But it has been fascinating to see the government allocate it in a pre-election pledge, which is really a sugar hit at a time when people need support. I do not begrudge the people who require support receiving that support. However, the opposition believes that the money could have been better targeted and that further consideration should have been given to longer term household costs instead of a one-off payment. Come February and March, people will be back to the full increases that the government initiated in the first two years of this term. It has not fixed the underlying problems.

I will raise a few issues about Metronet. I refer to page 137 of the *Budget Statements*. Unlike previous years, the government has left out the prior year's financial data. When I look at that and at last year's papers on Metronet, the only justification that I can find is the government's further secrecy about the true total cost of Metronet. The Minister for Transport said how much was in the budget in the forward years, but she has not said the total amount for Metronet. We know that all these projects are being delayed. Although the government wants to claim the Forrestfield–Airport Link as its own project, it is actually completing a project that was initiated by the former government. It is fascinating to hear the transport minister's claim because by the end of this term, the government will not have delivered one metre of additional rail in its massive Metronet program, and that is a broken promise. It is a broken promise and the government has failed to be transparent about it. It continues to hide the true financial costs of these projects. There is no excuse for the government not to provide the specific details. They are large major infrastructure projects in their own right and they should be listed with specific financial data in the budget. It is inappropriate. It is secrecy, manipulation and sneakiness by the McGowan government. It is not acceptable and we should not accept it.

We have seen a very large increase in the provisions for projects under development. We now have \$1.9 billion listed for projects under development, an increase of \$880 million. They have been brought forward a year but we cannot see what has or has not been spent in the past. It is now \$880 million more than what it was in the previous year, yet there is no specific detail about what those projects are. I heard the Treasurer on 6PR trying to explain that there are new projects but the projects he listed are specifically listed in the budget—grade separations and level crossings, what is happening on Denny Avenue in Victoria Park and so forth. They are all specifically listed. But the provision for projects under development is rapidly growing and the overall cost of Metronet appears to be blowing out. There is a lack of transparency because nobody can look at it specifically to determine exactly what is being spent and where. That is totally unacceptable for such a large investment of infrastructure dollars by the Western Australian people. There should be greater transparency. After he came to government, the Premier promised gold-plated transparency but this is a failure of transparency.

Moving on, I turn to the issue of public sector full-time equivalents. Metronet comes into this FTE issue. We have seen a dramatic increase from 113 387 FTEs to 121 824 FTEs this financial year, which is a net increase of 8 437. We know that the government had a 3 000 FTE redundancy program that cost \$300 million. It has put back on 11 437 FTEs. It is fascinating to consider where they have gone. Some of them have gone to the Public Transport Authority. Its number of FTEs has gone from 1 601 to 1 963, which is an increase of 362 FTEs in the PTA at a time when patronage on buses and trains has been falling and no additional services have been created. It is my understanding—if my memory serves me correctly—that a lot of this was to do with the delivery of Metronet projects. The Treasurer told us that a new group of people will be responsible for delivering the infrastructure spend when a large component of the infrastructure spend for the state government is in the PTA. I take it that given the delays on these projects and the cost blowouts, the Premier has lost confidence in the Minister for Transport and has decided to create his own department to ensure the delivery of these infrastructure projects that the transport minister cannot deliver. The transport minister has not delivered anything. I look at Labor's election commitments from four years ago and how much extra money has come in from iron ore royalties and how much is going through the accounts, yet we have these tiny little surpluses and I cannot see the delivery of these projects. I understand why the government is creating a new unit to deliver on infrastructure projects. It is because the unit that was created

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 October 2020]

p6656e-6708a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

under the transport minister has failed. There is no question that the Premier has lost confidence in the transport minister. I really look forward to seeing what this Premier does should he be successful in the March election. We will take it right up to them. I look forward to seeing how he deals with the ministers who have failed to deliver anything. These are serious broken promises by the government because it has not delivered on one. It has not been a money issue because we have seen the GST fix and how many billions that is bringing in. We have seen how many additional billions of dollars that iron ore royalties are bringing in. There is no excuse from a financial perspective; rather, it is more about the implementation and delivery of the infrastructure that is run and administered by the ministers and their departments. This transport minister has failed.

I talked earlier at a high level about the need to diversify our economy, which was another Labor election commitment in 2017. Labor said that the reliance on the mining sector was too great and it made a special election pledge to diversify our economy. The Premier made international students one of its pledges. Yes, there are challenges with international students because of COVID-19. However, the Premier destroyed the intake of international students before COVID-19. When the Premier instituted the change in the regional migration status of the City of Perth, he implemented a politically convenient policy that was all about protecting the jobs of our local kids from overseas people. We need look only at the ABS statistics to find that that did not change one iota the number of people who immigrated to Western Australia. However, it did change the number of overseas students who chose to study in Perth rather than in Adelaide and Tasmania. This state's market share of international students has dropped two per cent from 7.5 per cent to 5.5 per cent over a couple of years. That industry is the fourth largest in Australia, and, in the year before last, it contributed \$37.5 billion to the national economy. That two per cent fall was the equivalent of stripping \$750 million a year out of our domestic economy.

What does the government plan to do to pick up the economy of this state? Nothing in this budget describes what the government is thinking long-term. We can see that in the unemployment numbers. The government has forecast that in the next 12 months, unemployment will grow from the current seven per cent to an average of eight per cent a year. That should be of concern to everybody. By the end of four years, the unemployment rate will still be at six per cent. It was sitting at 5.2 per cent in February of this year. This budget will not even get the unemployment rate back to pre-COVID-19 levels. The problem is that this government has no economic plan.

It is fascinating that a lot of the spiel about this budget is that the hard border is delivering for the economy of Western Australia. One of the arguments that was put by the McGowan Labor government was that we do not want to have a second wave of coronavirus. Let us be honest. Nobody wants that. We all want to keep Western Australians safe. The government has said that if this state gets COVID again, it will cost our economy \$5.6 billion, and we will lose 30 000 jobs. If the government had done a proper analysis and taken an objective view, it would have also provided an analysis of the impact on the economy of the COVID restrictions. Up until 21 April, the impact of the COVID restrictions was about \$3 billion from domestic tourism and about \$2 billion from international tourism. Although this state's share of international students has been reduced to 5.5 per cent, that is still worth \$2 billion to our domestic economy. If we do not have those international students, that is another \$2 billion gone.

I am not saying we should open the border *carte blanche*. However, we need to have greater transparency and consistency from this government. This government has been able to find a process to enable the Australian Football League to bring people into this state and at the same time keep Western Australians safe. I love footy. However, the government has not attempted to find a process by which to bring people into this state for fruit picking and harvest and at the same time keep Western Australians safe. That is where this government has failed. The concern of the opposition, whether it be the Liberal Party or the National Party, is that this government has failed other industries. The Labor Party made an election pledge to diversify this state's economy. The government is not making any attempt to support alternative industries. The government has been working with the mining sector to develop safe processes. I applaud that. We want that to happen. We want the mining sector to continue to grow and prosper. I am not saying we should diversify at the expense of mining. We want to extract as much as we can out of the mining sector. However, if we do not pivot our economy away from the mining sector, we are setting ourselves up for future economic shock. Last week, the Treasurer reminded me in this chamber that the current commodity prices are not sustainable and will go down. Therefore, if the Treasurer wants to reinforce his own position around pricing, we must diversify and broaden our economy and work with the other industries to enable them to prosper. Lettuces are being ploughed back into the ground and strawberries are being left in the paddock. Farmers in the wheatbelt are unable to get people to drive trucks and headers. Across Australia, we should have better processes to support our other industries, while at the same time keeping Western Australians safe. That has not happened. On the one hand, such as for the AFL, the government has developed processes, but, on the other hand, it is too bad. The government is resting on its laurels and riding on its windfall gains from iron ore royalties. What the Liberal Party in WA finds galling is this government's inconsistent approach to industries other than those in the mining sector.

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 October 2020]

p6656e-6708a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

I touched in my opening comments on the government's claim that it has made a record asset investment spend. This is where I talk about political spin. In 2008–09, following the global financial crisis, the then state government made a \$26.14 billion commitment. The economic impost of COVID on the Western Australian economy is considered to be much larger than that of the GFC. The commitment of this government is \$27.1 billion over the next four years. The government claims that is a record spend. However, when we look into the future and take into consideration the increased cost of funds and the consumer price index, the value of that \$26.14 billion will grow to over \$31 billion in today's dollar terms. Therefore, in one of the greatest economic shocks this state has ever found itself in, the funding commitment from this state government is less in real dollar terms than what a former state government committed following the GFC, which was considered to have had a lesser impact on the Western Australian economy than this pandemic. I want to put that in perspective. I do not want people to automatically assume that this government is being honest when it says that this is a record investment spend.

I move now to COVID spending. As someone who has come out of the banking industry, when I see numbers that look to be too well rounded, it raises a red flag. When I explored the budget spending of the government, particularly the increases in both operating expenditure and capital expenditure since the 2019–20 midyear review, I found that a number of line items have been tagged as COVID spending. I therefore did the strange and boring thing of adding up those numbers, because I wanted to understand them. It is fascinating that for the increased spend in both the opex and the capex, there is a description for every line item, except for the COVID spending. There are 31 line items under the operating expenditure, and 30 under the capital expenditure, and they are listed just as COVID spending, with no specific description of what that is. That is the case for pretty much every department. Again, this government has failed a basic transparency test. Why the secrecy? What is the government hiding? I will tell members what I found, and it might just be a coincidence, but when I tallied the funds for opex and capex, they were exactly the same, namely 2.7 billion of opex for COVID spending, and \$2.7 billion of capex for COVID spending.

The government trumpets a \$5.5 billion spend, but I do not know whether that \$4.14 billion is part of the \$5.5 billion or is something totally separate. Is it the government's slush fund for future spending on an election? There is no transparency for me to account for this \$4.14 billion. I will be precise. When I said it, I came down to the nearest million dollars of being precise, but if I actually have a look, I can see that the operating expenditure was \$2.73 billion and one was \$2.76 billion. To be so close raises for me, from an audit perspective, the issue of what this is about. We in banking circles would say that this has been deliberately staged. I think this requires further explanation. When we talk about 30 and 31 line items over four years, we are talking about 240 different transactions with exactly the same amount of money in capex and opex. From a prudent governance perspective, this needs an explanation from the government.

In this budget, I felt for small businesses. The majority of small businesses do not pay payroll tax. There has been no benefit given back to them and we are the only state in Australia that has not done that. The financial strength of Western Australia is a result of the booming mining sector and this government is the only state government in Australia not to provide grants of up to \$10 000 for businesses that are struggling because of the pandemic. To me, that is heartless of this government.

There is nothing further in the budget to say how the government is going to stimulate business. We know that because of JobKeeper and JobSeeker and the fact that some people are spending up at the moment, some small businesses are doing well, but they still express concern to me. I see that people are selling second-hand LandCruisers for \$10 000 to \$15 000 more than what they were being sold for before the pandemic, and we know that the vehicle licence duty will increase. Small businesses are finding it harder to find stock and supplies and it is more expensive. Small businesses are worried about the sustainability of their current earnings and the increased costs that consumers will have to bear because of the challenges around those supply lines. I do not see any acknowledgement from the government of the challenges that businesses could potentially face moving forward.

I would like to briefly touch on the government's focus. To me, this budget has been focused on the short term as opposed to the long-term economic prosperity for all Western Australians. One example of that is the housing market, for which I see another red flag. The state government has provided stimulus to the housing construction sector, which was on its knees and needed support. But the fact that the stimulus has gone to new builds and not to existing houses is not balanced and I am worried it will distort the market. Another thing that I am concerned about is that when we do not have sustainable population growth, the increased activity is generally future demand being brought forward. The concern we then have is: what happens when that stimulus stops? The budget will show that in a couple of years dwelling investment will potentially fall off a cliff. Therefore, although I believe it was important to do something for the housing construction sector, I believe that the model that the state government has installed will cause greater damage out the other side than the benefit created on the way through. If that happens, it will show a 13.5 per cent growth and in two years a 17 per cent contraction from a much larger base. That in itself is a concern.

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 October 2020]

p6656e-6708a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

Another example of this short-term focus is the \$600 Synergy or Horizon credit. There are people who are desperate. Under this government, with the increases in electricity costs that it instituted in its first two years, the number of people having their electricity disconnected doubled from 10 000 a year to over 20 000 a year. People and households have been struggling. Mortgage stress has gone up. As much as the Treasurer wants to call it a blog site or whatever he wants to call it, we know that the number of struggling households has increased and we can see that in just the utility disconnections. To disregard that or to provide a \$600 one-off credit is great for getting through Christmas time, but following the election, the government will have the same problem with these people not being able to pay their bills, particularly when the government is talking about the average unemployment rate climbing from seven per cent to eight per cent over the next 12 months. Unfortunately, this government is not taking a medium to long-term approach in how it will tackle the increasing cost of electricity in Western Australia.

In this budget, the subsidy for Synergy is increasing such that the increase in price required to achieve cost reflectivity has gone up by nearly 50 per cent, from five per cent to 7.5 per cent. Yesterday and last week, the current Minister for Energy was out there spruiking renewable energy and batteries and so forth. I believe that batteries are needed, but I see no effort, acknowledgement or a glide path to lower electricity costs for Western Australians. We now have the second-highest electricity costs in Australia, behind only South Australia, yet the cost base of Synergy is going up and therefore the subsidies by taxpayers to Synergy is increasing. We are the only state in Australia that is subsidising a state-owned utility. This government is not thinking about the long-term impacts on the cost of living and household charges.

My concern around infrastructure projects is similar in the sense that infrastructure projects must focus on increased productivity beyond the completion of the project. If we end up focusing too much on maintenance and short-term social benefits at the expense of improved productivity and we do not have that balance right, again, when the infrastructure spending comes off, we will have the problem that we had before the increased spending. We will not have laid the foundations for future economic growth.

In summary, the McGowan government has been lucky with the revenue gains in this budget. It has been sneaky with the manipulation of financial data projecting financial surpluses and it has failed to prepare for the economic future of Western Australia.

**MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt — Leader of the Nationals WA)** [3.56 pm]: I rise to speak on the Appropriation (Recurrent 2020–21) Bill 2020 and the Appropriation (Capital 2020–21) Bill 2020. My colleagues and I in the Nationals WA had high hopes for this budget. It was an opportunity for the government to recognise the damage caused to and the neglect of regional Western Australians by previous budgets. It was an opportunity to think long term. It was an opportunity to invest and plan for the growth of our state beyond the pandemic, and, sadly, it is an opportunity lost.

This Labor government has done nothing to persuade me or my colleagues that it is governing for all Western Australians with the budget it has brought down. It cements the fact for us that there is no vision for regional WA and it reveals the government's true colours, which is very much a singular focus on metropolitan Perth and delivering projects where a majority of the people in this great state live. If ever there were an opportunity for us to make use of those record royalties, to reimagine and reboot our state economy, this was it. But, sadly, we see none of it.

COVID-19 has thrown our world into disarray. It has challenged everyone in our community—absolutely everyone. For the Premier, the Chief Health Officer and our WA Commissioner of Police, it has been a monumental task. We owe a debt of gratitude to all the frontline workers in the health, aged care and emergency services, the first responders, the WA Police Force, the educators, the carers and the people who kept our supermarket shelves stocked. We must thank the farmers and food producers who have worked tirelessly through the pandemic, experiencing workforce shortages and logistical challenges. We also need to pay a debt of gratitude to the local governments and the myriad community groups that stepped up and worked hard to make sure as few people as possible fell through the gaps as we went through the height of the restrictions and came out the other side in a new world. We congratulate the businesses that could pivot and adapt, and there have been many, for their ingenuity and persistence. But for those households and businesses that continue to struggle, we are doing our very best, from an opposition perspective, to bring those struggles to the government's attention.

The government's task should be to shape a budget that drives us out of this pandemic. It should harness the appetite for innovation and adaptability that we saw during the height of the pandemic. The government should be an agent of change but, sadly, that has not been the case.

I want to take a step back and talk a little from our perspective about how the world changed in March and what the priorities of the Nationals WA were throughout the pandemic. Our priority was very much to ensure that the regions were included in both the state and the federal government's response to the pandemic. When the crisis first struck, our number one focus, as it was for governments everywhere, was whether our health services were prepared and

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 October 2020]

p6656e-6708a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

fully resourced with personnel and the appropriate equipment, and that the logistical challenges that we would face from a regional perspective were being taken into account. Although, from a national perspective, our remoteness and distance might be vital to keeping COVID at bay, from a health perspective, it is always going to be the biggest challenge if we do have an outbreak. I truly hope that we are never tested, but I have grave fears that we will be. The Port Hedland experience, in isolation, is manageable and they are doing a remarkable job, but I am not convinced that that would be the case if we had more than one event at the same time. It would put extraordinary pressure on our health services, particularly from a regional perspective. Every day, as the pandemic and the crisis unfolded, new issues impacted our regions, such as the viability of childcare services, stretched grocery supply chains, the management of volunteer emergency workers, stranded backpackers and travellers, export markets for high-value produce that were looking at continuing to operate, the failure of airlines and the impact that had on businesses, regional patients who required medical treatment, and simply remaining connected to the remainder of the state. Those issues that we faced were just the tip of the iceberg.

In the Parliament, our team worked with the state government, in less than perfect circumstances, to assist with the passing of legislation designed for the COVID-19 fight. We did that in the spirit of cooperation and worked hard to continue to raise issues that impacted the regions within that context, but we understood that Parliament was in a different framework during that time. I think the workforce shortages in key sectors such as agriculture, hospitality, small business and tourism continue to hamper our economic recovery. On this matter, I am afraid that the government's response has been too little too late. With no certainty or road map offered by the Premier or the Treasurer on how we might open ourselves up when the time is deemed right, we still have some serious challenges to overcome. I wholeheartedly endorse what the shadow Treasurer said earlier. Significant plans have been made for some sectors in the state, but others have been left without any support. That will bode very poorly for the entire state and, indeed, the nation, if our agricultural and horticultural sectors are unable to do the job that we know they can do so well. Our tourism industry, which we will be relying on very much to see us through not just the next six months, but the next 12 or 24 months, will continue to have serious challenges to overcome. That is why it was so important for this budget to offer more than it does and why this is a budget that fails our state. In particular, it fails the people of regional Western Australia.

I want to talk a little about royalties for regions. It is no secret that our focus has always been on where this program sits within the state budget. Unfortunately, this budget confirms and cements everything that we have seen emerging over the last three budgets—that is, that royalties for regions is listed in the budget papers only in name. It was very interesting to listen yesterday to the Minister for Regional Development defend how royalties for regions had been used. Yesterday on ABC radio, she literally did not once deny that it was being used to pay for services and programs that had once been paid for through the operating budgets of other departments. It is simply being used to shift costs from one department to another to free up funds to be spent, presumably, in the metropolitan area. We know that a large majority of that is going into Metronet. The minister did not once apologise for ripping funds from regional Western Australians and diverting them into Perth-related projects. She did not once acknowledge that this government centralised the former Department of Regional Development, concentrated that power in Perth, cut off the legs of the regional development commissions, and left the state government rudderless when it comes to a plan for regional development. Royalties for regions is more than just a fund; it is the mechanism by which a regional development plan is delivered. If a government does not have a plan, that makes it very difficult for it to spend that money. Hence, it would rather spend it on things that people can see in the metropolitan area than in the sparsely populated area beyond the Darling scarp.

Of the \$4.2 billion budgeted for royalties for regions, \$2.7 billion is now allocated to what we would consider to be normal government expenditure—that is, things that were being paid for out of consolidated revenue prior to this government coming to power. They include Water Corporation subsidies of \$250 million a year. It is a straight community service obligation to the Water Corporation to make it whole and has always been paid from consolidated revenue.

I refer to the orange school buses. The Premier tried to make the point today that the previous government used royalties for regions funds to pay the Department of Transport or the Public Transport Authority for the orange school buses. He was absolutely wrong! This funding is for operating expenditure for those orange school buses. Operating expenditure was always paid to the Public Transport Authority out of consolidated revenue. The investment that we made in government was to bring the fleet up to scratch with air-conditioning and automatic transmission to, essentially, make it safer. Kids were jumping on buses in 42 to 45-degree heat. That was a singular investment to bring the fleet up to scratch. It was not the ongoing everyday expenditure that this government is using it for.

The budget also includes funding for regional education assistance, subsidies for TAFE fees in regional Western Australia, remote community water and power, and Metronet. That is correct: Metronet! For the first time, we are seeing royalties for regions now overtly being used to pay for Metronet. To me, that says everything

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 October 2020]

p6656e-6708a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

about where this government's priorities lie. I say it is overt, because the government has been doing it covertly for the last three years. In the media in recent days, the Premier and the Minister for Regional Development have been called on to defend their record in regional Western Australia. I am glad that they are being held to account for their disgraceful decisions. The people of regional Western Australia deserve much better. The mismanagement of that \$4.2 billion fund is not the only issue. As I said before, that fund is a mechanism to deliver the state government's regional development plan. That explains why the Labor government sees no value in royalties for regions. It has no plan for regional Western Australia. It has a jumbled bag of projects. There is a sleight of hand to spend dollars tagged for the regions in the metropolitan area. The government has completely missed the opportunity to invest and set us up for the long term. On top of that, the Premier and the Minister for Regional Development seem to want gold stars for spending in the regions. The government should spend in the regions. It should be spending money on roads, education and health services. This government has had the benefit of the GST deal and that income now coming from the federal government. It has record iron ore royalties. It claims it is a good financial manager. I have to say that I agree with the shadow Treasurer that good luck and sleight of hand are more likely to be the answers on that front.

Before I move on, I want to put on the record my great disappointment in the commentary regarding royalties for regions I hear from the opposition shadow Minister for Regional Development, Hon Dr Steve Thomas. The claims that he has been making in public cannot go unanswered any longer. Hon Dr Steve Thomas has proffered that the previous government wasted royalties for regions. Yesterday, on ABC regional *Drive*, he was interviewed by Andrew Collins and said that a couple of billion dollars could have been spent better, referring to royalties for regions. He said that he agreed with the report that was commissioned by the Labor government to inquire into royalties for regions. I remind members that that report was commissioned with the specific purpose of dismantling royalties for regions and providing political fodder for the Labor Party to discredit the program. Hon Dr Steve Thomas forgets that his Liberal Party colleagues sat at the cabinet table and approved every dollar that was spent through royalties for regions while we were in government. I proudly stand by every dollar. Regardless of what this government or Hon Dr Steve Thomas says, we had process and accountability. Every dollar spent went through cabinet. I truly hope that the position proffered by Hon Dr Steve Thomas does not reflect the broader Liberal Party view of royalties for regions. The Labor Party has decimated this program, has neutered the regional development commissions and is devoid of a plan for regional WA. Regional Western Australians certainly do not need weasel words about this program. They need certainty; they do not want empty promises. Any future government that is formed with the Nationals WA will come with the provision that funding to royalties for regions will be restored and the portfolio of regional development and the management of that fund will be a matter of high priority for the National Party.

To that end, I want to again address the commentary from the Premier that the Nationals WA is seeking to create a city-country divide for its own political purposes. I have no need or desire to create a divide. The fact of the matter is that it exists. Our point is that this Labor government is contributing to that ever-widening gap. By undermining and stripping funds from the royalties for regions program, the government not only is denying regional communities vital dollars, but also has dismantled the state's only regional development program. Last year, we revealed through its own state budget that it was spending double the amount on Metronet in comparison with the amount spent on a statewide regional development program. That to me is unforgivable.

Let us not forget that in its first budget, we saw the unforgivable attack on regional education, with funds for the Schools of the Air slashed, agricultural trust funds pillaged and Moora Residential College closed. I remind members in this place that Hon Darren West, the Labor member for Agricultural Region and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Regional Development, still contends that Moora college should remain closed and should not have been funded. The attack on our community resource centres undermined their confidence in, and respect for, this government and the department that is supposed to support them. There was a blatant money grab from the rock lobster industry. These matters were thwarted only because those communities stood up for themselves and we in the National Party and the opposition stood shoulder to shoulder with them. It is those actions and decisions by this government that create and widen that city-country divide. The very reason that the Nationals WA exists is to lessen the city-country divide. As a regional member of Parliament, I would like nothing better than to focus on the issues that consume some of my counterparts I talk to in the halls of Parliament.

It is very challenging for me when I contrast the recently signed billion-dollar Perth City Deal, under which the public transport network will be expanded across the metropolitan area, a new university will be built and bike and pedestrian pathways will be expanded, with the more fundamental challenges faced by those in our members' communities. The Perth City Deal, the first deal that has been signed for Western Australia, really reveals where the Labor government's priorities are. When that is considered in addition to the \$2.7 billion that has been ripped from the regional development fund—the royalties for regions fund—the actions of this government speak far louder than any words that I could utter as I travel around the electorates in this state.



**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 October 2020]

p6656e-6708a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

Hedland Senior High School is crumbling to bits. Scott Bourne, the Nationals WA candidate for the Pilbara, knows that this school needs to be rebuilt. It is unforgivable that the iron ore capital of the nation has a senior high school that absolutely needs to be rebuilt, not refurbished or given a facelift, which is what has been proposed by this government. That is not in the budget. The member for Moore, the Deputy Leader of the Nationals WA, has constituents in the midwest who measure their power outages by days, not hours. That is a problem that impacts on households and businesses, prevents growth and puts lives at risk. They are the issues that consume our members of Parliament when we look at a budget like this. That issue has not been addressed in this budget. The member for North West Central will tell us that Meekatharra Hospital is a disgrace. It is a fundamental responsibility of the government to deliver health services. That hospital has not been funded in this budget. Communities along our vast coastline are suffering from the impact of coastal erosion. Public and private infrastructure is being ruined and destroyed. Under the Labor government's watch, local governments along the coast have been left to foot the bill, using taxpayers' dollars, for putting in place restorative or protective remedies. That has not been addressed. There is a pittance in the budget to address this enormous challenge, which has been identified on a national stage, and this government has signed up to it, yet there is not nearly enough funding in this budget.

As we heard from the Minister for Health, there has been no response to the patient assisted travel scheme review and recommendations that indicated that the system needs bolstering and rejuvenating. It has gathered dust. The minister can point to the fact that he did not see the action that he desired when he was in opposition, but he has now had four budgets to rectify that. He has more front than Myer when he stands in this place and talks about the investment in regional health services in this state.

[Member's time extended.]

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** He is standing on the shoulders of investment that was made by the Liberal–National government. Through royalties for regions funding, services such as telehealth were innovated. Telehealth exists because of royalties for regions. How dare he shirk his responsibility, having made it an issue when he was in opposition, and let it sit there for four years! We are all for investing in regional Western Australia and upgrading our health services. We are proud of our record on that. In some circumstances, people are forced to leave regional Western Australia and travel down here to go to our tertiary hospitals, such as when someone has a baby or they need to access cancer or other specialist services. That will always exist. The vast majority of that cost is borne by patients, and in most cases they are people who cannot afford to do that. People tell me that they stay in hostels when they come to Perth for their treatment. It is unforgivable that a Perth City Deal, a new university and bike and pedestrian paths come before fundamental health infrastructure and services for our regional people. It should be a priority and it is a disgrace that it is not on this government's agenda.

Although I am the first to recognise the enormous burden for the Premier and the Minister for Health in dealing with the pandemic, they have quite rightly said that we have some fairly significant circumstances that allow us to operate in a new COVID world with fewer restrictions than those in every other state. This was their opportunity to put things like that in the budget to set us up for the long term and make sure that we get those structural changes. It was their opportunity to use a program like royalties for regions to innovate the delivery of services, not simply to cost shift or fund entire projects. It was their opportunity to go to our departments, garner the enthusiasm and adaptability that we have seen as a result of this pandemic and create a plan that would allow us to capture the best of what happened during this terrible time in our history and set us up for the future, not to simply concentrate all of that back into where everybody lives, which is what I see when I read the budget papers.

Given that I have spoken about royalties for regions on a statewide basis, as the member for Central Wheatbelt, I would like to spend a little bit of time touching on some of the issues in my electorate in the context of this budget. It is most disappointing that once again we in the central wheatbelt have been overlooked by the Labor government. In fact, my electorate officer attended a budget briefing by the Minister for Local Government in Northam this morning and I have seen the flyer issued by the McGowan government about state budget spending in the central wheatbelt. The government is not being deceptive, but people would assume from reading that flyer that it lists new spending initiatives in this state budget. But if people read it carefully, they will find that it contains all the investments made by this government over the last four years. When I read some of the initiatives, I thought, "Goodness, are we going back and funding something again? That's already been done." In fact, some of them are things that were started under the previous Liberal–National government. I do not like to say "deceptive", but I feel that the way that the government is gilding the lily in selling this budget to people who live beyond the Darling scarp to make them feel like they are being looked after will come back on it. People out there are not silly. They cannot see the investment. They know that royalties for regions funding is being cut off. They know that there is vastly more spending in the metropolitan area than there is in regional Western Australia. I think they will be harsh judges of that when it comes time to cast their vote.

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 October 2020]

p6656e-6708a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

I am seriously concerned about the lack of mental health services and community services funding available in my electorate, and I am seeing that play out for all those service sectors that provide support to families in financial difficulties and families that are unable to cope because of mental illness or homelessness. I have previously raised in this place organisations like Avon Youth Community and Family Services, which is struggling to support at-risk and homeless young people in the region. I hear announcements by the Minister for Community Services about the two Common Ground facilities and I wonder why a small amount cannot be found to support an organisation that is already delivering results in the wheatbelt—the only one of its kind. There is no other place for at-risk and homeless young people to go. This program is no longer supported 24/7, and the minister has told me that there is no money to be found, but we will have a bike path to make everyone feel more comfortable about getting on their bike and cycling to work in the Perth metropolitan area. I see no solution for the limited funding of suicide and bereavement services in the electorate, despite the overwhelming evidence that mental illness and suicide spiked during the COVID pandemic and were already a significant problem prior to the pandemic.

On the issue of aged care, I know that the state government will come back and say that it is a federal issue, but the fact of the matter is that aged care always has an intersection with the state government. People are struggling to find their way through that system—struggling to make sure that their elderly parents, friends and family can stay close to them and access the services they deserve in the community that they have invested in and grown up in. With the WA Country Health Service washing its hands of that interaction and this government saying that it is not its responsibility, they are significantly at a disadvantage. I find that to be an abhorrent position to take. It is buck passing at best, and people who have to see the elderly leave their community are regularly in my office. I would very much like to see programs such as royalties for regions being used to innovate and drive change at not only a state government level, but also a federal government level. That is what it is there for. We cannot do that when it is being used the way that this government has used it over the last four years. I see no investment in issues such as the poor power infrastructure that is plaguing some of my edge-of-grid communities. The tiny community of Beacon, regularly—as the member for Moore will understand; it borders on to his electorate in the midwest—is constantly without power, yet Western Power and the regulatory framework within with the Economic Regulation Authority makes it prohibitive for it to invest to reduce the outages, the blackouts and brownouts, for those communities. The community is simply told it is not able to invest as an organisation, yet, if the government chose to put external capital in, it could fix that problem overnight and come up with something that solves that edge-of-grid program. We see the community batteries; we see the microgrids being talked about.

There are communities in my electorate that do not have basic power infrastructure. That is not acceptable in the twenty-first century. It is not only preventing them from operating their businesses efficiently; it is having an impact on community safety. All our telecommunications are linked to our power infrastructure. When there is a community emergency and there is no power, Telstra, unfortunately, has let the team down with the longevity of some of the batteries that kick-in. These communities are then left without a mobile phone tower or a landline, and there is no way to contact volunteers who could come in either through the ambulance services or fire and emergency to respond to anything that might occur. That is not something that we should accept. Again, if the government was using royalties for regions the right way, that would create an opportunity to go to all these services and ask: How do we do this better? How do we innovate that service? How do we accept that what we do in the Perth metropolitan area cannot be the same as what we do out in the bush? That is what royalties for regions is about, and that is what this government has squandered. The government has shifted it into paying Water Corporation to do business as usual. That is absolutely unforgiveable.

Headworks make the cost of business prohibitive, especially compared with starting up at an industrial site in the Perth metropolitan area. I commend the government for supporting the expansion of a business such as Bruce Rock Engineering. It should not be as difficult as it is to create new jobs and opportunities in that regional town. To me, it is testament to the persistence and commitment of Damion Verhoogt, his family and that business that it has remained a wheatbelt-based entity—and they were very committed to doing that. The company was given funding through the government's regional economic development grants to allow it to upgrade its power, but I have to tell members that there were points in time when it was getting absolutely no traction with the government and was seriously considering that that might not be the place that it should expand its facility. Bruce Rock Engineering is an enormous employer in the eastern wheatbelt, not just for the small town of Bruce Rock, but for the entire eastern wheatbelt. I commend it, but it should not be that difficult when it comes to a business wanting to expand, wanting to see more people working and wanting to manufacture in our regions. It cannot be because the power is not sufficient and it has to upgrade. Companies look at the bill that they are provided and it is simply not tenable.

I will finish up on the issue of police. From my perspective, we welcome additional police officers. I would like to put a pitch in for some additional police officers in the community of Hyden. It does not have a police station or adequate police officers to manage that very eastern boundary along a very busy edge of the electorate and the

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

route between Esperance and through the middle of the wheatbelt. I would very much like that to be on the agenda of this government, and for Kondinin Police Station to remain open and be appropriately manned.

I would like to just restate that in the wake of COVID, we are very disappointed with this state budget. It was an opportunity to drive an innovative and ambitious program of development. It was an opportunity for this government to decentralise and empower the regions that generate the wealth of this state, and to set an agenda for long-term growth and prosperity. Instead, it is cautious and it is marked by major projects in the Perth metropolitan area that will bode well for an election in five months in the metro area, but it is the death of any vestige of a regional development program and royalties for regions. I think regional Western Australia deserves better, but it will not be getting it from this Labor government.

**MR W.R. MARMION (Nedlands — Deputy Leader of the Opposition)** [4.25 pm]: I rise to speak on the Treasurer's 2020–21 budget—the Appropriation (Recurrent 2020–21) Bill 2020 and the Appropriation (Capital 2020–21) Bill 2020. I start by agreeing that it is a missed opportunity and indeed, the budget really has the bare essentials to get by. It is a very boring budget with a few sweeteners and we will need to do a fair bit of research to try to find its flaws, which will obviously happen during estimates next week. I want to start by talking about the budget generally through my three portfolios, and then finish off with some of the issues that need addressing in my electorate.

I want to start by pointing out the Treasurer's comments in his budget speech. He highlighted that the total public sector net debt in the forward estimates of 2022–23 will be \$42.9 billion. The commentary on that in budget paper No 3 says, "This level of net debt remains affordable". In his speech, the Treasurer said —

... this level of debt remains sustainable, with net debt as a share of our economy to rise modestly.

In fact, budget paper No 3 states that 14.1 per cent of gross state product is very low by international standards. This was not the commentary the Treasurer made about the previous government. When this government first came into power, the midyear review of 2016–17 had actual forward estimates for 2019–20 at \$39.7 billion—admittedly, it is not the same year—and the Treasurer put out a number of releases that were mild compared with what he said in this chamber. In one media release on 6 April 2017 he commented —

"Western Australia's finances are not in good shape due to years of budget mismanagement from the previous government.

Some months later, around budget time, he endeavoured to bring in a gold royalty, which was not successful. I think the mining industry is still worried about the possibility that the Treasurer might consider to bring it in again if he is successful in the coming election. I would be interested to see whether the Treasurer makes a comment about that. In a media release of 7 September, he also made a comment that the state's budget needed repairing and that that was one of the reasons for his bringing in the gold royalty. If we look at the two figures, the forward estimates are now greater than what they were in the midyear review of 2016–17. We can argue pedantically about the actual figures but they are probably relative, yet the Treasurer's commentary is different from when he first became Treasurer.

What do we have in the budget? We recognise that there is a COVID recovery plan. I think that is important. The budget goes through the plan. It is about supporting vulnerable businesses to keep people in jobs and to create new jobs. The main part of the government's COVID recovery plan relates to increased infrastructure, with projects being brought forward, if possible. These are mainly road and rail projects. There is a concern about how these road and rail projects will be delivered, given the labour shortage. Additional jobs are required for the road and rail projects, coupled with increased mining activity. How will these jobs be secured? Will projects be competing for labour? Will the unemployed people who are endeavouring to get jobs have the skills to fill these jobs? Will some projects require interstate or overseas skilled labour? How will people get into the state with the border situation? Has this analysis been done? Has this analysis taken into account the impact on the other state infrastructure projects that are underway? This leads me to the other disappointing point, which the shadow Treasurer mentioned—a COVID recovery plan that is strategically developed and links specific projects to jobs. These jobs are coordinated to make sure that they are real jobs and that we have the capacity to fill those jobs. That is probably a missed opportunity. I would like to have seen a Gantt chart listing all the projects and the jobs available, so we could analyse whether the plan will work. At least the government recognises that a plan is needed.

I found a very small figure in the budget; from memory, it was \$7 million. There is no contingent liability for a bad outcome in the arbitration on the Perth Children's Hospital. We cannot get questions answered because it is going through arbitration. I think the claim is for about \$300 million. The last time we had some discussion in this chamber, the Treasurer mentioned that he had put forward \$20 million to settle the dispute. I may not have read the budget papers properly, but there was a figure of \$20 million for completing the project. I think the amount left is only \$7 million.

What projects has Labor completed in the past three and a half years? It opened Optus Stadium. I recall that that was a Liberal project. It opened the Perth Children's Hospital. It took the government two years to open it. It was very

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

proud to open the Perth Children's Hospital. I was at the opening. Jim McGinty and Geoff Gallop were congratulated for their foresight and for initiating the project.

**Mr D.J. Kelly** interjected.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** Colin Barnett found the money. Without the money, the project would not have gone ahead.

**Mr D.J. Kelly** interjected.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** Mr Acting Speaker, I have a lot to get through in 13 minutes, and no-one else has been interjected upon.

Perth Children's Hospital was a Liberal project. The Elizabeth Quay development was another terrific Liberal project that the Labor government has benefited from. I think some of the last parcels of land are now being built on. If we did an analysis of that project and looked at the capital cost, which was slammed by the Labor Party when we started building it, particularly by the Minister for Transport, we would find that it probably made a profit. That is a terrific capital works project. With the sale of the land, I think members will find that it pretty well broke even. The other major project that everyone remembers, including the punters out there, is Yagan Square. That was another project opened by the Labor government but initiated by the Liberal government.

What projects were announced by or started construction under the Labor government in the past three and a half years? The development of the Forrestfield rail line was announced by us but I think construction may have started under Labor. After four years, where are we? I would have thought that after four years of construction, the project may have finished. Unfortunately, we are not there yet.

I think the shadow Minister for Transport will talk in more detail about these rail projects. I am not sure what stage we are at with the Thornlie–Cockburn Link or the Yanchep rail extension. The Byford rail extension was announced. I would like to see the business case for that project. I heard some commentary on the radio recently about the cost of the flyover over the rail line by people who live down there. Not much has been done by the Minister for Transport to deliver projects that the government initiated under Metronet.

I move on to some portfolio issues, starting with the mining and petroleum portfolio and one of the concerns of the industry and the mining sector, particularly those in the uranium business. When it came to office, the Labor Party kindly agreed that it would not disapprove any approved projects. Three projects were approved for five years. Businesses that got a five-year licence to start construction are getting close to the end of that five-year period. They are very nervous about the capital expenditure they have put into those projects and whether the Minister for Mines and Petroleum will approve an extension for those projects in case the uranium price goes up. That is a concern in the industry.

The other major policy change implemented by the Labor government this year relates to gas. Although there was a moratorium on hydraulic fracturing of gas for a couple of years, which obviously stopped any exploration in Western Australia, that was lifted, thank goodness, but a lot of the state is still subject to a ban on hydraulic fracturing. A significant new onshore gas policy was introduced only a few months ago. It basically says that any discovered gas will be sold in Western Australia on the domestic market, although there is an exception for one project in the Perth basin. When I first heard of this policy on the grapevine, I thought the offshore gas policy was the same as the onshore gas policy, and there might be a 15 per cent component—if gas was discovered onshore, 15 per cent might have to be retained for the local market. I read it carefully twice and confirmed it with the minister. I understand that the policy is that all gas discovered onshore has to be consumed in the domestic market, except for one project in the Perth basin. There are two major exploration projects in the Kimberley. It costs a lot of money to drill a hole for gas in the Kimberley—about \$10 million each. They are current projects. The other concern, aside from the impact on those projects, relates to the consultation undertaken by the minister to develop this policy. I understand that there was very little consultation. I was very concerned when I heard that the Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association was blindsided by this policy. I am sure that more work should be done on this policy by the minister for mines. I do not know why it came out of the blue. Labor prides itself on its ability to consult; in fact, it is usually very good at consultation. I was quite surprised to hear about this new onshore gas policy.

The Minister for Mines and Petroleum also trumpets the exploration incentive scheme as a great scheme, despite the fact that he increased the mining tenement rentals to cover the \$10 million that we used to half-subsidise co-funded drilling programs, probably pressured by the Treasurer to make sure it is funded by the industry itself. Since Labor has come to power, due to an increase of \$10 million for the exploration incentive scheme, industry is now 100 per cent paying the co-funded drilling program. The other unfortunate thing about the way the exploration incentive scheme is being funded is that the increase in mining tenement rentals is having an adverse impact on the amount of rates people have to pay, because local government rates are based on mining tenement rentals. Therefore, anyone exploring or mining on their tenement gets a double whammy, basically, because their rates bill increases.

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 October 2020]

p6656e-6708a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

I know one exploration company, which is not a mining company earning any revenue; it is an exploration company, and which owns a lot of leases and invests capital in exploration. I will not mention the council; the Treasurer might find out which company it is, but a very small regional council is earning rates worth half a million dollars from this exploration company. As the minister knows, I support exploration and I know the minister does. Unfortunately, the exploration incentive scheme is having some unintended consequences.

I have mentioned gold royalties. Mention is made in budget paper No 3 of the amount of possible royalties forgone due to not raising the royalty rate to 3.75 per cent. In appendix 9, table 9.1, under the heading “Summary of Major Tax and Royalty Expenditures” and under “Subsidised gold royalty rate” the estimated actual forgone royalty is \$189.1 million. That is the sort of figure that the gold industry will be concerned about when it reads page 267 in budget paper No 3. It highlights another forgone gold royalty-free threshold of \$7.1 million. I assume that when the Treasurer announced the policy, it applied to major gold producers, not the small producers, so that \$7.1 million would not include the small producers.

**Mr B.S. Wyatt:** Yes.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** That is obviously a possible concern to the industry if, indeed, the government decides to increase the gold royalty.

[Member’s time extended.]

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** While I am still on mining—this comes under the Minister for Mines and Petroleum—there is a really good COVID-19 busting project in the City of Kalgoorlie–Boulder, Treasurer. I think the minister is standing on the hose regarding approval of an industrial park just out of Kalgoorlie. I do not know whether the minister has seen the lot on which Lynas Corporation Ltd has approval to build its facility, which is a value-added project—big tick—but it is great for Kalgoorlie. Right opposite that lot is a major industrial park containing a number of diverse-type projects, which are helping to diversify the economy. In fact, they are providing diversification for Kalgoorlie and we want people to live in Kalgoorlie. The projects range from A to N, so I will not read them all out. I am sure the member for Kalgoorlie will raise it. I understand that the last hold-up occurred with a couple of mining leases, but that a deal has been done and they have achieved a nice little earner from the mining leases. The minister just has to sign off on them. I think it is under section 16(3) of the Mining Act, although I am not 100 per cent sure about that. That will be great for the mining town of Kalgoorlie and for diversification of that area.

I will move quickly on to the science and innovation portfolio. I have to give the government a pat on the back for supporting a grant of \$5 million to universities for targeted research into COVID-19 and for the \$4.5 million to support the state’s capacity in the space industry. I was terribly disappointed, as I know were the member for Riverton and the member for Carine —

**Mr A. Krsticevic:** I am extremely disappointed.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** — that the space headquarters was not approved for Western Australia. A great report was written explaining why we should get it. Without a doubt, it could not have been said better that WA is the best place in Australia. There was daylight between the Western Australian proposal and that of any other state, but it is my understanding that the other states put some money on the table. Maybe the \$4.5 million we are putting on the table now to increase our capacity in that area for research at universities might have helped us get those headquarters. However, as I highlighted at the beginning of my speech, that is a bit of a missed opportunity. Page 208 of budget paper No 2, volume 1, shows that the forward estimates of money allocated to science and innovation is very flat; in fact, from memory, it drops off a bit towards the end. This was an opportunity to promote science and innovation through the start-up industry and to develop a bit more research in some areas and provide for new jobs in higher level industries and greater capacity in our education system. However, I recognise that there has been a massive increase in funding for medical research, including for the Harry Perkins Institute of Medical Research in my electorate. However, more money needs to be spent on basic science and innovation projects, particularly start-up-type projects that can develop into major industries in Western Australia. To complete my comments on the science and innovation portfolio, which touch a little on the education portfolio, when I was on the Education and Health Standing Committee last year, we went to some regional towns to look at their information and communications technology capacity. It was very disturbing to see that regional schools do not have sufficient internet speed to deliver good ICT education. They do not have the teachers or the apparatus and hardware required to deliver it. If we want to promote science and innovation, we need to make sure that the whole of Western Australia is included. I support the Leader of the Nationals who highlighted this to some extent in her speech. If we are to deliver science and innovation around Western Australia, we should make sure that at least the new leaders of Western Australia—the young people at both primary school and secondary school—have the tools to develop their own skills in ICT.

Moving on to my last portfolio of local government, I was not surprised to see the funding in out years for local government. A footnote suggests there is a change in the way the department has been structured, but there is

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

a drop in funding for the Department of Local Government. In the last four years there have been 12 inquiries. In the eight years the Liberals were in government there were four inquiries, so double the amount of work was done in half the number of years. In answer to a question I asked in Parliament, I found out that nine staff were involved in the inquiry. Therefore, the same nine staff—I think only one inquiry was outsourced—were running around doing all those inquiries. If the government is seeking to win the election while holding the same number of inquiries, one would think it should put some more money into the department. I certainly could not see that any money had been allocated to that area. It raised the question of the recent finding of the Supreme Court that there was no reason for the show-cause notice to hold an inquiry into the Town of Cambridge. The Treasurer might have read the transcript. I read it a couple of times; it makes for good reading. I was absolutely surprised. I think it is the first decision of that kind, certainly in Western Australia.

**Mr B.S. Wyatt:** Justice Tottle.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** Yes. I do not know whether he is a friend of the Treasurer. I think it was a fantastic and very learned judgement by Justice Tottle, far beyond my depth of knowledge. Certainly that is cause for concern for the Minister for Local Government. I hope that he is looking at his department to see what it did wrong and whether it was overzealous in its approach to the Town of Cambridge. The minister needs to have a hard look at that.

Before I conclude on the topic of local government and turn to electoral issues, I refer to the change to local government regulation 9(1) to allow councils to move a motion to permit councillors to become involved in administrative issues within a local authority. The words in the regulation have quietly been changed. It is sitting in the Legislative Council and I think there is a very strong likelihood that it will be disallowed. I understand that there was very little consultation on the change—it came out of the blue—which is fairly significant. Local governments were not consulted. I am not sure whether the Western Australian Local Government Association was consulted very well. The Minister for Local Government said that WALGA supported it but I do not think we have got to the bottom of how strongly WALGA supported the change to regulation 9(1).

In my last five minutes, I will talk about a few issues in my electorate. The predominant issue in my electorate relates to constituents whose relatives are stuck in other states and cannot get back to Western Australia. Apart from that, the main issues are town planning scheme amendments in both Subiaco and Nedlands. Many developments are in the pipeline at the moment and, obviously, as occurs in planning, there are people for and against developments. Massive changes are planned at the intersection of Dalkeith Road and Stirling Highway in the City of Nedlands. The Chellingworth development will see the building of three large towers. On the other side of the road, there are plans for two shopping centres. I am not sure about the Chellingworth development, but certainly everyone seems fine with the shopping centre developments.

**Dr M.D. Nahan:** With the car bay or the shopping centres?

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** It is in the same area as the Captain Stirling Hotel. Previously, there was a Woolworths and an IGA, but Aldi is taking over. There are two developments adjacent to each other. It is a bit tricky because of the roadworks around them. If we throw in the Chellingworth development across the road, one wonders about the traffic implications. We cannot decide to upscale an area in height and provide for more residents if we do not have a sufficient road network. That is of concern.

**Mr B.S. Wyatt:** Is that the intersection where the cinema is?

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** Yes. There is not a lot of room to change anything. I think Main Roads is tearing its hair out at the moment trying to work out how to redo it. With the shopping centre development, it is trying to work out how to configure the traffic lights at Smyth Road and how to block off roads, let alone the Chellingworth development. I am sure the Minister for Transport; Planning will be working with the City of Nedlands and Main Roads to work that out.

I congratulate the Minister for Health, who is not in the chamber. People might not know about Lawson House, which was the first maternity hospital in Western Australia on Barker Road, off Railway Street. Edith Cowan had a lot to do with it. Indeed, she is on the \$50 note with a picture of Lawson House. The Lawson House turrets had fallen into disrepair and, finally, at a cost of between \$60 000 and \$70 000, it has been fixed up. Well done, Minister for Health. Two years of badgering by me has got him across the line. In fact, I think he will end up doing quite a good job.

**Mr D.R. Michael:** Just a random fact, the picture on the \$50 note actually replaced this building on the old plastic \$50 note. The Parliament of Western Australia was chucked aside!

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** Lawson House is considered by the federal government and the federal Treasurer to be more important than the Western Australian Parliament. That is a good fun fact.

The last issue is a new one and we will find out more about it later. The concern is more rail movements on the line between Bayswater and Claremont with the Forrestfield line coming on and the Ellenbrook line going into

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 October 2020]

p6656e-6708a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

Bayswater. If there are six movements on each of those three lines, that is 18 movements. I understand that the turnaround will be at Claremont. The issue is not necessarily that three times as many trains will travel to my electorate between Perth and Claremont, but also relates to the noise associated with the threefold increase in the number of trains. I wonder whether noise studies have been done. I understand that the Public Transport Authority does not have to do noise studies, member for Riverton, except under construction mode. With that, I conclude my comments.

**MR A. KRSTICEVIC (Carine)** [4.55 pm]: It gives me great pleasure to say a few words today on the budget that the Treasurer presented to us last week—the Appropriation (Recurrent 2020–21) Bill 2020 and the Appropriation (Capital 2020–21) Bill 2020. As much as people say that there is nothing significant or inspiring in the budget, that nothing jumps out at them and that it is a very bland and basic budget in so many respects, with regard to the portfolios that I represent—community services, youth, homelessness, housing, the cost of living and a range of other things—it is a very informed budget because it confirms what I and others already knew; that is, the Department of Communities is an absolute shambles. It is a disaster. It has been a disaster for the last four years and, as confirmed by the budget papers, it continues to be a disaster. Members will remember that this department reported to four ministers. According to the Premier’s document, it reported to Hon Simone McGurk, Hon Stephen Dawson, Hon Mick Murray and Hon Peter Tinley but it now reports to five ministers because it also reports to Hon David Kelly. Instead of reporting to four incompetent ministers, it now reports to five incompetent ministers. I thought the Minister for Local Government was the most incompetent minister in this Parliament. He is an outstanding performer relative to some of his colleagues, given some of the stuff that I have seen.

**Mr W.R. Marmion** interjected.

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** I could not believe it myself.

What do the budget papers say? Page 521 of budget paper No 2 states —

The Government has requested an independently chaired functional review be undertaken covering the Department’s corporate, policy and contracting functions.

That is for the Department of Communities. It continues —

The functional review is aimed at improving the Department’s efficiency and effectiveness following the 2017 Machinery of Government changes, ensuring that resources are prioritised to delivering frontline services to the community.

Right there it tells us that from 2017 to 2020, the department has continued to fail the people of Western Australia. It has continued to fail the most vulnerable people of Western Australia. Under the abovementioned ministers, the department has managed to maintain that level of incompetence and dysfunction. It is an absolute disgrace that that has taken place. The budget also shows that at a time of highest need, community services funding will decrease in the forward estimates, as shown in the service summary area on the same page. It also shows that social housing wait times will increase. It is currently 94 weeks but the budget indicates that the wait time will head back up to 120 weeks. There are so many telling stories in this budget of misery, pain and suffering. The Treasurer received a letter on 16 September 2020 from Hon Simone McGurk, which states —

The annual report and the opinion of the Auditor General of the above agency —

The Department of Communities —

may not be ready for tabling within the prescribed period as the Auditor General is seeking further clarification from the Corruption and Crime Commission ...

We know that the Department of Communities has been having interaction with the Crime and Corruption Commission for a long time. We do not know when its annual report will be available, because obviously it cannot get even its basic reporting done in time. The machinery-of-government changes for that department have proved to be a massive failure. I will talk to some examples of where that failure has occurred.

It was reported recently that because of the massive overspend of the Department of Communities on salaries and services, there will be a lot of redundancies in that department. We know from people in the community services sector that there is not enough support and resources for people who are homeless, people who are vulnerable, and children who need protection. The Department of Communities has continued to fail this sector and the most vulnerable people in Western Australia. We have been raising this issue in this Parliament for the last four years, but nobody seems to care—or not enough to do anything. In 2019–20, the Department of Communities’ salaries budget was 9.7 per cent above its budget estimate. That is an absolute disgrace. We only need to go back to April 2020 when the then Commissioner of the Crime and Corruption Commission put out a scathing report about the serious allegation that staff in the Department of Housing had been taking bribes from people who wanted to jump the queue on the public housing waitlist. They were able to get in front of other people by giving someone a brown paper bag. I have

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 October 2020]

p6656e-6708a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

not heard anything from the department about what it is doing about that. We also know about the scandal with Paul Whyte, in which the Corruption and Crime Commission was involved. That department is an absolute mess.

We know that foster carers were given access to children when they did not have a working with children card. We also know from the Auditor General's report of 23 October 2019 that the department has no idea about whether its own staff have had a working with children check. The department is totally out of control. The Auditor General's report said also that 53 people who met the threshold for a negative notice, but who had been allowed near children and had been found to have posed an unacceptable risk to children, had been banned from working with children. Those 53 people had had 14 182 days, or 2 027 weeks, or 39 years combined, of access to vulnerable children when they were not fit and proper people to be given access to children. Those 53 people included a number of convicted sex offenders. Those people had been allowed to work in a childcare service, an educational institution for children, a coaching or private tuition situation, an arrangement for the accommodation or care of children, a babysitting and child-minding service, and an overnight camp. This is what this department allowed to take place with vulnerable children.

We would think the department would be able to get it right. It had eight or nine months to get it correct. The minister said that all these corrections and improvements had been put in place. However, guess what happened? Another report from the Auditor General found that three departments had failed with their working with children checks—the Department of Education, the Department of Health, and the Department of Justice. Even after those scathing remarks had been made some nine months earlier, when the Auditor General examined another part of this government, he found additional flaws in the system. The Department of Communities was also embroiled in a situation in which it had funded a service provider that did not have planning permission to deliver the service from its current location. The department had no idea about that until it was exposed. That is another example of how the department has no idea what it is doing.

When it comes to child protection—a very serious area—the Department of Child Protection staff are juggling up to 40 kids each, when they should be juggling no more than 15 kids each. That is a shocking caseload, particularly when this budget shows that the funding for that department has been cut. We also know that the department could not find eight teenagers who were meant to be in state care. They were listed as unknown. The department was supposed to be looking after those children, but it had no idea where they were. They were gone. They had disappeared. No-one seems to be too interested in where those vulnerable children at risk have gone. There is a very strong theme about how this department has been performing over the last four years. This budget demonstrates that more than ever before. I thank the Treasurer for exposing the weaknesses of the Department of Communities. The Minister for Communities is responsible for the failure of that department.

We know about the Roebourne sexual abuse and Operation Fledermaus. I am sorry if I did not say that properly. Hon Nick Goiran has been asking simple questions of the Minister for Child Protection about the number of vulnerable victims who have had to be in constant contact with their perpetrators. The minister said at first that there were 224 victims. The minister then changed her mind and said it was 42. She then said it was 70: "Don't worry; the answer is 70." We have no idea how many victims there are in Roebourne. In fact, the Minister for Child Protection herself noted that abuse in the town was normalised. However, did she declare a state of emergency? Did she increase the funding? Did she send in the Army? Did she do anything to try to save those vulnerable children? No, she did not. When the Minister for Police was asked to confirm the whereabouts of the 58 people charged with child sex offences, she said she did not know. She could not confirm it. She did not know where those 58 people were. I am shocked at the way this department has been performing over the past four years. This budget is bringing out those things.

The Department of Communities will now also be responsible for screening people to work with people with disabilities through the National Disability Insurance Scheme. We have seen the department's track record in every other situation of vulnerability. The government is now planning to allow this department to give people permission to look after people with disabilities. I do not believe this department will succeed in that cause. I think there will be more vulnerable victims in the future. The budget confirms that there be funding cuts in this space. The fact that the department has mismanaged its affairs over the last four years is an indictment of the Minister for Communities.

The Department of Communities does not conduct any audits or investigations. When I say that, I mean of its own accord. It conducts investigations and audits only if people bring information to its attention. If someone gives it the information, all wrapped up, and says, "You might want to look at this; something serious is going on here", it will say, "No problem; we'll look at that." In 2017–18, the department conducted 24 audits and 124 investigations. None of those was initiated by the department.

We also know from the budget papers—thank you, Treasurer—that the Department of Communities has a number of legal cases pending through the State Solicitor's Office. It is estimated that the department could be liable for



**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 October 2020]

p6656e-6708a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

a total of \$13 million. That is obviously yet to be determined. Up to 30 June 2019, the department paid out \$6 million to various people. The department is failing the people of Western Australia.

I turn now to what the Western Australian Council of Social Service said about the budget on 8 October 2020. It said —

We remained concerned that there has not been improved funding for the community services sector to meet rising need. With increasing unemployment and financial hardship predicted, it is crucial we are providing more support for those worst impacted.

WACOSS has continually been critical of this minister and this government for failing the most vulnerable people in Western Australia. Last year, the community services sector ran a petition and actively campaigned against the failures of the department and the Minister for Community Services, the member for Fremantle. It is unprecedented in the history of this state for the community services sector to take up arms against the Labor Party and the Minister for Community Services for failing the most vulnerable people in Western Australia.

The budget submission 2020–21 states all the failures of machinery-of-government changes and reform fatigue. It states that the department has a lack of communication and the structure is broken and is basically falling apart. WACOSS said in the vision statement that frontline services are overwhelmed and the department is creating frustration and is getting in the way and making things harder for people rather than easier.

In the 2018–19 annual report, even the CEO—this is a continual thing; this is not just something new—said that changing policy direction, significant state government reform, increasing funding uncertainty and increasing inequality are all key challenges at a time when we live in a country with immense wealth. Currently, the number one concern is that we have unsustainable services. Based on that, it is pretty obvious that the Department of Communities gets a big “F”, thanks to the Treasurer exposing the incompetence of the ministers and the failures of the department.

As far as social housing goes—I may not get a chance to talk about the homelessness issue today—the Department of Housing has had major cuts. For social housing stock in 2016–17, there were 44 087 social houses. There was unprecedented demand for houses over the next four years and guess what? The numbers went down! In 2019–20, there was 42 932. There are fewer social houses today than there were in 2016–17. At a time of unprecedented need, at a time when homelessness is out of control in this state, at a time when homeless camps and homeless cities are being set up—first in Rockingham, now in East Perth and they are popping up all over the state of Western Australia—it is an absolute disgrace.

For the construction of social housing in 2016–17, 956 homes were constructed or spot purchased. In 2019–20, guess how many were constructed or purchased?

**Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup:** How many?

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** It was sixty-five houses. From when we were in government, we have gone from 956 houses down to 65. As a matter of fact, it was 70 last year and 89 the year before, so it has been dismally sad all the way along. The Treasurer has been very successful in filling up the coffers by selling social housing at a rate of knots. I think over 1 300 homes have been sold, and so the Treasurer was sitting very pretty on a lot of money as part of that process.

[Member’s time extended.]

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** Another issue is the Housing First initiative. The Minister for Housing talks about Housing First all the time. The government took nearly three years to come up with a homelessness strategy that basically states that everyone should be put in a house, and we need to put support services around them. It was not rocket science. The sector was already telling the government that and it was pretty obvious what needed to be done. However, on 4 December 2019, the government announced two Common Ground facilities and the Housing First initiative. In December 2019, the government said it was important to get people into houses, and that it would put \$34.5 million on the table. It is not a small amount of money, but it is over five years—all of a sudden it is not that much money!

In December 2019, homelessness was absolutely a serious issue. People were dying in the streets and this was one of the initiatives that the government came up with. What it did not tell us at the time—we found out later—was that when making this announcement on 4 December, the government was not going to put money on the table until 1 July 2020. The government would not spend a cent for seven months! Even though the government kept talking about this initiative and how important it was to get people into homes, it was not going to do anything about it. It was just going to repeat, repeat, repeat the wonderful things that it would do, but it was not going to put any money on the table.

Then COVID comes along and the minister says that the government would bring this initiative forward; it would not start it on 1 July. The Department of Communities said it would bring forward the Housing First initiative to

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

1 May. However, on 11 August 2020, I received a reply from the Minister for Community Services. I had asked how the initiative was going and how many people had been housed. I was told that the Department of Communities was currently engaged in a procurement process to purchase services necessary to deliver the Housing First homelessness initiative. Therefore, it had not even gone out to procure services in August! I heard on the grapevine that the tender went out on 9 October 2020. It will take a month for that tender to close, which means it will be November. Therefore, nothing will happen by December, so this announcement would have been on the table for 12 months and not one cent has been spent.

At a time when the minister stands up in this Parliament and goes on about the Housing First initiative—I am sure members will hear him say it again—the government has not spent a cent for over 12 months. Let us not talk about the Common Ground facilities. They are nowhere to be seen. It was going to happen in the next two to three years. At most both Common Ground facilities programs will house only 70 homeless people when there are thousands of homeless people. Rough sleepers number over 1 000—over 9 000. There are over 14 000 applications on the public housing waiting list. Over 20 000 people—women, children and families—have nowhere to go and no support. From questions asked in this place, we know that the Minister for Community Services has cut the homelessness services funding yearly. In 2018–19 and 2019–20, she cut nearly \$7 million out of homelessness support services at a time of unprecedented demand. It is an absolute disgrace. I do not know how this minister sleeps straight in bed knowing all the pain and suffering that she is putting out there.

Another example of the incompetence of this minister and her department is the new East Perth tent city. I am not sure why we have a Lord Mayoral election going on here because they have already elected a mayor in that tent city. They have a mayor looking after it. The minister keeps saying that it is important to have people with lived experience. We note that the biggest campaign in the City of Perth is about homelessness. That is all that candidates are talking about. Every single candidate for Lord Mayor says that the most important thing is homelessness—and it is, but we already have a mayor for homelessness. Therefore, if we want someone with lived experience and someone to be a mayor to look after homelessness, let us go and give him the job. I am sure that he would be grateful and he would do it full time. I am sure he would do a perfect job as far as that is concerned. I cannot believe it.

The most important thing about the new tent city that was set up in East Perth under the bridge is the fence installed. The Department of Transport found out that people were sleeping there, so it put a fence around it: “We will fence it off and get rid of these people.” It installed the fence in May 2020. I asked the Minister for Community Services whether the Department of Transport had any idea about this fence that was set up? The minister replied: no; however, the Department of Communities was first made aware of the issue on 31 July 2020—three months later communities found out homeless people were sleeping under a bridge and that a tent city had been set up! The Public Transport Authority of Western Australia knew about it but did not tell the Department of Communities, and, eventually, the department found out three months later. I was amazed. I could not believe the lack of communication between the ministers and their departments. It is basic human decency to help homeless people. At the moment, about 40 people sleep there. I could not believe that there was no communication at all.

We know that the government wants to build two Common Ground facilities for \$35 million. We also know that the government itself has a report that states it will cost \$36 million to build one facility, but it wants to build two for \$35 million—so God knows how that will happen.

We remember very well in this Parliament when the minister said to the member for Cottesloe that he should not be scared when talking about Fremantle. She said that Fremantle was not that bad and that she lives in the middle of it; it is okay. That was her response to homelessness in Fremantle—it is not that bad. I know from visiting Fremantle that homelessness is a serious issue, as does the current Liberal candidate for Fremantle, Miquela Riley. She is out there campaigning and working hard. Anyone would think she was the local member. She is the only one who seems to be showing any interest in the problems and issues in Fremantle. We used to see articles non-stop in the newspaper about Fremantle and homeless people sleeping on the streets and violence not only by homeless people, but more so to homeless people. A lot of that goes on as well.

**Mr W.R. Marmion:** People aren't shopping there.

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** No. People are running away and shops are closing. As I said, though, the one good thing that this minister and the government has done is close down a lot of the shops. The advantage of that is when homeless people sleep in the shopfronts, they are not woken up in the morning because no-one is in the shops! The doors are closed because it is closed for business.

Recently, an article in the paper referred to the number of homeless people who die by suicide. It is out of control and out of proportion. It is very sad that all those people saw no option but to take their lives; they felt that was their only out as there was nothing else for them. We remember well Laurie at the homeless camp in Rockingham—the Premier's electorate. Laurie was crying out for help. He was on the front page of the paper and we all knew about

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 October 2020]

p6656e-6708a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

him. A few weeks after the article was published, Laurie committed suicide. Nobody had been out to look at what they could do to help Laurie and the other people there. At the time, the Premier refused to have anything to do with the homeless camp in Rockingham. He refused to go there and did not want to be told what he had to do. Eventually, he went there in July and met with a number of people, including Alan and Lynn. After I found out that the Premier had been down there, I went there a month later and met with the same people whom the Premier had met with. He had promised to do something for them but he had done nothing. They were still there. They had not heard a thing. They did not know anything other than that promises were made. Of course, when I raised this matter in Parliament, it was sorted. The Premier got onto it straight away and got the Minister for Housing to fix it up. It was making him look bad. He did not really want it to be fixed, but it was making him look bad.

Another issue of concern is that homeless people take up a lot of time in emergency departments, as the Minister for Health indicated. On 26 September 2019, the government came up with a wonderful initiative. I am sure that the Treasurer would remember it. It was called the medical respite centre pilot. It was looking for an opportunity to put homeless people who been to hospital into some intermediate accommodation where they could transition to recover. The government advertised this great initiative and put it out for tender. Can members guess what? The procurement was finalised in March 2020 but it did not identify a suitable respondent. The program has gone nowhere. The medical respite centre program was considered to be a critical part of assisting homeless people and it is dead in the water. Nothing has happened. I imagine that the government probably wanted people to pay it for the privilege of doing that.

The Tranby Centre used to be funded to open between 7.00 am and 7.00 pm seven days a week. When funding was given to the Tranby Centre, other service providers shut down their doors. They said, “It’s okay; the Tranby Centre is now looking after things from 7.00 am to 7.00 pm seven days a week”. After disaster ensued at the Tranby Centre from a lack of security and a lack of any support at all from the government, what did it do? It reduced its hours. It is now open on Monday to Friday from 7.00 am to 2.30 pm, not 7.00 pm; on Saturday from 7.00 am to 12.00 midday; and on Sunday from 12.00 noon to 5.00 pm. That is a massive reduction in hours when there are no other service providers. It was given \$5 000 by the government but that funding has been exhausted.

The government also set up the Moore Street precinct for homeless people. I went down there one morning. It was an absolute disgrace. Hundreds of homeless people were there, between Royal Perth Hospital and the car park. It is just that bit of street where the rail crossing is. There is nothing there! The homeless people have brought their tables and chairs, and set up their little tents to do what they need to do. Not even a table or chair is provided. I could not believe it. The way it was being discussed, I thought there would be something significant there. There was nothing. People were frozen. There was a bus where people were having showers. The water was trickling out of the bus and running down the road. The water was running down the same path where people were walking up the other way to access food and other services. Half of them were barefoot. It was seven o’clock in the morning and I was frozen. I had about 10 layers of clothes on! These people were in shorts and had bare feet. I just about fell over; I was in shock. I could not believe what was going on. I cannot believe this budget and that this Treasurer is allowing this government to get away with this absolute abuse of people. They live in absolute hell.

It is a pity that the member for Bunbury is not here because there was a massive failure in Bunbury. Bunbury tried to set up a homeless shelter but it has shut down. It is gone—finished. The member for Bunbury did nothing to help it. He came in and said that homelessness was a big problem in Bunbury but that the council was doing a great job because it had a solution. Within 12 months, it was gone; the homeless shelter is being shut down because the state government did not give it any financial support or help. It was palmed off to the local council, thinking the council would look after it so the government would not have to worry about it. That has well and truly fallen over.

The Hotels with Heart pilot program began with the COVID outbreak, but we know the disaster it turned out to be due to the government’s commitment. I think the government has spent \$400 000 to help homeless people during the COVID outbreak while other states have spent \$20 million. We found a measly \$400 000. Even though the Hotels with Heart program was a success, the minister will have us believe that it was a failure because that is a convenient truth. It means that the government does not have to do anything. Out of the 30 people who went there, I think around half found a home, which was fantastic. They were transitioned into something more permanent. The interesting thing is that the people who failed to find homes were not given COVID tests. No COVID testing was done. They were locked up like prisoners and expected to survive. It is not a surprise. We know about the hostels and that a death occurred. The government was putting homeless people in 11 hostels without any support services or help in any way, shape or form. We know about all the domestic violence issues, including the lack of funding for services. We shamed the minister into funding 18 organisations. I was told they have some additional funding as a result of that. There is nothing in the budget for any of this; it is an absolute disgrace.

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 October 2020]

p6656e-6708a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

**DR M.D. NAHAN (Riverton)** [5.25 pm]: I would like to comment on the 2020–21 budget—the Appropriation (Recurrent 2020–21) Bill 2020 and the Appropriation (Capital 2020–21) Bill 2020. It is very interesting for me. I have spent almost 30 years commenting on budgets and, hopefully, this will be the last state budget I comment on. It is very interesting—one of the most interesting I have seen. If we took it at face value and were very gullible, as *The West Australian* said, we would perceive the Premier and the Treasurer as superheroes. In the greatest economic catastrophe since the Great Depression of 1930, how did they create a budget surplus? How did they do that? Not only that, but the Treasurer keeps claiming that Western Australia’s economy is the envy of the rest of the world, largely because of what they have done; that is, transform the fiscal position of the state—according to the budget. There is no more debt monster of four years ago. Of course, hard borders have also been put up in a trade-oriented state, which have allowed us to flourish within them. If only it was so easy. Luck has a lot to do with it, but I can tell members that they are not superheroes. They are very lucky. They have done some good things but they have really relied on others to deliver an improvement. A real takeaway from this budget is that not enough has been done for the future. Our challenge is not now—other people are generating revenue to this state like never before—but into the future. Let me go through it.

I was Treasurer in the last three years, at the tail end of the Barnett government. I was quite regularly chased around by Labor’s debt monster. The statements made were, “It’s just expenditure. It’s terrible. No, you spent like drunkards. You spent too much. It’s not a revenue issue, it’s not the GST; it’s your expenditure”. Of course, I knew that was nonsense; nonetheless, this budget shows us the reality. What has transformed fiscally is a huge tsunami of revenue flowing into the government. Most of it is from outside things that the government had very little to do with. Actually, most of it is from either China or Canberra’s Liberal–National government. During the three years of the government’s budget to date, it has received a 20 per cent increase in revenue, or \$5.25 billion. To put that in context, under my three budgets, revenue went down by \$2.27 billion, or 8.3 per cent.

In other words, relative to our position, it has had a 29 per cent turnaround in revenue. That is absolutely massive! Where is it coming from? The government increased taxes, but tax revenue is not up that much. I give the government that. It increased the tax effort, but it has not raised very much. Why? It is because our economy has been very slow; in fact, other than the mining sector, it has been struggling under this government. The key source of revenue is iron ore. Relative to the forward estimates in its first budget, for 2017–18, it has received \$9.4 billion in additional iron ore royalties. That is a lot of money! It has also received a massive GST top-up. Despite GST collections going down nationally this year, GST receipts to this government will go up, albeit only slightly. On top of that, this government has received a huge increase in commonwealth grants for capital purposes. The Turnbull and Morrison governments have been the best friends of the McGowan government. In the last year of the Barnett government, the commonwealth was very good to us and we received \$2.7 billion in grants. This government has received \$3.8 billion from the commonwealth in grants to date, with an extra \$3.7 billion expected. With that type of money, how could you go wrong? Importantly, one of the initial so-called policy initiatives of the government was to hit people hard with water and electricity charges. Over four years of the Wyatt Treasury, dividends and taxes from public trading enterprises have garnished \$9.1 billion compared with \$6 billion in the last series of budgets of the Barnett government. In other words, this government has received a large amount of money from iron ore, the commonwealth, the GST top-up and, of course, its own efforts to hit and increase the surplus.

Importantly, revenue has been the key. Some of it has been luck and some has been due to policy, but government members are no superheroes. On the one hand, it has been relatively parsimonious on spending, particularly for a Labor government. It has restrained wages growth in the public sector. It has cut \$500 million a year out of the royalties for regions budget with fiddles. It has, for a Labor government, been reluctant to spend. However, for history’s sake, expenditure growth in my three budgets was lower than those of the member for Victoria Park. In other words, the problem we had in our last term was a real crisis. We had a declining economy, with declining revenue, iron ore prices, GST, and taxation revenue. Our economy and budget was really in a pickle. Things have recovered significantly. As they say, victors write the history books, and that is what this government is writing, but it is a one-sided history.

I would like to talk about something else—the future. As I said, I was chased around by Labor’s debt monster for quite a few years. Interestingly, we were supposed to be heading for a \$40 billion to \$44 billion deficit. Despite the 20 per cent increase in revenue and additional moneys expected from the commonwealth, iron ore and everything else over the next three years, the government predicts debt to go to \$43 billion. What happened to the debt monster? If \$44 billion was going to destroy the world as we knew it and members of this government are superheroes, why are we going there anyway? What did they do? It is not just that. If we look at net assets, which is the total asset base of the state less its liabilities, can we see that the government has increased the state’s capital asset base? It has actually shrunk! It has gone from \$110 billion in 2017 to \$102 billion in 2020. Despite the so-called expenditure on Metronet, if it is achieved, in 2024 it will still be \$109 billion. After seven or eight years of a Labor government,

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 October 2020]

p6656e-6708a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

with debt at a level that it said was unacceptable and to be avoided, it will not have added to our net asset base. What has it been doing? Capital investment has not exceeded depreciation for wear and tear and there have been asset sales. That is another point. Do members remember in the last election, in 2017, how the Liberals were going to destroy the public sector of Western Australia by selling assets? I can tell members that this government has sold more assets than we ever did. All I did as Treasurer was sell the Perth Market Authority. This government has sold the database of everybody who owns land and houses in this state to large banks. It has sold other assets, such as \$1 billion worth of Synergy's existing assets and future assets that it has to invest in. To date, it has shrunk the state's net asset base. That is hardly the sign of a superhero.

Indeed, the reason it has not increased it is that although it has talked a lot about investing in capital, it has not been able to do so. Each year, it has promised something and has delivered substantially less. The government has spent \$1.6 billion less in its four years than it predicted it would. It has been lucky. It has done some good things on expenditure. It hyped up debt and then delivered the debt monster itself. It has failed to invest extensively in capital, particularly when the economy has been running very low. That is not what I want to talk about. I want to talk about the future.

One of the biggest challenges we have is that because of the GST top-up, the future finances of the state are really in good shape, as long as iron ore prices hold up. I think the Treasurer has, quite astutely, reduced the forward estimates of the iron ore price down to some \$60. The exchange rate is a bit high, but we could quibble about that. If it were lower, the government would actually get more money. The GST top-up will ensure that those other things hold up. Naturally, our share of the GST would have plummeted into the 40s, but it will hold up to 75¢. That is underpinning the finances of the state going forward. The challenge will be to ensure that future commonwealth governments, when they are leaned on by desperate state governments—Queensland and Victoria in particular, whose finances are falling off the cliff—do not try to renege on that. That is a challenge that parties and members of Parliament in the future must defend in a united manner. Once those states look at the situation, they are going to be squawking. Victoria has not brought down a budget and Queensland is not going to. Queensland's debt levels will be over \$100 billion, and so will Victoria's. I assure the Treasurer that in the future the Liberal Party will support him on that issue, and expect he will support us if we win the next election. I am worried about the structure of the economy for another reason. One of the strategies of the government prior to COVID-19 was threefold: international tourism and education, the further expansion of our LNG sector, and diversification into new minerals, particularly lithium and others. That is how I understood it. I do not know where we are going to go with COVID-19, but I am a betting man to some extent, so I think we are going to have to learn to live with COVID-19 for a significant period. Therefore, I would say that international tourism is not going to be as robust as it was and international student numbers are not going to be as robust as they were. Given the hit to oil prices and the LNG market, we are not going to get the Browse and Scarborough fields operating in the way that we thought we were. I am not criticising the government; it is just that we have to deal with reality.

What does the government do when the main planks of its economic strategy going forward are kicked out from under it by external forces? The government has decided, as has the commonwealth, to undertake a large infrastructure stimulus program. That is a short-term phenomenon. To critique it, firstly, I think the government is going to struggle to get the workers for it. Secondly, as is indicated in the budget, it is not sustainable in the long term, particularly for housing. The shadow Treasurer made a really good point, and it is pointed out in the data: as indicated in the budget, dwelling investments from 2020–21 to 2023–24 add up to less than zero. In other words, we are going to have a big increase in dwelling investments in 2021–22, but before that and after that, there is zip. That is a reasonable assumption, because the population is not going to grow in this state, at least not as we understand it. People cannot come in because the borders are up and, of course, immigration in this nation has fallen short for the first time since the Great Depression or World War II—I cannot remember which one. Spending on dwelling units and associated infrastructure is a good sugar hit and it is useful during the COVID-19 pandemic, but it is not sustainable, particularly without the people to back it up.

Another issue that I would like to emphasise—this is one that we all have to be careful about verbally—is how we open up to the world in a COVID-19 world. As I have heard the Treasurer say on radio—again, he was wearing his superhero suit at the time—throwing up the borders to Western Australia has made our economy the envy of the world. We are doing better than almost any place we can think of; I accept that. But is it to do with the borders? Let us explore that. Part of it is to do with the iron ore industry. Not only is that generating huge amounts of income for the state and for workers, but also it is so large that it is leading to billions of dollars in additional capital expenditure a year, and that is keeping business investment going.

[Member's time extended.]

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** The question is: how long is that going to go for? I will come back to that. What is really keeping this economy going to a large extent is the billions and billions of dollars that the commonwealth government is

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 October 2020]

p6656e-6708a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

paying through JobSeeker and JobKeeper. Let us be honest about that. It is historic, unprecedented and unsustainable. It will have to come out. Most of the \$300 billion has been going to Victoria, but some of it has been coming here. It has distorted our economy to a great extent because it is giving people an incentive not to work. The key thing that businesspeople who are struggling or trying to recover say is: “Recovery means employing people and I can’t get people to work.” Hopefully, we will work through that.

What do we need to look at and how does this budget deal with the big issue out there? We have done well by any stretch of the imagination to keep the economy buoyant during the pandemic. We have been lucky in the first six months, because there are only two tarmac roads in and we can close the border and shut down the airports and, hopefully, the ships. I am not in any way taking away from the success that the McGowan government has had with that. It is to be congratulated. But we cannot stay like this forever. What is the basis of our economy? We are a small, open, trading nation that relies on iron ore and minerals to a great extent and also people movement, and the economy cannot be sustained if the movement of people is restricted. So we have a challenge. Where do we work? The commonwealth largesse will dry up. Unfortunately for us, to a large extent it will be after the next election; nonetheless, it will dry up. What did the government do about the long term in this budget? Did it put in funding for a strategy to deal with not a hard border, but what *The Australian* calls a smart border—effectively a filtered border that would require more money and new infrastructure, new people and new electronic and other systems? It did not do that. That is what we need.

I will give an example of one of the biggest threats that I see out there—the airline industry. The planes are on the tarmac, and usually parked in Alice Springs or someplace in New Mexico. An isolated state like Western Australia needs an airline industry like no other state does. We cannot get to our markets or to each other without an airline industry. Yes, most of the people associated with our domestic airlines are based in the east, but we need them. In a year’s time, if things have not improved, there will be no airline industry in Australia. It will be kaput. Even Qantas could be. We need to stimulate that development. We need to develop links with our trading nations that have also been successful with COVID-19. We can do it safely. Do not cower. We can do it and keep our elderly and our communities safe from COVID-19. That is not there. Nothing is there.

Going forward, there are some areas that we can do more in. In economic development, we always build on what we have. We have very effective world-competitive mining and oil and gas industries. The government has to a large extent in its four years—as did we in our eight years and as did the previous Labor government and the previous Court Liberal government—always focused on improving, working with and developing our comparative advantage, and that is the basis of our success. But we are not going to get LNG like we did before. This government has locked away shale gas for reasons unknown to me and has come up with a ban on the export, domestically and otherwise, of onshore gas. I do not know where that came from, with one exception. That is a dumb policy. We need to use the resources and technology we have to grow, but the government is locking it away.

Another area that we are really competitive in is processing resources, which is energy intensive. It makes us a high carbon emitter, but our carbon intensity is lower than that in other countries, particularly China. However, we have not reformed the electricity industry like we should to ensure that we have low-cost, reliable, large baseload electricity. In fact, this budget shows that Synergy’s budget for subsidies is blowing out once again. Under my watch, we started getting it down. Under the member for Victoria Park’s watch as Minister for Energy, it was almost eradicated, but now it is blowing out again. That means that we are not going to get competition and we are going to have high prices for electricity going forward. There will also be some investment in the medical area and in other infrastructure related to research and development, but it is not enough. We have to invest into the future of technology; we have to invest more in human capital. There is not that much here. We have not looked beyond the status quo.

One of the biggest issues in the media today is the rumour that China has indicated to its public trading enterprises to not take high quality Australian coal, thermal and other. It is a big issue, particularly for Queensland and New South Wales. The issue is not that it will do it, but the threat. It has not done it yet and hopefully will not, but if members were in China’s position and were looking at the biggest bill that it pays, they would see that it is not coal—that is Indonesia—but iron ore. Experts say that China cannot do away with our iron ore now, but if China acts consistently, in a year or so when Brazil comes back on, these prices—even though the Treasurer has been right to write the forecast down—will be optimistic. One of the biggest threats that we face is trying to look beyond the iron ore boom, which is what we are in now. Imagine that we did not have the largesse flowing through in iron ore now or into the future, as forecast. If that comes to pass and China acts on iron ore as it has on barley, wine, international students and perhaps on coal, the next government could face the same budgetary position that I faced four years ago, which is not very pleasant.

I return to summarise. The books of the state are in a good position. Yes, as the shadow Treasurer said, the budget surplus forecast for this year is a result strictly of an accounting fiddle, when dividends earned in 2018–19 are actually

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

booked for the current year of 2019–20. It is all fiddle. But, the Treasurer is right: budget surpluses do count. We are still balancing the book, more or less. It is a whole lot better than any other budget around. We are looking good with the GST top-up, as long as it remains, and thank God for iron ore. This is no miracle and the future is where the challenge is right now. We are lucky to live in Western Australia where even in the midst of the biggest economic crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s, the economy is strong, the budget is more or less in balance and we are not in high debt. Though debt is higher than the government predicted, it is not astronomical. But we got here by a number of means, partly luck, but as we know, we make our own luck. The future is the challenge for us. That is where the budget does not go. The government should have had a financially backed strategy for developing a smart border rather than hard border; it should have put more money into aiding the competitiveness of our mining and resource sector, particularly with electricity and energy prices; and the challenge is to invest in technology and human capital. There is some here, but there is not that much.

The Treasurer and the Premier are no superheroes; however, they have more or less generated a decent set of fiscal books, with a large amount of luck from Canberra and China, but they have not looked to the future. I am afraid they have looked to the future in March, rather than beyond March.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms J.M. Freeman):** Member for —

**MS L. METTAM (Vasse)** [5.54 pm]: Vasse.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** I just had a mental blank, member for Vasse; I apologise.

**Ms L. METTAM:** That is okay. I will start my response to the 2020–21 budget—the Appropriation (Recurrent 2020–21) Bill 2020 and the Appropriation (Capital 2020–21) Bill 2020—with Vasse, a region and electorate that has been forgotten by not only the Acting Speaker, but also the McGowan Labor government.

I would argue that this is not a budget for all Western Australians. It is disappointing that the McGowan government has once again turned its back on the people in one of the fastest growing regions in the state and the most popular tourism destination outside Perth. It is a missed opportunity, very much like the COVID economic response, which we would assume also forms part of the thinking around this budget. Busselton, the second largest regional centre in the state, has been overlooked. One would have thought it was assumed that the electorate of Vasse was inoculated from all the impacts of COVID-19 and the economic challenges that the people in that area face. The McGowan government should be reminded that taxpayers' funds are not Labor Party funds; they are the funds of taxpayers. Pre-COVID, this region was one of the fastest growing regions in the state and in the nation at two per cent growth. We also have one of the largest cohorts of people under the age of 21. We have our own pressures and the people in this electorate, who have been overlooked by the McGowan government, continue to wonder why the government has such an approach to the people of this state.

Dunsborough Primary School is an example of that. It requires the expansion of its undercover area and its canteen, which did not meet the standards of the City of Busselton's health requirements. This school is in one of the fastest growing pockets within the region, with 770 students. Cowaramup Primary School was established in 1923 and it has had no recent capital works. Again, with a heavy number of transportable classrooms, this is something that I have raised again and again with the Minister for Education and Training, and again this government turned its back on the children of this electorate. I find it extraordinary. It is just like the very first budget when every other region was represented, whether it was Gascoyne, Pilbara or in the northwest, but the southwest region was only represented and illustrated as being Bunbury, Albany and Collie, which is quite outrageous, given that we are talking about the needs of fellow Western Australians.

That goes to sporting infrastructure as well, in which, again, the region has been overlooked. Sir Stewart Bovell Sporting Complex is a facility in Busselton that caters and supports over 1 000 football players and junior players. It does not have change room facilities that women can use; it does not have showers. Women can change, but they have to share those facilities with men, which creates significant problems. Dunsborough Lakes sporting precinct is a district that has had an average increase of 200 per cent player use since 2010 and 2012.

Also, regarding the region, mental health has been a significant need, particularly in Busselton and the Dunsborough area. It is extraordinary that although there has been investment in Bunbury's mental health system, experiences in Busselton have been particularly disappointing when people in the Vasse electorate are denied access to services that exist next door in Bunbury. I had an experience in my electorate office when a lady was so frustrated and upset that she ended up having to spend some time in the hospital because that was the only place that could accommodate her. These are the real needs. Lorrae Loud, who was a federal Labor candidate at one stage—I am sure she will not be again—talked about the fact that under this government some of the mental health support programs were being halved. In 2018, the state government stopped funding its fair share of the homelessness program. That is just one example. The step-up, step-down facility that opened in March in Bunbury is a wonderful facility for that

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 October 2020]

p6656e-6708a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

area, but the Vasse electorate significantly misses out on what is a growing concern, not only across all of Western Australia, but in this region that continues to be overlooked and restricted from being able to get access and support from other areas.

*Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.00 pm*

**Ms L. METTAM:** I will continue with my remarks. I was touching on the Vasse electorate and highlighting that this budget is not a budget for all of Western Australia. In relation to the transport portfolio and infrastructure in general, we can certainly see that this will provide no infrastructure blitz. The \$27 billion that has been lauded as part of what is meant to be an extraordinary budget for extraordinary times is something quite different. The amount of \$27 billion is quite similar to normal government investment. In comparison, following the global financial crisis, the Liberal government invested \$8.3 billion in response; the highest on record. This year, Labor's spending is just \$7.5 billion, which is 10 per cent less, despite a much bigger economy and a much more significant economic crisis. Specifically, in relation to the transport portfolio, it should be acknowledged that the heavy lifting has been undertaken by the federal Morrison government—\$15 billion worth of investment into the important transport infrastructure portfolio. I again urge the government to lift its game in building and delivering on these job-creating transport projects. Although the Morrison government provided funding in its first three budgets for the Morley–Ellenbrook rail line, for example, we did not see any dedicated funding for this important project. That is an example of the gap between the government's commitment to transport infrastructure in WA and what has been delivered on the table. The significant issues within the transport portfolio are not only budget blowouts but also delays. The McGowan government is obviously very much aware of this. That is why we have seen the creation of the office of major transport infrastructure delivery, which is a new office created to assist with the McGowan Labor government's poor performance in the transport portfolio. It is quite clear that the Minister for Transport is out of her depth and needs all the assistance that is required. We already have a Metronet Taskforce chaired by the Premier, a Metronet executive committee and an integrated Metronet office comprising specialists across government. The announcement of an office of major transport infrastructure delivery simply indicates the creation of another layer of bureaucracy around transport projects that are already heavily delayed. We know that at the last election, Mark McGowan, as Leader of the Opposition, said that Metronet would cost \$2.9 billion and denied that figure was undercooked. The Liberal government came up with its own costings and said that Metronet would cost significantly more. The Leader of the Opposition at that time, Mark McGowan, accused the then government of being shonky for suggesting it would be much more. Slowly the government is inching towards those significantly larger figures. From \$2.9 billion, Metronet is looking at an overall cost of \$5.7 billion and growing. As others in this place have pointed out, particularly the shadow Treasurer, given the way the government has outlined its Metronet costings, not all the costings are clear, particularly in relation to past years' costings and future investment. Apart from the obvious delays, it is certainly noted that the Morley–Ellenbrook rail line contract is yet to be formally signed. We know the preferred proponent has been announced, but I wonder whether that is because the government is trying to avoid another layer of scrutiny, which the budget estimates and the budget papers would provide. We are left wanting in seeking an overall cost of Metronet, which is meant to be a signature project of this government.

In relation to costings in general, only in February 2017 the then shadow Minister for Transport was pitching the cost of Metronet to the press. The minister stated that the cost would be \$2.535 billion. The shadow minister at that time, and now minister, stated that the Metronet costings process had been thorough and comprehensive and would be world-class and affordable. The member for Victoria Park, the shadow Treasurer at that time, said that WA's funding sources for Metronet were credible and realistic, based on robust modelling. We know that either the modelling was not too flash or the Minister for Transport is unable to manage large projects, or perhaps it is a combination of the two. The cost of the Thornlie–Cockburn rail line was predicted to be \$474 million but we are looking at a blowout from \$272 million to the current costing of \$716 million. The cost of the Yanchep line extension has grown from \$386 million to \$531 million. The cost of the Morley–Ellenbrook line has gone from \$863 million to at least \$1 billion, although we are yet to see the final costings of that project. It is also understood that \$200 million out of the Tonkin gap is dedicated to that project. Funds worth \$207 million have been set out in the forward estimates for a group of projects that include the Morley–Ellenbrook line, Byford rail and the Midland station project.

The cost of the Byford extension has increased from \$291 million to an estimated \$481 million, there was a significant increase or blowout of over \$250 million for the removal of rail level crossings, and the cost of railcar acquisition has increased from \$410 million to \$668 million. The budget does not allocate all of the funds needed for railcar acquisition and replacement. In fact, \$450 million—almost half a billion dollars—is still not allocated for this project.

Not only does the transport portfolio have challenges in being able to deliver projects at the promised time and cost, but also some real incompetence has been demonstrated in community consultation and engagement in the design of projects. Funding of \$200 million has been set aside for the Bayswater station. The community has issues with the design of the project. The design announced by the minister and the Premier was significantly different from the



Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

design that went to the developers of this project. The final design is nothing like the design that was shown to locals and on which the Future Bayswater group had engaged in consultation. It would be fair to say that the community was significantly let down by that process, which is represented in a petition that went to the Legislative Council with over 1 000 signatures. They were let down, as the design on which they were consulted was never presented to the contractors of the project. It is quite extraordinary. They had gone through what was clearly just a public relations exercise.

[Member's time extended.]

**Ms L. METTAM:** There was a significant breach of trust of the community. They described trestle tables as being part of the Bayswater station design and found that no escalators were included in the design. They also had some real issues with the viaduct and other things that were presented at the government's PR event. The community certainly does welcome the backflip that was announced last week. There has been some acknowledgement by the government that there was a significant departure from what was promised. I understand that there is still a way to go. It is a significantly challenging project. Three services will now go through the Bayswater station, as the Midland, Forrestfield–Airport and Ellenbrook lines will use the same section of line. We hope that the minister will be transparent and address, in particular, the concerns about whether the Midland line will be able to run as regularly as it currently does once all lines are operational. There was an expectation that there would be a continuous service from Ellenbrook to Perth and I understand that that has now been achieved. However, the government is yet to explain how it will manage this project, given the significant challenge represented by Bayswater station. I understand that this concern is shared by the community and, most significantly, those who are working on the project. They feel very concerned about what has been promised and proposed.

A significant concern has been raised about the handling of community consultation in Victoria Park on the Armadale line. Issues were raised by the shire of Victoria Park about the fact that the member for Victoria Park—the Treasurer—had stated in the lead-up to the election that it would be most likely underground rail.

**Mr B.S. Wyatt:** That's not true at all. When was that?

**Ms L. METTAM:** There is a clip on Twitter about it.

**Mr B.S. Wyatt:** That's not true at all.

**Ms L. METTAM:** That was the statement made.

**Mr B.S. Wyatt:** Well, it's not true, member.

**Ms L. METTAM:** There is actually a video of the Treasurer stating that the rail would most likely be underground.

**Mr B.S. Wyatt:** Show me that footage —

**Ms L. METTAM:** I will.

**Mr B.S. Wyatt:** —because it's not true.

**Ms L. METTAM:** Okay. It must have been someone else who looks exactly like him.

**Mr B.S. Wyatt:** Well, show me after you sit down.

**Ms L. METTAM:** Okay. The city of Victoria Park and others in that community —

**Mr B.S. Wyatt:** The Town of Victoria Park.

**Ms L. METTAM:** It is the Town of Victoria Park; okay. It is the City of Busselton that missed out on investment. The Town of Victoria Park is concerned that, to quote the mayor —

“While we have been working with the METRONET team, this announcement is another example of State Government sidelining Local Government, under the guise of bringing this project forward for economic stimulus following COVID-19 ...

I attended one of the community meetings about that. Although the Liberals support the long-awaited removal of dangerous level crossings, the community is rightly concerned that this project gets it right the first time. That has been a theme throughout the transport portfolio, whether it is about access between Hale Road and Tonkin Highway or the Murdoch Drive and Bayswater station projects—a litany of transport projects has not been delivered to communities across the state as promised.

There have also been some general failures in delivery. I point to the government's promises around automatic train control. One aspect of that project was the Huawei contract. The Minister for Transport gave us many assurances in this place about how that aspect of the automatic train control project would be delivered. I point to the \$206 million dedicated to the radio telecommunications contract. There was certainly an air of secrecy around this contract—it did not go to cabinet and the minister refused to publicly announce this significant contract as well. Despite questions

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 October 2020]

p6656e-6708a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

being asked around this contract, what we finally saw was another attempt by the minister to avoid public scrutiny, with the minister announcing at 4.00 pm on a Friday during the pandemic that the government was unable to deliver the only Metronet project that had commenced at that time. It was beyond belief that the Minister for Transport announced the demise of this contract in exactly the same way that she had announced its commencement—that is, with an air of secrecy and a shameful cover-up. The budget papers do not make clear what is happening with this project. The budget papers state —

... the PTA is working towards a conclusion with the Huawei and UGL consortium and undertaking a new closed tender to deliver the project. As a result, this Budget does not reflect the financial impact of these processes.

That is pretty standard for the transport portfolio, given the lack of transparency in that portfolio. The saga associated with the radio telecommunications project continues under a veil of secrecy.

The transport portfolio is obviously a job-creating portfolio. The reason we have been so concerned about the delays in the delivery of projects in this area, such as the Morley–Ellenbrook line, construction of which was meant to have started last year but the contract is yet to be signed, the Thornlie–Cockburn Link, Yanchep and others, is that these projects represent jobs for Western Australians, and jobs are obviously a great priority of this side of the house.

In terms of other failures and missed opportunities, there was an opportunity to allow some of our mid-tier contractors to have a seat at the table in the delivery of those projects. The preferred proponent for the billion dollar Morley–Ellenbrook line is a United Kingdom consortium, Laing O’Rourke. The government has also bundled two Metronet projects that are 70 kilometres apart—that is, the Yanchep rail extension and the Thornlie–Cockburn Link. Those projects were awarded to CPB Contractors. The bundling of the two projects basically meant that no mid-tier company had an opportunity to compete for the projects. This is together with Acciona subsidiary Coleman Rail, which was awarded the contract to build Bayswater station. More than \$2.5 billion worth of work is going to only foreign contractors. We should have seen at least some part of that project being delivered by Western Australian construction companies. This is from a government that talks about supporting local jobs and businesses, especially in the construction industry. Recently, when the Premier was asked why he chose a foreign-owned contractor as the preferred proponent for the Morley–Ellenbrook rail line and why the government did not include a mid-tier contractor, he responded, “If we get big projects, we have to get a builder that is capable of doing it”, illustrating the fact that he missed the point. This represents a missed opportunity for the construction industry, which could and should have been part of the lead contract. The capacity already exists in WA. More often than not, it is balance sheet constraints that stop mid-tier contractors from tendering for this work, not their ability to do it. We know that this is possible. Main Roads WA has been able to do this. It insisted on industry sustainability criteria for the Bunbury Outer Ring Road. The opposition and the industry believe that it is possible for the Public Transport Authority Metronet projects as well. It is disappointing that we have seen that.

Another farce of the transport portfolio is the Westport Taskforce, which has been raised in response to the budget and the Fremantle port. Prioritising the outer harbour and investing in this infrastructure ahead of time necessarily means that the government has turned its back on addressing the significant and more immediate transport needs in the southern suburbs. Quite obviously it has also missed an opportunity to invest in the job-creating Roe 8 and Roe 9 projects. They would be not only job creating, but also congestion busting. Instead, the minister’s answer to addressing road congestion in the southern suburbs is an outer harbour, which is many years away and will not address the immediate concerns. The government has still not adequately stated how it will manage a new port in Cockburn Sound and the impact that it will undoubtedly have on pink snapper stock in Cockburn Sound. According to Recfishwest, it has not been given any information to suggest that this project will not be catastrophic. The amount of money that will be invested is quite extraordinary. The infrastructure spend is about \$10 billion, which could be better spent supporting measures to alleviate road congestion in the southern suburbs and investing in Roe 8 and Roe 9. We know that the federal government has investment there and that money is on the table for that project.

**MR P.A. KATSAMBANIS (Hillarys)** [7.25 pm]: I rise to speak on the Appropriation (Recurrent 2020–21) Bill 2020 and the Appropriation (Capital 2019–20) Bill 2020. When describing this year’s budget, the two words that come to mind are “very disappointing”. The budget is very disappointing for my constituents, the people of the electorate of Hillarys. It is very disappointing for the stakeholders in my portfolio areas of police, road safety, justice and industrial relations. It is very disappointing for all Western Australians. The government comes in here and crows about a \$1.2 billion surplus, which it does on the back of an unprecedented iron ore boom—an iron ore boom that has never seen this sort of height in iron ore prices in global history. Yes, people associate it with the iron ore industry, and the downstream people involved in the mining industry generally are doing it fairly well, and good on them. They take great risks; they invest significant sums of money. The terms of trade have turned in their favour and they are reaping the rewards of their efforts, and so is the state, through significant royalty income.

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 October 2020]

p6656e-6708a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

Outside of that iron ore boom, people are not feeling as though they are doing well. In fact, most people I speak to in my electorate tell me how concerned they are about the future, including their employment prospects and the rising cost of living. They are also concerned about whether they will be able to access basic public services that they expect government to deliver.

Unfortunately, those concerns that the people of Hillarys are telling me about are amplified by residents right across this state because although the iron ore industry, and the government on the back of the iron ore industry, are doing very well, thank you very much, the rest of us are sitting back and clearly identifying that too many Western Australians are missing out, and that is unfair. The cost of living is a significant issue, including in my own electorate. People are worried; some of them have lost their jobs. The budget shows that unemployment is projected to increase for the rest of this financial year, which makes more people fearful about their future and their family's future, and financial security. Western Australians know that over the last almost four years of this government, on average household fees and charges have gone up by \$850 per family. Yes, there was some slight relief in that the projected increases during the COVID period were frozen. That was a good thing, and good on the government for doing that. With the largesse that it is getting from iron ore royalties, that is the least it could have done in that difficult period. Yes, the one-off \$600 payment to every household through the electricity system will be welcomed—of course it will be welcomed. The public will not be hoodwinked; they know that an increase of \$850 a year minus a \$600 one-off saving will still leave them behind. They certainly will not be hoodwinked by the fact that further steep increases in household fees and charges are built into the forward estimates, including electricity and water charges, which the government has significant say over.

That is disappointing for the average household. While the government crows about its \$1.2 billion surplus, people are doing it tough and they do not feel they are getting the benefit of the iron ore boom. In the middle of a global pandemic, with closed borders making it very difficult for the wheels of commerce outside the iron ore industry to turn, with people fearing for their employment prospects and with costs going up and up, for the government to crow about \$1.2 billion surplus is like someone sitting at home and saying they have a whole pile of money in the bank when the roof is leaking and the ceiling is falling on them. It just does not add up.

Talking of ceilings falling in, that brings me to the people whom I represent—the people of the electorate of Hillarys. The students and teachers in my electorate are in schools that have reached the end of their use-by date. These are great schools with great teachers, principals, school staff, school communities, parents and P&Cs. The students, of course, are very eager to learn, but they are being subjected to substandard facilities. I get it; this did not happen overnight, but I have been the member for Hillarys since only 2017. From the moment I stepped in this place, I have been warning the government that it is in government now. I have warned the government that these schools are past their use-by date and they are getting dangerous.

We saw what happened last month when the ceiling collapsed in a classroom at Hillarys Primary School. It fell on three students; thankfully none of them was seriously injured. But that is not the first time a ceiling has collapsed at the same school; it happened four years ago, in 2016. Yes, in response to that collapsed ceiling, the department went out there and made some adjustments. It did a bit of lick-and-spit, a bit of a polish, replaced a few of the most dangerous ceilings and cleared up the most obvious trip hazards, but the vast majority of the school remains a 50-year-old school, apart from the new buildings that were built during the Burke period. The rest of the school is way past patching up. It needs replacement, yet the government comes in here and talks about record investment in education. Tell that to the parents, students and teachers of Hillarys Primary School, or come to Springfield Primary School in Kallaroo, which is in a similar, if not worse, condition.

Good on every school that is getting record investment; I do not begrudge them. I know there are schools all over the state, including in the Treasurer's electorate, that are getting either a partial or full rebuild, and good on them. I am sure they deserve it. What is it—about \$10 million? I am sure they deserve every single cent of it, but with \$1.2 billion in the bank, how about giving the students, teachers, staff and parents of Hillarys Primary School and Springfield Primary School the same consideration? It is unfair; it is discriminatory. As I said, the blame is not just on this government, but this government is the government now, and it has the money in the bank. Here we are with ceilings collapsing on students. We are not in some Third World country or living in the nineteenth century; we are in 2020 in suburban Perth, Western Australia, which is going through an unprecedented iron ore mining boom. That is just not good enough.

I have spoken about Hillarys and Springfield Primary Schools. I sound like a broken record, but I am going to continue to do that, because the people of my community deserve to be treated like every other citizen of this state. Hillarys Primary School and the three primary schools in Padbury feed into Duncraig Senior High School, which is just outside the boundary of my electorate. That school is undergoing significant growing pains. It has gone from around 1 300 to 1 640 students over the last few years, on the back of its wonderful academic achievements and extension programs. But the school itself is old, it is crumbling and is groaning at the seams with demand that

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 October 2020]

p6656e-6708a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

will reach almost 2 000 within the next three or four years. It got \$1 million for, again, a bit of spit-and-polish. That does not go too far in a high school, as we all know. It needs a significant investment.

The school is located in the electorate of my colleague the member for Carine; his constituents send their kids to that school as well, and we are going to continue to fight for a fair share of that \$1.2 billion for Duncraig Senior High School. It is extremely important.

**Mr P.J. Rundle:** It's not in Bunbury!

**Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS:** I do not begrudge any school for getting funding, member for Roe, because I have been around this state, and many, many schools and facilities need replacement. That is what governments do, especially at a time when we are getting record iron ore royalties. The government needs to give the people a bit of a dividend and benefit from those record iron ore royalties rather than crowing about how much money it is taking away.

There are other needs in my electorate, such as relieving traffic congestion. We know that all the Infrastructure Australia reports tell us how congested our roads in Perth are going to be within the next few years, and Marmion Avenue and Mitchell Freeway come up every single time. They run right through the heart of my electorate. Marmion Avenue is at the midpoint of my electorate, from north to south, and the freeway is the boundary. Our people use those roads every single day to get around.

We have the Mitchell Freeway widening project for the now-infamous third lane between Hodges Drive and Hepburn Avenue. Going south in the morning it is a car park—every single morning. There is not a morning during peak hour, from Monday to Friday, when you turn on the radio and congestion on that stretch is not mentioned. Usually they say between Ocean Reef and Whitfords Avenue, or Mitchell Freeway around Whitfords; it is that patch: the missing third lane between Hodges Drive and Hepburn Avenue. The reservation is already there, and I am sure we will need to move a few services, but effectively all we need to do is bituminise it and there it will be—the third lane.

The previous government put funding for it in the budget, and in its first budget, this government pulled it out. Eventually the federal Morrison Liberal government came to the party—as it has in so many ways in Western Australia—with \$38 million last year. The state government said, “Thank you very much.” It said it would match the funding and the Minister for Transport brought out a vague commitment that it was anticipated that a contract would be awarded in late October to enable construction to commence at the end of 2020. I think the Minister for Transport said that around June this year. Where is that contract? What is the commencement date? When is it going to happen?

This project should have started in 2017 and finished in either 2017 or 2018. The money was in the budget, but it was pulled out and we still do not know when it will happen. We needed that extra southbound lane well before 2017, let us be honest. To be fair, governments of both sides deserve some opprobrium sometimes for what they have and have not done, but when is it going to happen? The government needs to stop talking about it. The government has become adept at announcing and re-announcing ideas by saying that it has put out a tender today or that it will put one out next week or that the tender is closing in a week. The government then puts out another press release that the tender will close in three days' time and then another press release when the tender closes. Get on and build the project. It is the same with other minor but important road projects in my area. As I said, Marmion Avenue will be one of the top 10 most congested roads in Australia over the next decade. We need work done on intersections, we need slip lanes and seagull islands in the middle of the road to protect people turning right and left. We need work to be done.

Mcwhae Road in Hillarys is a very important intersection. There has been a significant increase in traffic on that stretch of Marmion Avenue between Hepburn Avenue and Whitfords Avenue. I have been championing this project but the state government has refused to fund it. Luckily, the Morrison government, again, has provided \$735 000 to upgrade the Mcwhae Road–Marmion Avenue intersection and the City of Joondalup will deliver the project. Hopefully, that will be done in the next few months. Across the road in Padbury, Marmion Avenue and Forrest Road, again, need slip roads. Vehicles turning onto these roads need slip lanes because it is a such a busy road and the traffic gathers speed at some points. The infrastructure has not caught up with the congestion. Again, the City of Joondalup has applied for black spot funding from this state government in the current round. I have written to the Minister for Transport and said that this is really important. Forrest Road is one of the main arterial thoroughfare roads in Padbury and is used to deliver traffic into some of our important recreational facilities such as MacDonald Park and Forrest Park, which are both on that road. There is so much traffic that on that road that we need a slip lane and a seagull island to ensure that our local people can travel safely on those roads. I hope that the government sees sense and funds this project. MacDonald Park and Forrest Park are the home grounds of four important sporting clubs: Whitford Junior Football Club, Whitford Amateur Football Club, Whitfords Junior Cricket Club and the Whitfords Districts Senior Cricket Club.

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 October 2020]

p6656e-6708a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS:** Junior sport is flourishing. More than 900 families attend the junior football club alone. The junior cricket club has had record enrolments this year. We are still enrolling kids as we speak, as the cricket season is about to start. It has been great that kids have been able to get out and play sport this year. Junior sport started a bit late and the season was extended and everyone was happy. There has been huge growth in demand, particularly in female participation. In this chamber I have consistently championed female sport and women's Australian Rules football in particular. It is critically important to keep young people involved in fitness and community activities and to get them off their devices and involved in the community so that they can understand teamwork and volunteering and the like. Obviously, major health benefits come with that. Unfortunately, we cannot manufacture new ovals in suburbia, except at extraordinary cost, so we have to utilise those facilities better. MacDonald Park needs better lighting so that there can be junior football matches of Friday nights as well as on Saturdays and Sundays, and maybe on Saturday evenings later on. Floodlighting is needed for teams to train during the week. The City of Joondalup has applied for community sporting and recreation facilities funding for the floodlighting to be upgraded at MacDonald Park. That is critically important to my community. Again, I have written to the Minister for Sport suggesting to him that this vital project be funded. The government has the money. It has \$1.2 billion sitting there. Please, my community needs this support. The volunteers are extraordinary—the mums, dads, granddads, grandmothers, parents, uncles and aunties who volunteer their time. All they need is good floodlighting and sport will continue to flourish and all those benefits will continue to flow into our community.

Hillarys Boat Harbour is another important facility. It is an extraordinarily important tourist facility that has been completely neglected during this government's time. We know that the regions are flourishing because we are told that. The Minister for Tourism put up the "full house" sign in Western Australia. He told interstate and overseas people that we do not need them or want them. He even told Western Australians, essentially, "Don't bother booking because everything's full." What an absolutely ridiculous thing to say. Where is the assistance for the traders at Hillarys Boat Harbour? The facility is owned by the Department of Transport. Where is the genuine assistance? The Premier came and put up a couple of signs for a walking trail. The Premier cut a ribbon, made an announcement and left without even talking to anyone. He came and left. He came back a couple of weeks later for a photo opportunity, bought a coffee, got the photo and left. Where is the support for those traders? Where is the promotion? Come down to Hillarys Boat Harbour. The traders are doing a great job. They are trying their absolute best, but without interstate and overseas tourists, they are struggling. The restaurants and travel agencies are struggling, not to mention the souvenir shops, unfortunately. If they do not have the tourists, they cannot sell anything. There is no support from this government. It has not provided a general small business grant or even a calibrated small business grant like every other state has managed to provide. When we have raised it in this chamber, we have got glib comments from the Minister for Tourism and the Premier who ask whether we would give a handout to every business with an ABN. They say that that would cost billions of dollars. Every other state managed to calibrate that problem and sort the wheat from the chaff. Every other state except this one under this government gave out generalised small business grants during the COVID period. This government does not care about small business. It absolutely does not care about it.

Turning to my shadow police portfolio, everywhere I have gone over the last four years, communities have said that they need lots of things but that what they need more than anything else is a visible police presence to deter crime. We have not had that from this government. All in all, during the almost four years that this government has been in power, a grand total of around 200 police officers has been added to the force—a grand total of 200 police officers. That is hardly enough to cope with population growth and the increasing complexity of policing. Police have to do extra work when they attend family and domestic violence situations; they have extra paperwork to do; they spend more time in courts; and mental health escorts eat up entire shifts of police work while people who need mental health assistance wait for a facility to open. The police are hardly able to keep up with that. Most of those 200 police are still being trained in the academy. The government had to pull out 400 or 500 police to do COVID duties. The front line has been denuded of police, and police officers know that. If government members talked to the police, that is what they would tell them. When we ask what we can do for them, they say that the one thing we can do is give them extra bodies so they can cover the work that they are unable to cover. The Minister for Police always comes in here and says that the crime rate has dropped, but the statistics tell a slightly different story. Some crime has dropped during the COVID period. Yes, some of the volume crime, particularly that associated with meth, has reduced. That is a great thing. We shut the borders and the meth has not come in. It is a pretty simple equation. One day the borders will open and the meth will start pouring in again. It is just a temporary blip. What has happened to violent crime—crimes against the person? That has gone up. According to the police's own statistics, in the 2019–20 financial year, which are the most recent statistics, crimes against the person went up. That is assaults, threatening behaviour, robbery, and more serious offences such as sexual assaults and the like. Crimes against the person went up and violent crime went up, and so did the number of incidents that the police attended. The actual

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 October 2020]

p6656e-6708a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

charging rates might be down, but there was a 32.3 per cent increase in priority one and priority two incidents attended by police in the last financial year compared with the previous year, and response times went down. There was a decrease of 5.2 per cent in the number of priority one and priority two incidents in the metro area that were responded to within 12 minutes, which is the KPI. That is the lowest level in five years. We know that throughout the period of this government, not one police district in regional Western Australia was at its authorised strength of police. That is absolutely not good enough. We know now, from the latest statistics we have, that 11 of the 15 police districts, including some of the metro districts, were not up to their authorised strength. Now the government has announced 800 new police officers over the next four years. It is hardly believable; it has given us just 200 police officers in four years and all of a sudden it is going to give us 800 in the next four years. But even if we take the government at its word, those police officers are needed right now. They are not needed in four years' time. Most of those numbers are back ended to the last two years of the forward estimates, not the next two years. The Western Australian Police Union tells us that we need 200 new police officers right now just for the CBD and Northbridge, let alone regional areas and everywhere else. This government neglect of policing and keeping our community safe over the last four years is now coming home to roost. Unfortunately, it is too little, too late. The 800 new officers will be welcome, let us make no mistake about it, but my goodness, the government has struggled to deliver 200 new officers in four years. I do not think there is much believability in its claim that it can deliver 800 new officers in four years. I hope that I am proven wrong. As I always say in here, I barrack for any government of any day to be successful. I do not actually want this government to fail. Unfortunately, it is failing. That is the problem. This government is failing this community. It is failing all Western Australians, including the people of Hillarys, and whether in Hillarys or any other part of Western Australia, that is what the public is saying. We do not have a visible police presence, and that is unfortunate.

I do not have enough time today to expand on a lot of other areas that have been neglected, but I think one of the really big failings that drives the disappointment in this budget is that there is no vision for the future of Western Australia in this budget. There is no vision whatsoever. There is no vision for creating a broader economic base by leveraging off our strengths in mining, oil and gas and, obviously, agriculture to grow and broaden our economic base. There is no vision whatsoever. Unfortunately, that leads to the continuing brain drain from Western Australia, whereby young Western Australians who have an interest in a particular field that is not available here need to leave this state. A government with vision that is genuinely interested in growing this state and the prosperity of every person in this state would be looking at ways of encouraging a brain gain. Instead, all it is doing is feeding that generations-old brain drain from Western Australia, and we hope to goodness that once they have made it in the outside world, they return here for an early retirement because it is a good place to live. That is absolutely not good enough. One area the government failed to address is genuine reform of payroll tax to stimulate the creation of new employment opportunities in this state. There is \$1.2 billion in the kitty and an iron ore boom to end all iron ore booms. Yes, the government has given a payroll tax holiday to some businesses during the COVID period, and that is welcome, but that is the least it could have done. That is, unfortunately, the metaphor for this entire budget. This budget is just the least the government could have done, dragged kicking and screaming, with no vision and no support for the people out there in the community, including the constituents in the seat of Hillarys, who are asking for assistance from their government in very difficult times and are not getting it. Unfortunately, it is very disappointing, and it is not good enough.

**MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Deputy Leader of the Nationals WA)** [7.55 pm]: I am pleased to be able to be here tonight to make some comments on the budget—the Appropriation (Recurrent 2020–21) Bill 2020 and the Appropriation (Capital 2020–21) Bill 2020—that has been put forward by the Treasurer this year. Just before I do that, I note that we just had a little get together with VisAbilityWA to talk about the guide dogs and assistance dogs in Western Australia, and I was shocked to realise and understand that none of those dogs are bred in Western Australia. The question is: why not? We are now putting through a bill to control puppy farming in Western Australia, and I am told that that bill will cost \$8.5 million to enact, including the development of a central registry and putting in place all the necessary regulations, yet we are apparently reliant on dogs being sent over from the eastern states to assist those people who need the help of guide dogs for the blind, assistance dogs for people suffering from autism, companion dogs and the like. It just beggars belief that in the whole state of Western Australia, we cannot breed our own dogs. That is staggering. I could not believe what I was hearing—that these dogs have to be imported from the eastern states. Surely this state can provide people who need assistance with a dog. I was talking to one of the ladies and I understand that it costs about \$75 000 to \$80 000 to fully train a dog—not a fully trained guide dog but a companion dog—so there is a lot of money going out of the state, I would think, for each of those types of dogs, and a lot of opportunity gone begging. I would urge the government to look very seriously at whether a better way to spend \$8.5 million than perhaps its rather dodgy puppy farming legislation would be to actually put the money into providing guide dogs and assistance dogs for Western Australians.

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 October 2020]

p6656e-6708a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

I am here tonight talking on the 2020–21 budget. I should be up in my electorate in the Shire of Gingin talking about stable fly. There is an annual general meeting tonight of the Stable Fly Action Group, and this has been an issue in the Shire of Gingin going back many, many years—decades. There is a vast amount of horticultural and poultry industry within the Shire of Gingin. There has been a problem with stable flies, which were initially introduced when they bred in the poultry manure that was deposited around the vegetable farms. Then it was found that the stable flies were actually breeding in the residue of vegetable farms. Where there is a production system producing a vast quantity of lettuces, carrots and all sorts of other produce that feeds Western Australia and is exported around the world, there is residual from that crop. It might be the taproot of the crop; it could be those portions of the crop that have no economic value. What has happened is that over the years, the stable flies that were introduced with the chicken manure have been able to also breed in the residue of those crops, unless they are treated properly, ploughed well under the ground or treated in some way.

Recently, the Minister for Agriculture and Food allowed the use of “treated” poultry manures in the Shire of Gingin, and it is a disaster. Members of the Gingin community have told me that it has led to an explosion of stable fly. In previous years, the use of poultry manure was banned in that shire and poultry manure had to be taken out further to wheatbelt shires where the effects were spread around a much larger and probably drier area. But thanks to decisions that have been made, stable fly is coming back in droves in the shire. I am getting reports from constituents consistently about the negative effects on their lifestyle of that problem. I would very much like to be up there tonight listening to them and hearing their concerns. I believe that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Regional Development; Agriculture and Food is there, but as we know from previous experience, these matters tend to fall on the deaf ears of that particular individual, so I do not know whether much will come of that. Certainly, I make the case for my constituents who are struggling with this insidious situation. I have seen video images of cattle, horses and human beings being absolutely hounded by these flies. Stable fly is a bloodsucking insect. It is like a housefly, but it attacks people and looks for their blood. It drives livestock mad. Tens of thousands of them land on animals and cause all sorts of problems. It is beyond me that the government has allowed the use of “treated” raw poultry manure in the Shire of Gingin. It is just incredible. I hope that the Minister for Agriculture and Food listens to people’s comments to the parliamentary secretary tonight and moves to stop this practice immediately, because the stable fly situation in the Shire of Gingin is an absolute disaster.

Back on the budget as such, the Labor government has missed an opportunity to use the budget surplus that has been created largely on the back of royalties from the mining industry to breathe life back into the royalties for regions program and support regional Western Australia’s economic recovery as we come through the COVID-19 experience. The Treasurer announced a \$1.2 billion surplus; however, a significant amount of substitution of economic costs and underspend in the royalties for regions program will lead to an estimated \$2.7 billion of royalties for regions funds, which should be available for regional areas for economic development, to be siphoned off and spent in areas of greater interest to the state government. Because they are largely city-based MPs, that means spending in the metropolitan area. We do not begrudge areas of Perth having their fair share. We do begrudge the government ripping off the regions with the depletion of the royalties for regions fund and the death of royalties for regions we have seen under this government. The program may exist in name, but it is a shadow of the program of regional development that the Nationals envisaged when it formed government with the Liberal Party in 2008. The price of forming that government was the royalties for regions program. One-quarter of the royalties from the state were to be returned to the areas from which they came—to the regions—to be spent for the betterment of regional WA.

We know royalties for regions should not be paying for everything in the bush. We do not believe that royalties for regions should be paying for the ordinary business of government. Royalties for regions is a key ingredient that can get us beyond those little humps in the way of development of a region or an area and enable projects to come forward that otherwise might not get over the line if they were compared with city-based projects. We do not have the population to compete against a project in the City of Bayswater, for instance. City-based projects will always stack up more in terms of numbers than projects in the Shire of Katanning, because there are more people in the city. We understand that. Collectively, we represent 25 per cent of the state’s population, and all we are asking is that 25 per cent of the state’s royalties is spent in our regions. It is not too much to ask. That would greatly enable many, many projects throughout our electorates.

I will turn to a few issues in my electorate because my time is very limited. I note that the Liberal spokesperson on regional development in the upper house has been talking for hours, but we in this house do not have that opportunity; we have only half an hour. It is just not possible. I would love to have the opportunity to talk for an unlimited time. I am sure I could entertain people until well past midnight with all the issues in my electorate, which, I might add, has the oldest demographic of any electorate in Western Australia. It has very special needs. The population is much older than, for instance, the member for Dawesville’s electorate, and there is an urgent

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 October 2020]

p6656e-6708a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

need for more consideration of aged care. In the previous term of government, the Nationals put forward the Ageing in the Bush program, which comprehensively outlined the need for aged-care services in our regions and set out a process to address those issues. Funding for aged care depends largely on commonwealth sources, but the state spending money to enable programs to garner federal funds would be a great outcome. When government changed hands in 2017, we saw the curtailment of many very, very good programs that would have addressed aged-care issues throughout regional WA. As the representative of the electorate with the oldest demographic of any in this Parliament, it would be remiss of me not to highlight the need for aged-care services in my electorate. To my knowledge, very few places in the electorate have any level of comprehensive aged care. Generally, it is provided in the old WA Country Health Service hospital sites, but moving away from those places, very little is available. The Shires of Gingin and Chittering—leaving aside the City of Greater Geraldton of which I have a very small proportion of the population—are the areas of my electorate with the highest population and have virtually no WA Country Health Service presence or residual legacy infrastructure from days gone by that could be turned into aged-care facilities, as is the case in many other places that have an old hospital with beds that are no longer used for other purposes and become a de facto aged-care centre for the region. Many areas in my electorate do not have that.

The Nationals in government worked out a program with the then Minister for Health, the former member for Dawesville, Hon Kim Hames, that would have funded many of the aged-care requirements in my electorate. The Turquoise Coast Health Initiative would have not only provided palliative care and aged care, but also care for young families in all those areas where there is no legacy of hospitals and infrastructure. I am talking about the Shires of Chittering, Gingin and others along the coast to Dongara. It was a \$22.5 million project that was well developed when government changed hands, but it had not been put in place. The planning had been done by the WA Country Health Service and it had begun the process of putting in place the necessary workforce and everything else, but the new government said, “No. We’re not going to bother spending money in that area. We’ll get rid of that. We’re going to build on our local jobs, local priorities”, or whatever the slush fund was called after the election. So that money disappeared from my electorate and I do not know where it went. It just disappeared into the ether, but I assume it went into Perth electorates, because it certainly did not show up in my electorate.

There are many other issues in the electorate. At the moment, transport is a red-hot issue for people in Moore, not least because the preferred Dongara to Northampton coastal route has just been announced. I am talking about a new route from the Irwin River at Dongara and potentially a new road to the Geraldton–Mt Magnet Road, and a new road across to Oakajee that would join up with the existing alignment of the North West Coastal Highway, but with significant upgrades, until it gets to Northampton, with a bypass to Northampton. The Northampton bypass has been needed for many years and I strongly support it. I believe that it could be built as a standalone project and would not need to wait for those other projects to happen. At the moment very large trucks come right through the town, intermingling with tourist traffic. There is a very sharp corner around the middle pub and on a couple of occasions trucks have got too close and knocked the verandah of the shops on the other side of the street. The bypass really needs to be constructed. A bypass route around Northampton has been talked about for years and it needs to happen. There is general acceptance in Northampton for it to be built. Northampton has recently become a tourist mecca with many campers et cetera coming into town and they do not want to miss out on the opportunity of coming into Northampton, so the design of the bypass needs to be sensitive to ensure light traffic can quickly go through Northampton and people can stop and have one of the excellent vanilla slices at the Shearing Shed Cafe. The member for Geraldton can vouch for those. I bought him one a couple of months ago and he was most impressed. “Better than anything in Geraldton”, he said.

**Mr I.C. Blayney:** I don’t remember saying that.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** I think the member did say that. I am sure it is better than anything in Geraldton. It is the best vanilla slice in Western Australia. We do not want to deprive tourists of the opportunity to get the best vanilla slice in Western Australia. We want them to keep coming through Northampton. This is the sensitive nature of bypasses. We do not want them to be town killers. It is very important for the Shire of Irwin. The Shire of Irwin represents the towns of Dongara and Denison, which are one community—collectively they are the biggest community in my electorate, which is why my office is located in that town. But if a road is built that completely bypasses that town, tourists will not have an opportunity to go into the town and that would be to the detriment of the community. The shire is supportive of a bypass, but only if tourists are given a good opportunity to come into town. Oh my goodness! We do not have much time in this house, do we? Can I have an extension?

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** If it has not already been granted, certainly.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Could I have several, because I could talk longer?

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** No, just the one.



**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 October 2020]

p6656e-6708a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr B.S. Wyatt:** Is there a move to the upper house?

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** That might happen; you never know.

This is an urgent issue for the shire. It put a proposal to the government, which I understand it knows about—certainly Main Roads knows about it—to extend Indian Ocean Drive to come into Dongara at about where the golf course and the medical centre are, with the construction of a new bridge over the Irwin River. A new bridge is desperately needed because the closure of the one decent bridge in Dongara would split the community in half. The medical centre is on one side and the largest number of people live on the other side and there could be a big issue if something were to happen to that bridge. The community would like another bridge in the town, which would also facilitate tourists coming in closer to town and interacting with the Dongara community. They would not mind a road that would come off away from the Brand Highway as it exists around Greenough, because that area is very heavily populated now. There is very valuable agricultural land and a wider corridor and a big road through the Greenough flats, as they are known. Expanding that road would be to the detriment of both agriculture and the local community. It is a good idea to get that traffic away from that area, but not to the detriment of Dongara. We do not want to see that happen. I am going to have to move along quickly.

Another issue with the road around Oakajee is its basic geometry and what is known as the ONIC—the Oakajee Narnngulu Infrastructure Corridor. For the past 15 or 20 years, landowners' properties in that corridor have essentially been sterilised. The people who have lived there for 20-odd years have not been able to move on because there is a line on the map that does not trigger compensation and yet prevents them from making decisions about the future of their land. They cannot, for instance, put a house on their land because it is too close to the proposed ONIC. We do not want that to happen to other people. The government needs to get behind those landowners and compensate them, instead of just leaving it in the local planning strategies as Main Roads has suggested. That road needs to be included in the local planning scheme, with matching indemnity from the government to trigger compensation. It is not good enough that landowners on this route could be left in limbo for another 20 years. Those landowners need to be compensated and the land purchases need to occur. If that is done, I imagine that the move towards getting some action will be much quicker.

Also the Mullewa community in my electorate has been calling for upgrades to the Geraldton–Mt Magnet Road. Mines have started up out towards Cue and traffic to the east of that area has increased. The road desperately needs to be upgraded. I am pleased that the Orange Route on Toodyay Road is being looked at. A dual carriageway out to Gidgegannup will benefit the communities of Toodyay, Dowerin, Goomalling and the like. There has been a very sad history of road deaths on Toodyay Road. Very early in my time as a member, I remember fronting up to a meeting at the Gidgegannup Hall, which is not in my electorate but is nearby, after an entire family had been wiped out by a truck on that road. The community was very upset. I do not want to front up to those types of meetings. I would rather see that the road was fixed. I know that that road is in the City of Swan, so it is in the member for Swan Hills' electorate, but it services people in my area. When it deviates and heads out to Northam, it will benefit the people in the area of Northam as well.

People on the NorthLink WA have made it known that they have great issues with NorthLink at the moment and the chip seal that has been put down. Main Roads has said that chip seal is common in rural areas. I say that the particular seal on NorthLink is the worst I have ever seen in my life. I was a shire president of a shire with nearly 2 000 kilometres of road and I know a little about how roads are constructed. That road has the biggest stones I have ever seen on a sealed road surface and, consequently, the noise is awful. The bitumen was laid on a cold day and the tar went like bubblegum; it did not adhere to the stone. Consequently, 1 000 people's cars and windscreens have been damaged. Back in June, there were 417 cases, with \$88 000 worth of damage. The ABC reported on 13 September that 1 000 people had been affected and \$300 000 worth of damage had been done to individual cars, not to mention the horrendous noise for the people who live nearby. That noise has been replicated on Indian Ocean Drive where a similar seal was used. I have written to the Minister for Transport, asking her to install noise monitoring in the subdivision of Woodridge, which is north of Two Rocks, at the bottom of my electorate. I have been told no, because the work that Main Roads did was to install asphalt. That was a small portion of the work. The rest of the work was to do with Indian Ocean Drive safety upgrades that led to increased noise and complaints through Woodridge, Sovereign Hill and Redfield Park. The noise that emanates from Indian Ocean Drive on a long weekend is so loud, it is a roar. It is terrible. Again, it has this really, really coarse seal. In old language, the stones are at least an inch across. It is ridiculous. Main Roads needs to look at this issue, because this is not isolated. It is happening wherever it is putting down the current chip seal. It is much louder than other road surfaces I have travelled across in the past.

Another transport issue is coastal planning and erosion. We have repeated issues at the Jurien Bay marina. I remember taking petitions and leading a grievance to the former Minister for Transport, Hon Troy Buswell, back in 2014.

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 October 2020]

p6656e-6708a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

The response was that a working committee would be put in place to look at ways to improve conditions at the marina. A lot of work has been done on the Jurien Bay marina to understand the processes going on. I understand from questions I put to the minister in Parliament, question on notice 6330, that the design of that fix for the marina has been put in place. There is an estimated cost of \$7.8 million. The department has been in Jurien Bay consulting with the community. I was very disappointed to see that the project is not on the list of budgeted projects. Going back again, if royalties for regions had been spent where it should have been, that could have been taken forward. There are 55 coastal erosion hotspots in WA, and of those 40 or so in are in the regions. Eight or nine of those are in my electorate, including Ledge Point, Grace Darling Park, Wedge and Grey, Cervantes, and Grannies Beach at Port Denison and the nearby surf beach, which are subject to erosion. The budget has \$5 million put towards land management. If the Nationals WA were in government, royalties for regions would have put \$50 million to it. That is our policy. That is the sort of commitment required to get these jobs done. That would be made available to regional and local governments, Coastcare and other community groups to fund programs and initiatives to help manage Western Australia's fragile coastline.

I have spoken briefly before about the Turquoise Coast Health Initiative. Another program in health going on at the moment is the Mullewa and Dongara primary health care demonstration sites. This is a project that the previous government funded. It was being planned under the previous government. We are coming to the end of this government's term and there is still nothing on the ground in Mullewa and Dongara. It is a disgrace. The communities in Mullewa and Dongara deserve better.

I turn to power. I am very disappointed to see that power upgrades have not been done in the midwest. The member for Central Wheatbelt, our leader, spoke about this. Power outages in the midwest are measured in days—not minutes, not hours, but in days. That is leading to the diminishment of communities. I am seeing people leave communities because of this. It needs to be addressed; it has not been addressed.

I turn to education. The government will be pleased to know that the Moora Residential College that it did not want to fund is nearly constructed. I think it is pretty well full up for next year. In fact, it is full of boys. It has run out of space. It has not been completed yet, but it is full, and we are looking forward to completion at the end of December. Again, the Nationals have a commitment in Moora that goes beyond that, and that is to develop the senior high school so it has more ability to provide the face-to-face Australian tertiary admission rank courses that will encourage people to stay in the regions and get their education regionally. We know at the moment that regional kids are missing out and they need the opportunities. Royalties for regions is there to provide some of these services ahead of the need, because we know that if that is not done, we will never get to the point at which there is the need because people leave. They leave because there is no power, they leave because there is no education and they leave because there is no aged care. That is what we need royalties for regions to fix up.

I just want to spend the last two minutes talking on the matter of fracking, which is a huge concern in my electorate. Members will know that I have had on the notice paper for a long time a disallowance of the current government's fracking regulations, which I have not moved. The reason I have not moved it is if I moved the disallowance of those regulations and it was successful, there would be no protection for my communities against the evil practice of fracking. Communities have made that concern known to me over many years. I think the first fracking petition I got was back in 2013, and ever since community after community has told me that it does not support the practice of fracking. I have made that known to the government and the Minister for Mines and Petroleum inadvertently told me that there would be no fracking in Moore because there were no petroleum leases currently so it could not happen. A map of the electorate of Moore shows that everywhere from Dongara pretty well to the Perth CBD, the Perth boundary, is covered in petroleum leases, and all of that area is potentially subject to fracking. My community does not want it. Its members have expressed that in great numbers. I support them in that. I do not see that there is any need to undertake fracking in a state with abundant gas supplies from conventional sources, and I support the community in its opposition to that horrendous practice.

**MR D.T. PUNCH (Bunbury)** [8.25 pm]: I rise to speak to the Appropriation (Recurrent 2020–21) Bill 2020 and the Appropriation (Capital 2020–21) Bill 2020. I start at the outset by thanking the Treasurer for an outstanding budget and for its record spend within regional Western Australia of \$7.5 billion. It shows that this state is in a safe pair of hands. I am known as being proudly Bunbury, but I have never been prouder of my community than I have over the past eight months. We have been part of one of the biggest challenges this globe has faced, and my community, as is the case with all of Western Australia, faced that challenge with courage and resilience. When the call went out for volunteers, people stepped up. When shops had to close, people did that willingly. When we were able to remove the immediate restrictions around our lives and open up again, people responded with enthusiasm. Perhaps more than anything else, it showed just how much of a community we are as we faced up to an uncertain future.

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

Last weekend in Bunbury the sun was shining. It was a beautiful spring day and all over Bunbury there were festivals and events happening, and the electorate was buzzing. It was as if for the first time in a long time people did not need to feel fear about the future. They came together to enjoy music, dance, food and new activities, from story tours about shipwrecks to a brand-new motor museum. On the Saturday I went to the Live Lighter Southwest Filipino Community Arts Festival. Under President Francis Albercite's leadership and Mary Jo's organisational ability, it was a beautiful festival with mums and dads and children dressed in traditional costumes enjoying a local band at the Graham Bricknell Music Shell, surrounded by food trucks and market stalls, and, more importantly, enjoying each other's company. Later in the day, the Koombana Bay Sailing Club started its season over the beautiful outlook of Koombana Bay. With the new committee led by Commodore Sarah Twigger and Vice Commodore Deri Price, the club now looks forward to a great future expanding sailing and boating right around Bunbury's waterfronts. In the afternoon, the youth advisory committee organised the SHIFT music festival. It was all happening in Bunbury for youth on the Koombana foreshore, with live music and other activities along the water's edge with people just out enjoying each other's company and the sunset over the water. Then there was the Garba Festival. Garba is a Gujarati folk dance celebrated in Navratri. It is a celebration lasting nine nights, with songs typically revolving around the subjects of the nine goddesses. There is a circular dance that can go on for 24 hours, and I managed four circuits.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** How long did that take?

**Mr D.T. PUNCH:** It took a long time, about five minutes a circuit.

It is a celebration for every generation, with children through to seniors dressed in colourful traditional dress dancing to deep rhythmic Indian music. Dr Parthasarathy Ramesh, president of the South West Indian Group, brought the community together for this festival, and was joined by Indian Consul General, Dantu Charandasi. Everyone was together for this festival. It was a great festival.

On Sunday, Bunbury won the South West Football League grand final. The member for Vasse is here—it was a stunning victory over Busselton! A crowd of over 3 000 people enjoyed the day. They kicked footies on the oval during the breaks and enjoyed a pie and, dare I say, some chips and gravy. Sunday also saw the opening of the Bunbury Geographe Motor Museum in the city centre, with a huge collection of classic motor vehicles—perhaps an excess of Holdens over Fords. This is a result of the efforts of local people who were keen to bring new opportunities to the CBD. Tom Dillon and Colin Piacentini were the driving forces, supported by chair of the committee, Paul Stubber. What all this shows is that people are out and enjoying everything that our community has to offer. People are not only enjoying themselves but also volunteering and actively creating things to do and see. That is because people see our state as safe. This government is working hard to keep our state safe, despite the efforts of the federal government and the Liberal–National opposition to open our borders and expose our state to community transmission. All the gains to make our community as safe as possible and to open up the community to provide opportunities for a strong economy will be under threat if members opposite have their way.

Several members interjected.

**Mr D.T. PUNCH:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I had to endure members opposite in silence. Can I seek your protection?

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Everyone, I am on my feet! Do you have a point of order, member?

A member: No.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I didn't think so. Members, that is enough. Please let the speaker continue; he has the call.

**Mr D.T. PUNCH:** When the McGowan Labor government was elected in March 2017, it had a plan to bring the state's finances under control, given the appalling mess left by the Liberal–National government that put this state into recession. We had a plan to support local jobs, rebuild TAFE, support education and health, and build the infrastructure that would carry Western Australia into the future. Above all, the government's platform when it was elected in 2017 was to put the people of Western Australia first. It wanted to make sure that our health services have patients at the centre. It wanted to ensure that apprentices and trainees are supported with quality training opportunities and that our kids have access to modern school facilities. It put education assistants back into the classroom and embraced opportunities to promote science, maths and engineering. The government did all this while making sure that the state's financial position was under control for the long haul. By February 2020, the government's fiscal position was a world away from the mess left by the Liberal–National government. There was one per cent less unemployment and a \$9 billion improvement in forecast debt, and operating expense growth was not only under control but also delivering a surplus. We were delivering on our plan for Western Australia. Of course, the COVID-19 pandemic changed everything everywhere. It changed the world's economy and plunged most of the world into potential recession. It brought fear and anxiety about the future, and uncertainty. It has impacted every part of our lives, but one thing has not changed—the McGowan Labor government still puts people first.

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

This budget is about keeping our community safe, keeping people healthy and ensuring that we manage COVID-19 by controlling our own destiny. It is also about enabling people to rebuild—to get back to work and resume their businesses and careers as far as possible within the resources of the state. The budget builds on the partnership this government has developed with the federal government in funding infrastructure for the future, with the largest regional roads program in this state’s history. Of course, my region is benefiting from that through the construction of the Bunbury Outer Ring Road and the dualling of Bussell Highway. It is about having a safe and strong community. The feedback from my community is that that is welcome. The future of our economy rests on our ability to manage the virus within our state. The ability of people to go about their daily lives and to be able to go to work, open their businesses and invest in the future is based on our ability to ensure that this virus does not get a second foothold in the state. My community welcomes the actions of this government to put the health and safety of people first. Make no mistake: the McGowan Labor government has the back of Western Australians. My community welcomes the fact that we have regained 70 per cent of the jobs that were lost during the lockdown, aggregate hours worked are almost 90 per cent of what they were pre-COVID, and job adverts are at a new high. It welcomes the fact that in 2019–20, the state’s economy grew by 1.1 per cent and has not followed the rest of Australia down the path of recession. Gross state product is forecast to grow by 1.25 per cent. Most of all, unemployment, which was forecast to average eight per cent in 2020–21, declined to seven per cent in August, with 32 000 people gaining employment in that month. The retail confidence and business confidence indicators are up.

I read a very interesting ABC online news report today, which I will read out for the benefit of members. It includes comments from the Australian Retailers Association and talks about the importance of the state’s economy being quickly rebooted after the initial lockdown, with retailers the unexpected winners. The article states that retail sales are up by more than 20 per cent in WA compared with the same time last year. The article quoted the Australian Retailers Association as saying that WA is outperforming the rest of the nation, and states that the strong return to work rate is creating a retail sector boom. To quote the CEO of the Australian Retailers Association, Paul Zahra —

“WA is definitely a star performer since the COVID pandemic began ... the state is likely going to post a record year of sales in 2020,” ...

...

“There are a few key ingredients for the retail sector to thrive,” ...

“The first is the underlying retail business has to be healthy and the second is people need to be in jobs and have cash.

“Third, consumers need to feel positive about the future and I think we’re seeing those three ingredients play out in WA.”

The president of The Retail Co in Bunbury, Cheryl Kozisek, was also quoted as saying —

...although there were some casualties during the peak of the pandemic —

My heart certainly goes out to those people —

many retailers were enjoying a swing back to traditional shopping.

There we have it: the retail sector is very strong. It is everywhere. The government knows that keeping people safe is the key to a strong economy, and a strong economy means more Western Australians and more people in my electorate can get back to work and live a life as close to normal as possible. That is why I am pleased this budget returns money to Western Australian households—\$600 in power credits—increases the number of police on the streets by 950, fully funds the Western Australian economic recovery plan and funds important services and infrastructure in my community. It is a plan that provides the fiscal stimulus needed by my community and many other communities, and a foundation for renewed confidence and investment from the private sector.

The economic recovery plan for Bunbury is about health, education, a renewed focus on industry and manufacturing, and infrastructure to make our roads safer and more efficient, but at its core it is about having a safe and strong community. The south west economic recovery plan delivers for Bunbury a fast-tracked outer ring road that will deliver 4 500 local jobs and significantly improve state road safety into the future and reduce significant congestion in suburbs like Glen Iris, Dalyellup, College Grove and Gelorup and around our regional hospital. This project will make our local roads safer and improve the lives of local people. The plan contributes \$38 million of additional funding, for a total of \$60.8 million, towards the redevelopment of Bunbury Hospital, which is one of the hardest-working hospitals in the state. This is a major redevelopment that will continue —

**Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup:** That the member for Bunbury has done nothing about. It seems congested and you’ve done nothing about it at all.

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 October 2020]

p6656e-6708a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

**Mr D.T. PUNCH:** When the member for Dawesville has something to say that is sensible, I will listen. When he has a significant contribution to make, I will listen. But until that time, I seek the protection of Madam Deputy Speaker.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Absolutely.

**Mr D.T. PUNCH:** This is a major redevelopment of a hospital that will continue to provide services to my community right through the redevelopment program, while it works to meet the needs of the south west for the foreseeable future.

The budget contains \$8 million to fund a new multipurpose community and youth centre at Dalyellup, a community of 9 500 people. Dalyellup is larger than most regional towns in Western Australia and is desperately in need of community facilities. This suburb was entirely neglected by the previous Liberal–National government. In fact, I do not think it even knew it existed. The budget provides \$5 million towards the provision of modern facilities at Hans Oval. This includes national standard male and female change rooms. This is particularly important given the rise of women’s ground sports in the Bunbury area.

The budget provides \$11.9 million towards the Bunbury water resource recovery scheme, which will provide recycled water for irrigation of Bunbury’s public open spaces, and potentially a source of water for construction. That will significantly safeguard potable water for the city’s future drinking water supplies. That is an excellent example of this government’s investment into the future—leaving a legacy.

There is \$15.5 million to facilitate the expansion of the port of Bunbury by separating private traffic from commercial and freight traffic. There is \$3.3 million for the sports and performance area at Bunbury High School, a school that was also long neglected by the previous government. There is \$32 million to expand the Lower Fees, Local Skills program, and to significantly reduce TAFE fees across 39 high-priority courses, and \$25 million for free TAFE short courses. These are outstanding examples of our government’s commitment to reskilling and to education, and I thank the Treasurer for that.

The recovery plan also includes \$159 million relief funding for crisis care organisations, which have been working with people throughout the pandemic period, as well as not-for-profit sports, arts and community groups. There is \$942.8 million to support Western Australian businesses through the pandemic, and \$30.6 million in payments to maintain apprentices and trainees. There is \$556 million to reduce or freeze household payments. That is on top of the very warmly received \$600 that will be made available to households as a credit on their electricity bills.

The budget has also delivered to Bunbury a welcome announcement of \$78.1 million for stage 3, part 1 of Bunbury waterfront. This is a major transformation of Bunbury’s waterfront. It will provide a new level of protection for Casuarina Harbour, enabling the expansion of berthing for vessels, and also new hardstand and boat-lifting facilities. This is about a recreational and commercial marine industry that Bunbury has long missed out on. It will mean new and varied jobs. It will mean apprentices and trainees. It includes a rebuilding of the Koombana Bay breakwater, which will trigger significant private sector development from the local sailing club for all boaties in Bunbury. WA Labor commenced this project back in the 1980s as part of the Bunbury 2000 program. The Liberal–National government over successive periods chose to ignore that. I am very grateful that after all this time, a Labor government is delivering this.

I would like to acknowledge the hard work put into that project by community members Mr David Kerr, Mr Stuart Thomson and Mr David Doherty, who worked with me to establish the need to expand the marine industry in Bunbury, and by Ms Robyn Fenech and members of the Bunbury development committee. I want to especially acknowledge Mr Ashley Clements of the South West Development Commission, who has been a champion and worked tirelessly to make the whole of the Bunbury waterfront transformation a reality.

I am also very pleased that the budget includes \$8.4 million for the creation and management of the Kalgulup regional park at Bunbury. This will be 3 100 hectares of protected bushland that will be a stronghold for biodiversity, as well as a recreational park for the people of Bunbury and Dalyellup.

[Member’s time extended.]

**Mr D.T. PUNCH:** This highlights the environmental credentials of this government in both setting aside land of high-value biodiversity, and dealing with issues like waste through the containers for change scheme, which has hit 10 million containers returned. It is amazing.

Beginning in 2021, there will be a new pilot program to increase the completion of child health checks at year 1 and 2 in Bunbury and Midland to a target of 75 per cent of the population and 100 per cent of high-risk children. That reflects that historically, Western Australia has had low completion rates. That is a very important project for the future lives of our children.

This budget completes the Labor government’s commitments to the people of my electorate through the “Plan for Bunbury”. We went to the 2017 election with a clear plan. I am pleased to say that all the commitments in that

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 October 2020]

p6656e-6708a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

plan have been delivered, are under contract, or are now funded through this budget. Every project has arisen out of collaboration with the community, and in many instances produced new partnerships.

The many other aspects of this budget that I am delighted about include the increased spend on mental health, which is now over \$1 billion, a record spend; broader commitments to schools; a new maintenance program for social housing; funding for the tourism sector; the refurbishment of police stations; and the 800 additional new police officers, bringing the total provided by the McGowan government to 1 100. It also includes our commitment to freeze household fees and charges, and to hand \$664 back to households in 2021, effectively a massive reduction of 10.4 per cent to the average household in government fees and charges. The delivery of the McGowan government's commitment to our community, the additional commitments to support an economic recovery agenda for the state, the government's ability to develop a working relationship with the federal government, which saw the GST inequity largely addressed, and a suite of major infrastructure projects funded, are testament to a government and a Treasurer that work hard and are disciplined.

The budget will return a net operating surplus for 2020–21 of \$1.2 billion. I know that members opposite want us to spend the lot. This is money that can be invested in the government's infrastructure program. Importantly, this money can be a buffer in case a second wave of COVID-19 emerges in this state. That is part of the strategy of this government to keep our community safe. We cannot afford another outbreak of COVID-19 in Western Australia. We cannot afford to have the Liberal–National opposition tear down the border protections that are contributing to the safety of our community. The consequences could be enormous, with a six-week lockdown period, resulting in the loss of 30 000 jobs, a huge reduction in state product, and, most importantly, a huge impact on the health and welfare of our community, and a return of fear. That is why this government is relying on the advice of the Chief Medical Officer on the arrangements for our state border. The stakes are incredibly high. This virus has shown that, given a chance, it takes no prisoners. This is a prudent and sensible plan for this contingency. That is why I am pleased that the McGowan government has been able to respond to this crisis so strongly, yet retain the capacity to fight the fight should we need to.

I started by acknowledging the people of my community. I also want to end on that point. Dalyellup and Bunbury are special places. My community has shared the adversity of the last eight months, and shared the uncertainty of the future. However, like so many Western Australians, when their backs are against the wall, they come out fighting. What I saw last weekend with all those festivals was a vibrant, confident and forward-looking community that has regained its sense of purpose. It is safe in the knowledge that this government, in this budget, is putting people first. It is putting the safety of the community first, and it is putting a strong community first. Thank you.

**MS C.M. ROWE (Belmont)** [8.47 pm]: I rise to make a contribution to the Appropriation (Recurrent 2020–21) Bill 2020 and the Appropriation (Capital 2020–21) Bill 2020. I think it is fair to say that 2020 has been a year like no other. None of us foresaw that this year would unfold as it did. We have been faced with some of the most difficult and unprecedented challenges any of us have ever seen. In March this year, the world pivoted into uncharted territory. How could we have predicted or imagined that the world would be totally transformed by COVID-19?

Our state government, under the exceptional leadership of the Premier, the careful guidance of the Minister for Health, and the sturdy stewardship of the Treasurer, responded swiftly and decisively. The government made the tough decision to close our border, and thank God we did. To date, the McGowan state government has protected the Western Australian community from COVID-19. I think it is fair to say that we are in an enviable position to the rest of the globe, with currently no transmission of COVID-19 in the community.

Critically, our government has also taken dramatic steps to ensure that our economy is the strongest in the nation. WA is the only state to not have slipped into a recession. In fact, WA has experienced its strongest economic growth in many years. In the face of a pandemic, this is truly remarkable. I wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge the enormous efforts of our Treasurer during this challenging period. This has resulted in our economy being largely buffered from the worst impacts of this really shocking virus. The community should be really proud of the role it has played in making sure that we have arrived at this position. I am acutely aware that many families and businesses in my community have been hurting and doing it really tough during the COVID-19 period.

It is also important to note that we are not through this. COVID is not over; it is not going anywhere. We do not have a vaccine, and it continues to run rife through much of the world. It is very clear to people, certainly to people in my community, that our state government is not taking any chances. We know the risk of COVID coming back to our state, and we know the impact that would be likely to have on both our health system and our economy. Thus far, we have been able to buffer our economy thanks to the continued strength of the mining industry, but it is fair to say that we are all acutely aware that if there is a second wave, it will have a much deeper impact on our economy.

That brings me to my next point: this is why it is so important that our Treasurer achieved a budget surplus this year. We need to ensure that we act in a financially responsible manner so that we have the capacity to once again

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 October 2020]

p6656e-6708a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

act swiftly to stimulate the economy, should we need to if COVID returns to WA. I note with absolute dismay that the Liberal opposition has condemned the government for being financially prudent by preparing for the future. It has criticised the surplus; this is nothing short of recklessness. Even the people in my community who do not necessarily have a background in finance can understand the necessity of having a surplus right now. For the opposition to say we should not have a surplus, when there is so much uncertainty in our world, is quite frankly unfathomable. We need to have funds available in reserve to make sure we are in a position to again act swiftly to stimulate the economy, should we be faced with phase 2 of COVID-19. I congratulate the Treasurer for yet again being so cautious in his actions. It has really held us in good stead.

As the fight against COVID-19 continues, our most recent budget is focused on keeping Western Australians safe and strong. That has been the government's modus operandi, and that is what has got us through the pandemic thus far. We will continue to do that and make sure that we do not take our foot off the pedal, do not ignore the risks, and do not take it for granted that we are safe here in WA. We know that COVID could come back at any stage, and we are being vigilant every step of the way. I think that is really important, and it is a really big differential between us and the opposition. We were the ones who recognised early the need to be firm with our borders and to close our borders. We were the ones who acted swiftly, and I am really proud of our government for doing that.

We are focused on protecting the health of our community and leading the state's economic recovery by creating opportunities for local businesses and jobs for Western Australians, which are so important at this time.

Several members interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Dawesville, please. That is enough yelling.

**Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup** interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I suspect that both of you are adults and can manage that very easily. I am sure the member on her feet will continue with her speech.

**Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup** interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Enough!

**Ms C.M. ROWE:** As I am sure the opposition is aware, with this budget WA is the only state in Australia that has declining debt. I am sure even the naysayers on that side of the chamber acknowledge that it is incredibly important at this time to have declining debt and for the government to take responsible steps to make sure we have a surplus so that we are in a very strong position. Everyone remembers that when we came to government in 2017, we were left with a record deficit; the state was saddled with monumental debt that got up to \$44 billion. Let us just let that figure sink in. It is astronomical.

Since 2017, the Treasurer, the Premier and the cabinet have worked tirelessly to bring the state's finances back in, and I am really proud of the work they have done to turn our finances around. As a result of that, we had the capacity to act swiftly to stimulate the economy and turn things around really quickly here in WA. I hope we can continue to do so during this pandemic. God knows what we would have been able to do if the Treasurer had not been able to get the budget back under control.

Thanks to the government's responsible management of finances and the strength of our economy prior to the pandemic, this budget will fully fund our \$5.5 billion recovery plan. That is a record amount for investment in infrastructure, and I think that is fantastic. It is clearly about making sure that we use that money to stimulate the economy effectively by putting people into jobs, and to have something to show for it with regard to infrastructure. It has certainly been welcomed right across my community, as I am sure it has been in other electorates. The recovery plan is a pivotal step in our state's COVID journey. It will stimulate economic and social recovery right across our state while simultaneously creating a pipeline of jobs, including in regional areas. I am sure that our Nationals WA colleagues will appreciate that.

As part of the McGowan government's recovery plan, we announced a \$492 million building schools package, which includes sizable funding for infrastructure such as performing arts centres, school upgrades and refurbishments, and so on and so forth. Some of the schools in my electorate of Belmont were the very grateful recipients of some of that funding. Belmay Primary School, which has very dated classroom and assembly area infrastructure, was absolutely over the moon to receive \$2 million for general upgrades. They cannot believe their luck. The whole school community is very excited to be able to put that money to really good use. Belmont Primary School is another old school in my community; it is more than 100 years old. It will receive \$1 million to refurbish its classrooms and for general upgrades. The main high school in my electorate, Belmont City College, will receive \$1.3 million, again for general refurbishment, but it will also upgrade its tennis courts. They are so dilapidated that the kids cannot use them; it is just bare concrete. The school will also upgrade its gymnasium floor. These are things that my

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 October 2020]

p6656e-6708a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

schools simply would not have been able to afford to do, so this is an enormous achievement and the community is really excited about it.

**Mr B.S. Wyatt:** Is Stephanie Dann still there?

**Ms C.M. ROWE:** She is; Stephanie Dann is still at Belmont Primary School, and she talks about the Treasurer fondly and often.

The McGowan government is clearly committed to investing in our schools, evidenced by the fact that even before the building schools package announcement, the state government had already committed a massive \$200 million to a maintenance upgrade blitz. Again, that was for schools right across the state. A lot of our state schools got absolutely nothing from the other side over eight years, so they were really excited. A lot of my schools were yet again grateful recipients of that funding, so that was fantastic.

We also showed our bona fides in education by announcing that 200 state schools will be able to convert existing classrooms into brand-new science labs and to furnish them with \$25 000 worth of equipment. I am pleased to say that over the past few years in my electorate, we have received quite a lot of funding for local schools, including \$5 million for a new performing arts centre at Belmont City College. Belmont City College has a very well renowned performing arts culture. It runs an immensely popular course in conjunction with the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts. Unfortunately, the performing arts centre had grown out of its current facility and Belmont City College was very happy to find out that we will fund a brand-new performing arts centre. That should be finished in November this year and will be ready for the new school year next year. Belmont City College is absolutely rapt. The performing arts centre is an asset that the whole community can enjoy. A lot of community theatre is performed there and a lot of bands play there. It will be well utilised by the whole community, and I will be excited to see it open.

We have also put a brand-new roof on Carlisle Primary School and provided it with a brand-new fence. It is located on Wright Street, which is a busy street just around the corner from where I live, so I know that street well. The school was pleased to get that. We have converted classrooms to science labs at Belmont, Rivervale, Carlisle and Belmay Primary Schools, and installed new nature playgrounds at Carlisle, Cloverdale, Kewdale and Rivervale Primary Schools. We have also put in new perimeter fencing at Belmont Primary School, which was incredibly important and something the parents had advocated to me for for some time because it is on the corner of Great Eastern Highway, which is a very busy intersection.

Talking to locals in my community, whether it is out doorknocking, meeting with parents at the local schools or meeting constituents around and about, I know that the upgrades to our education facilities are important to young families in particular. They want to know that our kids will be learning in the best classrooms possible. The parents therefore feel that their kids are getting the education that they deserve, and they are getting that because the teachers at all my local schools, like most teachers across the state, are second to none in their dedication. I am pleased that the state government is putting its money where its mouth is by prioritising our kids and investing in our schools. My schools, as I have mentioned, desperately needed the funds, and the upgrades are very welcome. The record \$492 million building schools package not only provides schools with the funds that they need, but also stimulates the economy so that we keep Western Australians in jobs. We can all acknowledge how important that is right now.

The recovery plan, though, is also delivering other exciting news for my electorate. I was delighted when I was informed that \$6 million was going towards the refurbishment of the Ascot Brick Works kiln site. Everyone in my area knows that is an iconic site. There has been a lot of heated debate about it. Some people wanted the kilns knocked down, although only a few people I have met have ever said that. The overwhelming majority of people in my community have an enormous attachment to the kilns and are fond of them. They have stories about relatives who might have been involved in their initial establishment back in the day. There is a sense of nostalgia towards those kilns. The provision of \$6 million to protect that heritage site is fantastic. I think that the kilns are the only kilns of their type in the southern hemisphere, so they are very important. I remember campaigning to protect the kilns before I was elected as a member of Parliament. It was fantastic to see this come to fruition.

**Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup** interjected.

**Ms C.M. ROWE:** It sounds as though the member has a fondness for the Ascot kilns because obviously he has been following my progress in campaigning for them. I am touched that the member acknowledges my hard work in that regard, because it has been a long time coming. I did not campaign on my own. Since being elected, I have worked very closely with the Ascot Kilns and Parry Field Action Group. I would like to give a shout-out to that group because it has been very dedicated in advocating for funding to protect these beautiful kilns, and we should be proud of that. The \$6 million will hopefully restore these dilapidated kilns to the way they looked in their heyday.



**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 October 2020]

p6656e-6708a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

Acknowledging their importance by putting them on the state Register of Heritage Places is also important to ensure that they are protected for future generations. I am proud of our government for doing that.

The recovery plan has also delivered \$180 million to fast-track some important road upgrades in my community—the Roe Highway, Great Eastern Highway and Abernathy Road upgrades. This fast-tracked project is expected to create 1 200 jobs. That is not a small number and is not to be sneezed at. That project alone will create 1 200 jobs for Western Australians, which is fantastic. The government has also provided \$93 million to fast-track the Leach Highway–Welshpool Road interchange.

[Member’s time extended.]

**Ms C.M. ROWE:** That project will create around 600 jobs and will be kickstarted six months earlier than originally anticipated. We have also committed, as a government, to providing more than \$60 million for shovel-ready maintenance upgrades to vital state government facilities. As part of that funding, \$1.5 million has been allocated for the upgrade of Belmont Police Station. Belmont Police Station is obviously a vital asset to keep our community safe. It is one of the busiest police stations in the metropolitan area. This funding delivers on our commitment to make sure that our police have a better, safer and more efficient working environment. It will make it a much more modern facility. Importantly, it will enable us to accommodate more police at the station in the future. As part of the works, improvements will be made to the station’s secure compound and fencing and custodial areas.

Through our strong financial management, the budget fully funds the recruitment of 800 additional police officers. This comes on top of the 300 additional officers already recruited. This is the single biggest increase in police officer numbers in decades. This announcement will mean a stronger police presence in Belmont, safer local roads and improved police response times. That will be absolutely welcomed in my community of Belmont. It is a fantastic announcement for our community as it means Western Australia will have the highest number of police officers per capita of all the states. I know that will please my community and, equally, reassure them that they will be safer. These are not small numbers. The Commissioner of Police requested 800 additional officers, and that is what we are providing. We are taking community safety very seriously. Crime is an issue that affects all our communities in different ways. I know that is something my constituents are worried about but I also know for a fact that they are very relieved that we are again putting our money where our mouth is. We are building a better police station at Belmont, we are making sure that it will be open for longer hours under our watch and there will be more police on the beat. Alongside these announcements, the McGowan government is committed to modernising our police force by equipping police with new technologies such as body-worn cameras and protective vests.

In addition, as part of the budget, the McGowan government has announced that every household in Western Australia will receive a historic one-off \$600 household electricity credit. This is a very significant announcement that will have a tangible impact on the lives of Belmont locals who are impacted by cost-of-living pressures. Having spent a significant amount of time doorknocking last week, I can say with my hand on my heart that nearly every single person I talked to spoke of the sheer relief they felt when they read in the newspaper that they were getting \$600 towards their power bill. They were genuinely relieved. One lady said she was brought to tears because she was so relieved. Again, I am really proud that our Labor government is looking after people during this tough time. We understand the cost-of-living pressures and we are doing our bit to help people get through this. I think it is especially important to be doing it during the lead-up to Christmas when costs are exacerbated more than ever, and this will come at a time when people need it most. It will be showing up on people’s bills on 1 November. I think it is something that people will be pleased with not only in my electorate, but also right across the community.

Another element of the budget that really struck me is our commitment to mental health. I hosted a mental health forum in my community probably about eight weeks ago now with the Minister for Health; Mental Health, Minister Roger Cook, and I was inundated with the response I got from my community. I have never had such a response from people. I wrote to the community and said, “Please come along to my forum if you are interested.” I had people contact me to say that they were not able to come, so they were contacting me to RSVP “no”, but they shared their stories of either their own experience with mental health or that of a loved one. It was incredibly moving, but the need for mental health services in the community was incredibly confronting. It was apparent to me that this is an issue that affects everybody across all walks of life. People really welcomed that opportunity to have that conversation with the minister. There was deliberately no agenda for that forum other than we were going there to listen to what people had to say about their experiences and take that on board, and I was very grateful that the minister made himself available and took on board everything that was said. I was really proud of that. But in terms of what we are doing in the budget, I was staggered to see that we are investing over \$1 billion into that mental health space, which is fantastic. There is nearly \$47 million for suicide prevention program initiatives, and, importantly, of this money, \$9.7 million will be allocated to funding Aboriginal regional suicide prevention plans in each region of WA. That is critically important and they are funds that I am sure will be welcomed by those regional communities. There is \$25 million for a new 16-bed youth mental health alcohol and other drug–related homelessness service in

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 October 2020]

p6656e-6708a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

the Perth metro area, and \$24.5 million to develop a 20-bed adult community care unit to provide high-level support and rehabilitation services in a home-like environment in the community. Again, this speaks to our commitment to mental health. We are putting our money where our mouth is.

This budget has delivered in unprecedented and unpredictable circumstances. It is a budget like no other, as our state has never faced a fight like this in our living memory. Amidst these unprecedented times, our government has delivered a budget that is stimulating the economy, creating and supporting a pipeline of WA jobs and providing essential relief to our households. This budget looks to the future—a future beyond COVID-19. It invests in our children’s education, makes our community safer and stronger with additional police officers and provides crucial funding to further support mental health services and facilities.

We are stimulating our economy with huge infrastructure investment and by keeping people in jobs, whilst of course ensuring that we keep COVID at bay in our state. Meanwhile, members of the previous Liberal–National government, who have been heckling from behind, left nothing but record deficit and state debt, and continue at every step of the way to oppose our efforts to tackle this pandemic. Regardless, we have delivered a budget with declining debt that simultaneously supports households, stimulates business, invests in education and infrastructure and outlines funding boosts to our health and mental health care systems. We have kept WA safe and strong. I am really proud to be part of the McGowan government, which will deliver for the WA community not only now, but also into the future. I commend this bill to the house.

**MR T.J. HEALY (Southern River)** [9.14 pm]: I rise to also make a contribution to the debate on the 2020–21 budget—the Appropriation (Recurrent 2020–21) Bill 2020 and the Appropriation (Capital 2020–21) Bill 2020. I am very, very happy to support the budget that has been put forward by the Treasurer and team Mark McGowan. I want to say firstly that I certainly endorse the \$600 power credit. I cannot tell members how positive it has been to talk to residents at their doors and people on their phones and let them know. Everyone appreciates it. Everyone appreciates the fact that, as members know, \$600 will appear on our power Synergy bills as a credit at some time from 1 November. It is important that people know that we have all done the hard work and we have all done the right thing during COVID, and it is a great way to equitably share the proceeds from the Bell Group litigation and to say thank you to all those people with this stimulus measure. If people watching at home have any questions about the \$600 energy credit that has been supplied by the member for Victoria Park, the Treasurer, and Mark McGowan, member for Rockingham and the Premier, they can just call my office and we will make sure that they get all the details they need. I also want to commend the provision of 800 new police officers for our community and all the work that has gone into that. That will make a difference to all our communities.

I will begin by saying a special thank you to a number of people who will benefit from this budget. First of all, I would like to thank my staff. I want to thank Kelly, Marcus and Jacob for all the things that they do for me and our community. I certainly appreciate all the things that they do in their work for me and in making sure that all the people in Southern River, Canning Vale, Gosnells and Huntingdale are well looked after. I would also like to acknowledge several of the volunteers who have been helping us out and doing some incredible work of late. Refaat Fouda, Anne Best, Deb Stackpole, Laurie Wilmott, Brian Dynon, Seren Moulds, Sue Bouwmeester, Kalaluka Mwiyakui, Jayson Loh, Aidan Clyde and Paul Omodunbi, thank you for the work you do in communicating with the electorate about all the things that we do, and for looking after everyone.

I would like to formally mention that we recently officially named our new primary school. As members know, we promised to build two new primary schools in my electorate after none had been built for eight and a half years under the previous government. Southern Grove Primary School opened in 2019 as promised, and we recently formally named Yarralinka Primary School, which opens next year for kindy and preprimary for the other half of our Southern River community. It is named after the street the school is on, Yarralinka Road, but also a drought-resistant crop that was in the area for many years. I would also like to thank Hon Sue Ellery, who came out to name the school with us. As members know, Sue Ellery and Mark McGowan recently came out for the sod-turning. There was a lovely big birthday cake for the school’s beginning, and we had a lovely young fellow whose birthday it was that day who officially handed the envelope with the school name on it to Hon Sue Ellery. The name was chosen by the school community, so thank you.

I would like to thank Councillor Olwen Searle from the City of Gosnells in my electorate, who was recently nominated for and received an Eminent Service Award. It was well-deserved. Members who have been around Gosnells for some time will know that Councillor Olwen Searle has served over 45 years on the City of Gosnells council. She is a former teacher in the area, like me; she taught in the Kenwick area. I used to joke with Olwen that she has been on the Gosnells council longer than I have been alive, and she has no intent of slowing down yet. I would like to record in *Hansard* her service over many years and the countless hours of service she has given to our community.

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 October 2020]

p6656e-6708a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

In the coming weeks we will have our next Metronet roadshow. This year, we will be showcasing the designs of all the new train stations. People can come to my office down at the Vale Shopping Centre where we have all the new very fantastic designs for Ranford Road and Nicholson Road stations. Please come and have a look, ask questions and have a chat to us about those.

I would also like to announce that in the coming weeks we will be having a *Frozen* night in my office. We have some wonderful Elsa and Anna impersonators coming to my office. We are asking all the mums and dads of my electorate to dress up their young children in their Elsa and Anna *Frozen* dresses. We are going to have colouring in and there will be photos and music. It will be a very wonderful night. I ask all the mums and dads in my electorate to bring their kids down to meet Elsa and Anna in my office in the coming weeks.

In a speech that I gave recently, I acknowledged my top 20 Facebook fans. I am very honoured to have a huge support base in my electorate. I am very, very humbled. I mentioned my top 20 Facebook fans, and a number of people said, “What about me?” I appreciate the almost 3 000 people on my Facebook page and would like to acknowledge the next top 50 faithful fans on Facebook. I thank Rebecca Purkiss, Stephanie Lyn Oineza, Natasha Bakranich, Michael Dastlik, Linda Gan-Tan, Rajkumar Rasaratnam, Lisa Roberts, Malik Sajjad, Rayleen Clark, Nathan Williams, Sue Lysaght, Matt Goff, Yaso Ponnuthurai, Sheila Tomkins, Sandy Whyte, Abdullah Khan, Simon Kelly, Ellen Gail, Brian Tuku Chisulo, Sean Lim, Rebecca Pedrick, Refaat Fouda, Val Raubenheimer, Marjorie Williams, Marinomoana Ward, Barbara D’Sylva, Caroline Clark, Angie McCourt, Andrew Montgomery, Shaz Pillay, Elaine Collens, “Kevcol”—Kevin and Colleen—Green, Asif Ahmadi, Heidi Hargreaves, Bianca Swift, Edna Moss, Deborah Nangle, Chontelle Stone, Tapaswini Das, Dhara Thakkar, Craig Eddy, Jackson Munday, Sheryn Partington, Allyson Murray, Lucie Ebor, Cindy Yardley, Ross Leipold, Jenn Clune, Marline Isaak Hand and Deb Stackpole. Thank you for your service in making sure that I can help share on my Facebook page what we are doing in our community and that people are aware of all the great things that Mark McGowan does.

I have been very privileged for the last couple of years to speak at Caladenia Primary School student elections. Members would know that Caladenia Primary School is the reigning school of the year. For the last couple of years, the school has invited me to speak at the student elections. The school has a culture of service and leadership. Over 100 students have put forward their names to be student councillors and faction captains for year 6. I have never seen that in a school before. I was very honoured to hear them all give a 30-second speech about why they would be a great leader, and I want to acknowledge all those young people who put forward their names. As many members know, it is about more than just coming to lunch with their local member of Parliament and giving up their recess; it is standing up for their community. I say thank you to all those young people at Caladenia Primary School, whether they were elected or not, for putting forward their names. I will mention all the girls who were candidates for council and then the boys. I thank Audrine Lee, Tala Almur, Isabella Moya, Carol Fernandes, Natasha Garatidye, Jocelyn Hurst, Aaliyah Louise, Ayesha Asim, Anastasia Lam, Moumitha Kanthi, Grace He, Sehaj Trehan, Zainab Latif, Sera Bijoy, Jessica Lovelock, Mina Topuzovic, Naomi Cheung, Makayla Dunn, Kailyn Joseph, Milena Permus, Linda Xu, Rahi Patel, Kushi Kattecola, Vivian Nwokeiwu, Nimar Gill, Angela Huang, Shrutika Aravinthan, Tamara Malik, Amber Wood, Olivia Kim, Kayla Troy, Emmy Wei, Shinenoor Kaur Sidhu, Yuna Chen, Ella Duscher, Violet Tay, Ada Wang, Ingrid Priscott, Vanessa Tjitra, Mariam Wasim, Eva Breja, Phoebe Kol, Aadya Vyas, Raenah Jain, Harmony Fung and Wardah Chowdhury.

That was only the female year 5s who put forward their names; we also have faction captains and male student councillors. Of course, I am very happy to provide all students with copies of *Hansard* for them to take home. I thank all the male year 5s who are doing great work and for their service in year 6 next year: Luke Liu, Farhan Shah, Dhairya Dave, Youssef Abousamra, Zexin Zhao, Bryan Xia, Samuel Lillywhite, Akshayan Mukunthan, Mahesh Gorijala, Hamzah Qureshi, Donald Munro, Nathan Joseph, Jake van den Dries, Yi Heng Loh, Zaahid Abdoolakahn, Nate Wright, Yin Chen, Ryan Ikhlef, Saqib Yasar, Kai Luke, Chuqi Zhang, Zane Sutherland, Jason Dong, Lishaanth Karthikeyan, Viraat Juvvadi, Lucas Werder, Logan Madden, Tharul Ranamuka, Clarence Leong, Davis Kennedy, Stanley Rivers, Ovick Hossain, Albie Elson, Isaia Philips Tairea, Mansur Temuri, Deva Krishnakumar, Tejas Kyadar, Riley Walker, Dylan Karunanayake, Aman Raj, Malakai Faataumaua, Mehtaab Brar and Brodie Eckersley. Thank you again for stepping forward and putting forward your names. I look forward next year, if my electorate sees fit to return me to this chamber, to announce who won those elections.

I congratulate the nominees for faction captains at Caladenia Primary: Ayesha Asim, Carol Fernandes, Milena Permus, Vanessa Tjitra, Ingrid Priscott, Eva Bareja, Wardah Chowdhury, Aaliyah Louise, Linda Xu Yufan, Angela Huang, Jocelyn Hurst, Rahi Patel, Sehaj Trehan, Natasha Garatidye, Yin Chen, Nimar Gill, Kailyn Joseph, Emmy Wei, Moumitha Kanthi, Raenah Jain, Elizabeth Zee, Aadya Vyas, Anastasia Lam, Darlene Haniel, Audrine Lee, Shrutika Aravinthan, Yuna Chen, Mariam Wasim and Vivian Nowkeiwu. Mila Gibbs nominated for vice captain of blue faction. She presented me with a letter at the student elections asking us to recycle more. On the day we started can recycling, Mila was the first person to hand over a can from Canning Vale to Minister Stephen Dawson to officially

**Extract from *Hansard***

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 October 2020]

p6656e-6708a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

begin our recycling program. She is already a fantastic leader. I congratulate the other nominees: Keerat Didhra, Lola Rivers, Esme He, Emily Martin, Angela Han, Sierra Louise, Sienna Jiminez, Ridmi Yatagama Arachchige, Yara Ravjee, Tehzeeb Kuhar, Sophia Aly, Emma Xu, Yelini Kumarage, Adeleine Barr, Armani Brown, Charmaine Thoo, Danika Broughton, Emily Sartori, Claire Karanja, Jaslin Kaur, Eniko Lee and Clarissa Tampubolan. Thank you again for stepping forward.

I congratulate the faction captain and vice captain nominees for the boys: Davis Kennedy, Brodie Eckersley, Yi Heng Loh, Jake van den Dries, Donald Munro, Bryan Xia, Aman Raj, Jedolph Jerish, Viratt Juvvadi, Isaia Philips Tairea, Tejas Kyadar, Zaahid Abdoolakhan, Lishaanth Karthkeyan, Clarence Leong, Hamzah Qureshi, Ekraj Dhamy, Ryan Ikhlef, Logan Madden, Mahesh Gorijala, Kai Luke, Malakai Faataumaua, Nate Wright, Deva Krishnak Padaparambil, Dhairya Dave, Youssef Abousamra, Zexin Zhao, Saqib Yasar, Dylan Karunanayake, Mehtaab Brar, Oliver Kennedy, Benjamin Wojciechowicz, Ethan Sasidharan, Raamis Shazlee, Shane Sethi, Haavansh Dhillon, Yonal de Vas, Darsh Gundapaneni, Bodhi Chopping, Desandu Premarathna, Imandiv Semage, Henry Sun, Mahavir Suraatmadja, Sai Maroutu, Ijaaz Ramdianee, Adhvik Praju, Jeremy Chee, Nicholas Yulianto, Shuban Shetty, Reagan Adhikary, Giovel Augustine, Dihain Abeynayake, Dong Riakgol Gordon, Tatum An, Shenal Rathnayaka and Charles Nwokeiwu. I thank all those people. As I said, we are very, very proud to print a formal parliamentary *Hansard* to provide to those students and their families. Again, I look forward to announcing who won those positions. I thank you again for your service.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr T.J. HEALY:** We have some fantastic schools, P&Cs, P&Fs, parent action committees and school councils in my community. I would like to thank and congratulate all those people who take on the volunteer roles that are so valued in our community; attending school committee meetings weekly and monthly. They are the lifeblood and backbone of our community and I want to say thank you. This Parliament is proud of the work that they do. On behalf of Mark McGowan and the Parliament of Western Australia, I thank them for their service. I acknowledge and thank the leadership of Ashburton Primary School. On the P&C, there is Amanda Daintith and Katie Peos. On Ashburton Primary School council, members would know former member Peter Abetz, who is council chair. Deanne Tabone is manager of corporate services. Council representatives are Michelle Harris; Julie Brown, who is another councillor from the City of Gosnells; Katie Peos; Natasha Bowden; Shannon Papas; and principal Heather Fallo. Again, I thank all those people and all the families at Ashburton Primary School for the work that they do.

I would like to mention the members of the Bletchley Park Primary School board and thank them for their service. I welcome the new principal, as of yesterday, Wayne Walpole, a member of the board; Sharmini Aru, the chairperson; Damion Hill, a former board member; board members Denis Coldham, Kelly Gillett, Kevin Porter, Paula Kontor, Ty Hudson, Melanie Sagenschneider, Tarsha Willis, Sen Ooi and Keren Harding; and some of the staff representatives and deputies, Kylie Avery, Kelly Anderson, Paula Vardy, Josie Millwood and Sue Bachman.

I say thank you to the Bletchley Park Primary School P&C and its long-serving president Darren Warwick; Vanessa Magee, vice-president; Kylie McKivvet, treasurer; and Vicky Warwick, secretary. It was lovely to doorknock you recently and to discuss all the great things that we are doing in our area. I look forward to coming to a P&C meeting very soon. Again, I will be happy to provide you with some beautiful copies of parliamentary *Hansard*.

At Caladenia Primary School, I would like to say thank you to Aimi Richards, P&C president; Mel Watts, vice-president; Kylie Chapman, treasurer; Mikayla Reynolds, secretary; and committee members Chelsea Walker, Peta Lillywhite, Stacey Walker, Linda Gan-Tan, Lourdes Tsekos, Sirissa Chang, Manpreet Kuhar, Judy Meskic, Ben and Fiona Gould, Mena Bajaj, Kelly Baynes and Mel Jimenez-Franco. On the Caladenia Primary School board, I say thank you to Carol Veneris, chair; John Elson, vice chair; the hardworking parent representatives Chao Sun, Brian Tan, Rattan Gould and Kunal Malhotra; Lourdes Tsekos, the P&C representative; Natasha Duracic and Andrea Harris, teacher representatives; Anne Driscoll, the manager of corporate services; and Ted Nastasi, the school's long-serving and hardworking principal.

I would like to mention the very great work that is done at Campbell Primary School. I acknowledge Dr Rachel Sheffield, the chairperson; Leonie Gurr, the vice chairperson; Michael Slee; Winnie Wong; Kylie Somers; Mandy Slee; Jenny Marshall; Sam Roper; Zoe Parry; and the principal, Lynne Bates. Campbell Primary School board chair, Rachel Sheffield, would like me to mention that this has been a very, very tough year and she wants to commend the leadership of the school, the principal and the leadership team, and all the staff. I certainly echo that from the chairperson, Dr Rachel Sheffield. Thank you for all of your work in these times of uncertainty, and for your resilience and your grit. I would like to acknowledge Campbell Primary School P&C president Deb Boxall, and Gabrielle Hughes, vice-president. Again, it was lovely to doorknock Gabrielle recently. I would like to also thank Lauren Cox, the secretary, and Cindy Truscott, the treasurer.

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 October 2020]

p6656e-6708a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

At Canning Vale College, I would like to acknowledge principal Paul Bottcher; the board chair and Mayor of Gosnells, David Goode; the vice principal, Jacquie Bogunovich; Deb Oorjitham; Kyle Lister; Wendy Qasem; Russell Lawrence; Murray Thorpe; Simone Collins; Yusuf Denath; Jodie Duncan; Kieron Flynn; Cameron McLean; Graham Styles; and Stacey Wood. Thank you all for your service.

At Excelsior Primary School, I would like to acknowledge the chair, Cameron McLean; and board members Karen Pott, Luke Walsh, Jennifer Capelli, Aaron Adams, who is also a City of Gosnells councillor, Tiffany Langoulant, Adam Fay, also former board member, councillor Olwen Searle, who I mentioned earlier; and of course the principal, Bec Stewart. Thank you for your service to the school board. At Excelsior Primary School, I would like to acknowledge the P&C president, Claire Robbins, and Darren Devenish, a P&C member.

At Gosnells Primary School, I would like to congratulate the P&C president Karen Schokker; the vice-president, Calvary Din; the secretary, Natasha Coombes; the treasurer, Sean Carthew; and, of course, the hardworking principal, Craig Anderson.

At Harrisdale Senior High School, I would like to congratulate and say thank you to Alan Rumsley, chairperson; Gregory Walkington, deputy chair; and board members Vanessa Woodington, Denise Lane, Dr Lorraine Hammond, Badhar Vattekkattayil—lovely to doorknock you also recently—and Viju Baby; Angie Thomas, the deputy principal; and, of course, the hardworking principal, Leila Bothams. Yaz Mubarakai and I both share Harrisdale Senior High School and we are always so very proud of it. I also thank the P&C: Denise Lane, the 2019 president; Denise Woodington, the 2020 president; and also Kara Rothery, vice-president; and Tracey Trewick, treasurer. The great accomplishment at that school has been the implementation of the gifted and talented program, which many residents are very happy and proud about.

At Providence Christian College, I would like to say thank you to the school board chair, Rodney Olsen; and board members Renier van der Klashorst, Trever Beard, Dave Stevens, Elisabeth Chieng, Rob Greaves and Megan Yazdani; and the principal, Bill Innes. Thank you for the service and the work that you do.

At Seaforth Primary School, I would like to say thank you to Joy Verco, president; Ashley Spicer, vice-president; Renee Leheste; Goergina Lowe; Rayleen Clark; Rosslyn Smith; and Mark Bower.

At Southern Grove Primary School, I would like to mention first of all that it does not have student councillors at that fantastic school; it actually has ministers. I would like to acknowledge the ministers of operations, Kian Wilmot, Sumiya Djuljaidi, Sumaya Djuljaidi and Radhe Pate; the ministers of sustainability, Safiya Mostafa, Hayley Muchandibaya, Emily Denison and Nasiha Minty; and the ministers of outdoor play, Asa Mawire, Maikayla Flindell and Charlie O'Neill. We are looking forward to inviting all those student ministers to cut the ribbon on the new wheelie park that will open just across the road in November. We say thank you for all your service and we look forward to you joining us.

On the P&C at Southern Grove Primary School, I would like to congratulate Sarah Minas, president; Belinda Pang, vice-president; Annette Thompson, secretary; Carla Howe, treasurer; and Kylie Searle, fundraising team leader. On the school board at Southern Grove, I would like to say thank you to Annette Thompson, chair; Belinda Pang; Nahin Ahmed; Alladean Chidukwani, again, lovely to doorknock you recently; Janelle Campbell-Cooke; Krystal Jager; Emma Wolfe; Rizza Camprag; Aaron Berghuber, again, lovely to doorknock you recently; Carla Howe; Sue Garland; Leanne Santaromita; Vanessa Pugh; and principal, Bec Burns.

At Huntingdale Primary School, I would like to say thank you to some of our fantastic leadership on the council in Anne Gisborne, chairperson and a wonderful hardworking teacher at the school; Jodie Ward; Rebecca Tennent; Steve Cox; Matthew Pham; Lyn Green; and Edd Black, principal. I would like to say thank you to the Huntingdale Primary School P&C and Scott Olney, president; Jamie Powers, vice-president; Rachel Payet; Naomi Hodge; Louise Thomas; Rebecca Tennent; and Ashley Johnson. Again, it was lovely to doorknock you and your family recently, Ashley. Thank you, everyone, for the service that you do for our community.

At Southern River College—the school I used to teach at—I would like to thank our school board members: Pat Morris, chair; Denis Coldham, deputy board chair; Everal Eaton, principal; Sharon Harry; Brian Hand; Mike Erith; and Owen Davies. Also, I particularly thank Connor Nicol and Alexia Lozada, the head boy and head girl, who are heading into an interesting time with their end-of-year exams. Congratulations to them and I thank them for their service. I would also like to thank Ron Mitchell, Emma Whitty, Julie Holden, Jenn Clune, Teresa Lau and Anne Marie Bartolome for their very, very hard work. Also at Southern River College, I would like to say thank you, first of all, to recently retired P&C president Karen Adams for her years of service. Thank you to our new president, Jenn Clunn; Natasha Bakranich, secretary; and Rob Cechner, vice-president; Mary Calupig, treasurer; and also the very hardworking members Halima Aden, Julie Holden, Susan Clifford, Brett Clune, Michele Rees, John Rees and Glen Bakranich.

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 October 2020]

p6656e-6708a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

At St Emilie’s Catholic Primary School, I would like to say thank you to the principal, Tania Thuijs; Glen Rozario, chairperson; and all the very hardworking people on the school board, including Stewart Sutton, vice chair; Honorine Enriquez; Craig Bishop; James Elloy; Rebecca Tennant; Father Jean-Noel Marie; Father Patricio Carrera Morales; Father Victor Lujano; Father Chien Nguyen; Stuart Munro, assistant principal; Gillian Norris; and Paul Gates. At St Emilie’s, I would like to say thank you so much to Rachel Davies, our very hardworking P&F president. I look forward to presenting the annual bike voucher next week to the school for its lapathon. Thank you to Rachel Davies, president; Teena, a class rep; Larissa Shaw; Gillian Norris; Leanne Wallis; Jessica Loth; Erin Southwell; Tanya Dellaca—these are also our P&F class representatives; very, very hardworking members—Enzina Ierino; Jain Chow; Pamela Lawrence; Nichole Grima, lovely to doorknock you again recently; Amanda Fuller; Kylie Marston; Danielle Stevens; Jacque Searle; Eimear Drinnan; Melanie Stocker; Belinda Blackus; Kirsten Devereux; and Rebecca Tennent.

I would like to congratulate those hardworking people at St Munchin’s Catholic Primary School and say thank you to our principal, Rob Romeo; Luke Bresland, our school chair; Mike Hutchison, our vice chair; Daria Weber; Richard Serrano; Derek Ingram; Gaylia Evans; Father Philip Perreau; and Mr Joe Musitano and Ms Lisa Harrison, our assistant principals. On the P&F, I thank Janene Neale. I look forward to coming to your P&F meeting, I think, next week. Of course, I will be providing a very beautiful copy of the parliamentary *Hansard* of tonight’s mention of you. I thank Zoe Bresland, our vice-president; Moira Park, our secretary; and Caroline Surtees, our treasurer.

Sorry, members, I am coming to the end of my school list. I would finally like to say thank you to the leadership at Wirrabirra Primary School; principal, Steve Richards; and also Wirrabirra Education Support Centre principal, Julie Dawson. To the P&C, I would like to say thank you for hosting me recently at your meeting. I thank Sonya Kimbar, our P&C president; Kylie Sharp and Jody Soper, our vice-presidents; and Rebecca Fordham and Leanne Meyza. On the committee, I thank Shiralee Quayle, Nicholas Mew, Emi-Leigh Johns and Rebecca McBride. I also thank the board members for the invitation to come and speak at your board meeting recently about all the things we are doing in Gosnells. I would like to say thank you to Marnie Kehoe, our chair; Audrey Turner, board member; Marnie Brady; Kerensa Dodds; Emi-Leigh Johns; Michael Kimbar; Sara Skrgic; Charmaine Bayross; Courtney Stewart; Karen Efferille; Jason Owen; Kate Doepel; Ben Knight; Sharon Millson; and Ann-Maree Melvin. It is a very, very hardworking school that will be celebrating its 50-year anniversary very soon. I certainly say thank you and congratulations.

I would like to mention some of the wonderful community groups that exist in my electorate. I say thank you to all of those sporting clubs and community groups for all the work they have done throughout the COVID period.

At Huntingdale Junior Football Club, I would like to mention Kirsty Drew, our president; David Keys, our vice-president; Cathy Macri, our Treasurer; Jennifer Keys, our registrar; and Dean Vallve, our secretary. I thank other committee members: Zish Burchell, our Auskick coordinator; Greg Gordon, our property manager; and Cliff Lane, the canteen manager.

The Australian Arab Association is a very, very hardworking community group in my electorate. I would like to mention our president, Sam Youssef; vice-president, Omar Ahmed; secretary, Layal Ghalayini; treasurer, Ayman Qutteineh; community director, Motaz Siriya; youth director, Ahmad Jarrar; international director, Raif Youssef—it was lovely doorknocking you and your family recently—and liaison officer, Amal Youssef. The AAA does incredible work to bring the social and economic aspects of new migrants in the community together. One of the great things it did during the COVID period was produce and sew a huge number of masks, and I want to say thank you.

Recently I met with the Sikh Association of Western Australia. I would like to welcome the brand-new members of the Sikh Association in the community and say thank you to Devraj Singh, our new president; Bahadur Singh, our vice-president; Harbir Singh; Amarjit Singh; Pushpinder Pal Singh; Darshan Singh Sidhu; Rajinder Singh Bassi; Harmeeek Singh Kamboj; Ajmer Singh; Daljit Singh Dhillon; Harmohinder Singh Dhammu; Jaskiran Kaur Cheema; Joginder Singh; Juginder Kaur; Paramjit Singh Nagra; and Rani Kaur Samra.

I also say thank you to Gosnells Anglican church and the leadership team: Father Luke Durham; Richard Ward, the warden; Glenda Hamilton; Dale Pekel and the parish council. Of course, Dale Pekel is also the coordinator of our welfare and community services. I acknowledge the great work they have done during COVID delivering food parcels and supporting everyone. I would like to congratulate them—and invite people to their summer fete on Saturday, 21 November—including for all the work they will do towards their Christmas hamper program.

I recently had the honour of being at the Southern River scout group, and because I was a Riverton scout growing up, I was recently presented with my Southern River scout group scarf at a meeting. Can I please say thank you to all of the leadership team, including group leader, Kylie Watkinson; assistant group leader, Luke Watkinson; our joey leaders, Shelley Weir, Sam Vincent and Brett Vincent; cub leaders, Tyson Waters, Luke Walsh, Marie Van Heerden and Lisa O’Shea; scout leaders, Zak Jermyn, Jarad York, Laura Sutton and Ashley Manning; and our venturer leaders,

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 October 2020]

p6656e-6708a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

Amanda Saunders and Glyn Sturrock. Again, there have been some interesting times through COVID and I want to say thank you to all those people who did those things.

I also mention the Gosnells District Cricket Club: Ross Leipold, our recently retired president; fellow life member, Andrew Panetta, chairman of our board; Paul Cullinane the new president; board members Samantha Parkyn, Dinesh Burah, Len Hill, Craig Passmore, Simon Acomb and Matthew Robson.

We have a fantastic community in Southern River, including Huntingdale, Canning Vale and Gosnells. I want to say thank you to everyone.

**MR M.J. FOLKARD (Burns Beach)** [9.44 pm]: Is it all right to stand on this side of the table, Madam Acting Speaker?

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Yes.

**Mr M.J. FOLKARD:** I would stand on the other side of the table, but when I was a police officer, I never got a stab-proof vest, so I figured if I stand on this side, I might be able to look my enemy in the eye! I rise to speak on the Appropriation (Recurrent 2020–21) Bill 2020 and the Appropriation (Capital 2020–21) Bill 2020.

Several members interjected.

**Mr M.J. FOLKARD:** Excuse me, sir.

Firstly, I simply want say thank you, Mr Treasurer. Thank you on behalf of the thousands of police officers and their families, thank you on behalf of the victims of crime and, finally, thank you on behalf of my electorate and the community in my electorate. Thank you, sir.

Having served for many years as a police officer, I know what it is like to patrol the lonely streets of Perth and regional WA at night, making sure that our greater community sleeps safely, free from fear. I have done this alone and I have done this with fellow brave officers. I congratulate my government, the McGowan government, for this year's budget with its particular focus on community safety. When this government was elected, we committed to an additional 120 meth border protection officers. Earlier this year, as a result of the pandemic, our government approved an additional 150 officers to assist with the WA response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the recovery plan. Last week, I had the privilege of listening to our Treasurer; Minister for Finance, Hon Ben Wyatt, announce that an additional 800 officers are to be recruited and trained over the next four years. In total, this government, my government, will have increased the strength of the WA police force by 1 120 officers by the end of the next term of government.

These numbers will bring to the community of Western Australia the highest police-to-population numbers in Australia—I say that again: the highest police-to-population numbers in Australia—and will allow the force to continue to deliver an effective, consistent and efficient response and deliver services across the state. The 1 120 additional police officers that the McGowan government has committed to is the single largest commitment to police officer numbers in the last 30 years. I know this is a fact, as I was recruited when the last 1 000-officer increase commitment was made. The last time this commitment to police numbers was made, our prison and justice systems struggled. Not many people in this place would be aware of that. Without forethought and planning, the systems break down. I can remember trial allocation dates of longer than two years, prisons with over 25 per cent muster strength and violence levels in the prisons that led to riots. Our commitment to these new police is not a cheap political grab for the law and order vote. It is just not.

During the last election, I was asked by several senior members of government about the best way to fix domestic violence and drug-related antisocial behaviour in our community. My answer was simple: if the government is serious, it needs to change the domestic violence laws, fix up the meth legislation and build a new prison, then increase police numbers, and do it in that order. Guess what? Our Attorney General introduced the stronger meth laws and the no body, no parole legislation. The Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence introduced stronger domestic violence laws. The Minister for Corrective Services effectively built a new prison within the footprint of the existing prison system, with 1 300 new beds, two rehabilitation units within the walls, which is an Australian first, a mental health treatment ward to take the pressure off the Frankland wards, the largest high-security unit in Australia and then—this is the kicker—he employed 450 additional prison officers. To my knowledge, this is the greatest increase in prison officer numbers ever. We are ready.

In the last budget, there were 800 extra officers and the resources to back them up. On reflection, I have never seen a deliberate, well-executed strengthening of our law and order system by any government in the last 30 years—I think it has been longer. The feedback from my constituents is, “At last—a government that cares, a government that listens and a government that finally delivers a stronger and safer community.” How was this achieved? Simply—with steadfast, outstanding leadership. Let me explain. Over many years, I worked within the defence forces, within

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 October 2020]

p6656e-6708a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

the policing environment, and overseas in multiple areas of operation in active war zones. I have worked alongside some of the best critical incident management leaders in the world. They are all outstanding people; all have faced adversity and all have excelled. Since the beginning of this pandemic, I have watched and observed our Premier, the member for Rockingham; our Deputy Premier, the Minister for Health and member for Kwinana; and our police commissioner, Chris Dawson. This is one of the finest examples of sustained critical incident leadership that I have ever seen, and this leadership has led our state to being strong and safe.

This year's budget, prepared by the member for Victoria Park, Hon Ben Wyatt, further underpins the strength of our state, both financially and in dealing with COVID-19. I am proud of this government, my government, the McGowan government. It is a government of achievement. In a time of national crisis, we have achieved a 10.4 per cent reduction in household costs. The feedback I have received about the \$600 credit on residential electricity bills and the freezing of other utility costs is a breath of fresh air. Even our self-funded retirees, who have been ignored by our federal government and previous state Liberal governments, have greeted this credit with real appreciation. We have a budget surplus that makes us strong. This surplus ensures that we will be able to deal with COVID should a second wave hit this state.

The announcement of the \$100 million Mitchell Freeway upgrade, which will widen the freeway to three lanes south of Hodges Drive, will reduce the commute time to the city at peak hour by 15 minutes. That is just good government. I would like to thank Minister Saffioti for listening to my lobbying to widen the top end of Mitchell Freeway. I am glad she took it on board.

I spoke earlier about this government's commitment and strength in law and order. If I have said this once, I have said it a hundred times in this place—if we send one child or one young person to jail, we have failed. After years of policing, I still believe that if we can get our youth a job, they will not be breaking into people's homes. I believe this is the best way to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour; it is law and order 101. An investment in education means increasing the opportunities for employment for our youth. If we can have our youth job ready when they leave school, our employers will be happy, our mums and dads will be delighted and our community will grow. Any investment in education means better outcomes for our children.

This government has invested \$600 000 in COVID recovery funding in Joondalup Primary School and the Joondalup Education Support Centre. This is on top of about \$550 000 in funding for two demountable classrooms and \$30 000 for shade covers. I have to say that these co-located schools get it. When it comes to inclusivity, they are tops. Natalie Hatton and Carol Selley, the two school principals, are absolute stars in this space; P&C president Amy Stewart agrees with me.

I advocated for support to be provided to Currambine Primary School, and this commitment resulted in \$1.5 million in COVID recovery funding to replace some of the old demountable classrooms. We can add to this funding of \$200 000 for a fence to surround the school, which will stop all the after-hours vandalism, \$50 000 for the remembrance lone pine tree shrine, and, most importantly, funding to remove asbestos from two older classrooms. I remember talking to Currambine Primary School principal Geoff Smith and the fathering program's Rob Williams, Rob Wilson, Walter Ramage and Mike Bush about the relief they felt when we removed the asbestos from the two old demountables at the school.

We have invested \$1.5 million in the Kinross Primary School early intervention centre for families and a further \$50 000 in the nature playground, which the children are using every day. I look with pride at the way the space embraces our First Nation people and am proud of the way that Robert Bropho guided the children through its development. I love the way that school principal Therese Gorton, lifelong P&C member Margaret Patullo—I hope I pronounced that right—and P&C president Emma Oliver are so proud of their school.

This government, my government, has further invested \$2.5 million in upgrading Kinross College. The funds were invested in facilities, classrooms and technologies to improve the educational outcomes of the children. We found an extra \$70 000 to improve the basketball court and lighting around the school, and to purchase a new school bus. Principal Rod Buckenara, deputy principal Dale Beaton and school board chair Geoff Lummis are committed to the educational outcomes of the students at that school. I am certain that the Kinross community is well served by that school.

This government, my government, is a government of accomplishment. After much consideration, encouragement by me and the participation of legendary community campaigner Mary O'Byrne, we were able to convince the City of Joondalup and Department of Transport engineers to spend \$250 000 to provide the only controlled traffic crosswalk signal across Marmion Avenue. It is used every day. When the children from Burns Beach Primary School start coming across to Kinross College, the usage will only grow. That one means a lot to me. I scraped a kid off the road probably 500 yards to the north of this crossing, so I hope there will be no more of that.



Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

During COVID, it was natural for the anxiety levels of our children to grow. They grew within adults, so that had to be reflected in our children. Mindarie Primary School principal Barbara Bromley and the fantastic leadership group approached me to help fund a wellness survey. As a result, I reached out to the Paul Ramsay Foundation, and with the help of Joondalup Health Campus CEO Kempton Cowan, we were able to fund a survey to nine schools within the electorate. The results will be made available shortly. I hope this will underpin any problems identified by the student population within the electorate.

**Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup:** Well done, member.

**Mr M.J. FOLKARD:** I thank the member. This will also assist this government's commitment to enhance the wellbeing provided by our level 3 coordinating mental health teachers at Currabine, Joondalup, Kinross, Somerly and Mindarie Primary Schools, and Mindarie Senior College. I look forward to finding further ways in which I can continue this survey as it is such important work.

Youth unemployment is such a problem in the electorate. The COVID-19 pandemic put even greater pressure on young people within my electorate, and it has had an impact on their mental health. This is clearly evidenced by the increase in presentations to Joondalup Health Campus and the Clarkson mental health service. When I was first elected, I remember sitting around and chatting to several students and teenagers from different schools who were studying politics at the time, and they all said that we needed more mental health support for our children. Guess what? This government has committed \$360 million in this budget to mental health support, with significant resources being delivered to my electorate. This can be added to the \$700 million in previous budgets, which will bring that investment to over a billion dollars. I raised the issue with the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Mental Health, the member for East Metropolitan Region, when we first came to government. Guess what? This government listened. Look at the investments; look at the outcomes. Getting the economy moving after the COVID-19 pandemic is probably the greatest challenge my government will face in the near future. This economic activity and stimulus will underpin the growth within my electorate and address the commercial COVID malaise that struck the community during COVID.

Let us look at what is happening. The freeway to Romeo Road is shovel ready and is starting in December. The Yanchep Metronet rail project is eight weeks in front of projected work outcomes with the earthworks. I did not think there were D11 bulldozers, but I saw a dozen of them working on the project when I was recently take up there by the minister. The smart freeway and Mitchell Freeway widening from Hodges Drive has started. After 30 years of procrastination, the Ocean Reef Marina has begun. Earthworks and limited bush clearing is underway. The Meridian Park commercial area in Neerabup is starting to grow. It is up and growing. This will be the next job-creating engine in the northern corridor. This will be Malaga on steroids. This will mean jobs for my electorate—jobs for the kids. The next stage at the Joondalup Health Campus has commenced and when finished, will lead to a safer and healthier electorate. This stimulus will lead to more activity, which will lead to more jobs and a safer and stronger community.

Finally, I would to recognise the Kinross College leadership group who joined me in Parliament tonight: college principal Dale Beaton, associate principal Jeanavieve Walia, associate principal John Avenell, Theresa Harris and Alex Lawrie. On behalf of the greater Kinross community, I would thank them for their fantastic work and I was glad they joined me in the house this evening.

Take care. Be safe. I commend the budget to the house.

**MS L.L. BAKER (Maylands — Deputy Speaker)** [10.01 pm]: My comments tonight on the Appropriation (Recurrent 2020–21) Bill 2020 and the Appropriation (Capital 2020–21) Bill 2020 will focus on my own electorate and the incredible strategies that it brought to play when things started to get really tough and how it turned and moved in different directions really quickly. It kept moving. I sometimes worry about the whole “pivot” word because to me it means that one is standing still and turning. My businesses did not stand still; they kept moving while they were turning, so I think it was more of a pirouette than a pivot.

My colleague the Treasurer delivered the 2020–21 budget. It provides cost-of-living relief to households. It trains our constituents. It keeps our community safe and it supports the vulnerable, providing essential services and delivering quality infrastructure no more so evident than in my electorate around the Bayswater redevelopment, through the Metronet project.

The McGowan government had overseen the creation of 77 000 new jobs and unemployment had fallen to its lowest level in nearly five years. Then the COVID pandemic hit and everything stopped—in fact, everything went backwards. Our domestic economy contracted by six per cent in the June quarter—the largest quarterly decline on record. Some 103 000 Western Australians lost their jobs in just three months to May 2020. Consumer and business confidence fell to record lows and businesses were severely impacted. This is the kind of pressure that comes to a community and the community either rises and meets the challenge and finds a way through or it will atrophy. I am

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 October 2020]

p6656e-6708a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

so proud that in Western Australia we have seen so many creative and innovative solutions to what seemed to be an almost insurmountable set of problems. I am particularly proud that by design and good planning we had the Treasurer take us through this and lead us into the next 12 months, when we see a 1.1 per cent growth in the domestic economy. Western Australia is the only state to achieve that annual growth. It shows that with confidence from our people and confidence from our business, we can pull back and redirect some of these losses. In fact, since restrictions in Western Australia have been eased, more than 70 per cent of the jobs that were lost and almost 90 per cent of the reduction in aggregate hours worked have been restored, but I am not treating it lightly because that still means that 10 per cent of people are working fewer hours than they did prior to COVID and that 30 per cent of people do not have their jobs back.

The really interesting phenomenon is watching some of the businesses that decided that COVID had given them a chance to restructure their activities. That is one of the real challenges that I face in my electorate, and I am sure many of my colleagues face it, too, because some businesses have found an opportunity to change the way they do business, thereby lowering the need for staff, which means that they are not going to re-employ some of their staff. The challenge is how we move forward, create small businesses and feed the economy intelligently and in a sustainable way. Unemployment is forecast at eight per cent in 2021, gradually reducing over time. Indeed, that is pretty typical of the way unemployment moves in our state; it rises and then it lowers. The unemployment rate has already fallen faster than we expected, declining to seven per cent in August. It looked as though we had an opportunity to move forward but what was needed was the budget that has been delivered. It is a budget that means that we are safer and stronger into the future and that is what the state needs.

I said I wanted to talk about my electorate and I certainly do. I want to start by talking about “iso life in Baysie”, if you like—what people did, what strategies they used and some of the clever things they invented to get through this time. What was so magnificent about the COVID crisis was that it showed the innovation and creativity that people have when they work together and the confidence they take from each other during dark times. Nikki Mauri has showcased how my community managed to cope during the COVID-19 lockdown in an exhibition that was funded by the City of Bayswater seed funding program. The exhibition was held this September at the mighty Bayswater Bowling and Recreation Club. Nikki studied photography but she now works in events. She said she was feeling really disconnected from people during the lockdown so she started to send flowers to her neighbours and invited them to start driveway dinners. People could pop out to the end of their driveway with a card table and a couple of deck chairs and have a dinner to be seen and be a part of the community. It was a way of being outside but still being isolated and safe. She started taking photos on the streets of Bayswater during this time. There are photos of the popular driveway dinners that we had in Bayswater and the rainbow chalk pieces that kids in the suburb drew on driveways. Some of them were just masterpieces and very cute. It was great to see them in the exhibition. A photo that Nikki collected that is particularly moving was the beautiful moment when a little boy met his newborn brother for the very first time. The photo shows him sitting in the hospital car park holding his brother in his lap because he was not allowed to enter the hospital due to restrictions. It was the very first time he got to see and hold his baby brother.

On Anzac Day—I will talk more about Anzac Day—mix94.5 sponsored a special driveway dinner in Bayswater. The residents’ playlist was played over the radio and Maylands’ iconic pizzeria, Rossonero, delivered pizzas up and down the street. A special shout out to Rossonero for donating pizzas to local families who were finding it really tough to make ends meet during the COVID isolation. Nikki has taken the images of all these moments and put them together in a community photographic and mixed media exhibition called *Baysie Iso Life*. It is a fantastic opportunity to look at the way that one community responded to the COVID lockdown and the great moments that she captured on camera.

One of the things that moved me most during the COVID times was Anzac Day. Normally, like all my colleagues in this place, I would be up at 5.00 am to drive to one of the five or six cenotaphs in my electorate to take my place along with a range of dignitaries, soldiers and very experienced and wise members of our community who have been going to Anzac Day services for a very long time. I always go to the Halliday Park service in Bayswater, which is always incredibly moving; there is a beautiful cenotaph there. Literally thousands of people usually go there with me, so it was such a challenge to wake up on Anzac Day this year and wonder how we would observe such an important day on our calendar.

I ended up standing at the end of the driveway in almost complete silence with my niece and nephew and my brother and his wife, listening to the *Last Post* on the radio, and hearing it echoing in other driveways around the area. It was incredibly moving to be on our own, standing at the end of the drive, watching the lights from other people’s homes and listening to the *Last Post*. That is an experience I certainly never thought I would have, and it is one that I will never forget. I think many people shared that experience. When people turned out to pay their respects, it was a very different Anzac Day dawn service.

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 October 2020]

p6656e-6708a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

One Bayswater resident told me that she was at her letterbox the evening before Anzac Day when two unknown neighbours, out for an evening stroll, asked her if she would be attending the service the next day and if she would like some rosemary for it. They placed a bunch of rosemary in her letterbox so that next morning, when she stood in her driveway at dawn in the freezing cold, she was incredibly touched as she could not only hear the quiet echoing of the *Last Post*, but she also had the joy of receiving a gift from her previously unknown neighbours to recognise the moment.

Now, we have a wonderful bookshop on Eighth Avenue in Maylands—Rabble Books and Games. There has been some contention in the global media recently over Rabble’s response to J.K. Rowling’s controversial comments on transgender issues; Rabble has removed all the *Harry Potter* books from its shelves, but that is not what I want to talk about. I want to recognise Rabble for the amazing job it did in responding to the pandemic. Rabble is an absolute treasure in my electorate and in Perth in general. It is an incredibly innovative bookshop that has some amazing publications that one just does not see anywhere else. It has an eclectic and curious range and if anyone is looking for good Christmas presents, they should pop to Rabble Books and Games, and I guarantee that they will find some extraordinary books.

**Dr A.D. Buti:** Do they have my books?

**Ms L.L. BAKER:** They probably have my colleague’s books, although I am not sure which of his many books! The member for Armadale could probably open a bookshop on his own, just with his books!

Anyway, Rabble Books and Games in Maylands responded to the pandemic at the speed of light and already had home delivery set up by 13 March, just a week into restrictions. There was a one or two-day turnaround for orders for books, games and puzzles. These became really hot commodities very early in the piece. Later on, Rabble announced its free community books program as a way to give back to the community that had supported it during tough restrictions. This meant that if people did not have the financial resources to buy a book, they could browse the community books category and borrow a book for free, and it would be delivered to them. Owners Nat and Sam said —

“We’ve felt how needed our books, games and puzzles are over the last few weeks, we’ve seen how they keep people connected and stimulated, looking after our mental and emotional well-being. Reading is essential but with libraries closed, access to books (and board games) has become really difficult for people who are currently financially insecure. Seeing mutual aid networks emerging has inspired us to do our little part.”

Rabble, you are amazing. Thank you for being there and thank you for all the work that you do to keep our community together, solid and looking forward.

That was not the only business in my electorate that made the most amazingly quick turnaround to manage what was going to be a much longer time frame than I think anybody really realised at the start of the pandemic. Businesses in my electorate sprang into action really quickly. One of my particularly favourite moments was when all of the businesses around Whatley Crescent started a campaign called Bring Whatley Home. The businesses Chapels on Whatley, The Woodfired Baker, Sherbet Cafe and Bake Shop, Smoult’s Larder, Lula and Sasha, Steam Haus, Look Feel Be and Firefly Gifts all banded together to offer free delivery to the community. They managed it by putting out posts on Facebook that said if people got their orders in by a certain time in the morning, the deliveries would be shared amongst the businesses. For example, one day Smoult’s Larder would do it, and Chapels on Whatley would do it another day. Meals and all number of things were delivered from those shops to people in their homes. It obviously did an amazing job at keeping people connected, and keeping those businesses going and trading profitably. I am sure a small reduction in profits was made at the time, but they bounced back.

Chef Sophie Budd cooked hundreds of meals for homeless people during the pandemic. She operated out of The Rise in Maylands after the trading provider, iCollege, opened its kitchen for her to use. How amazing is that? A local chef stepped up to cook meals for the homeless during the pandemic.

I should also give a shout-out to the City of Bayswater for starting up a Buy in Baysie online directory of businesses that have adapted to serving their community in new ways. The City of Bayswater did not just do the Buy in Baysie. A whole raft of other really creative things showed how caring it is for its own staff and community. For instance, the City of Bayswater managed to avoid cutting its staff numbers by offering transitions into other positions that were previously unthought of. In some instances, they were quite humorous transitions. Some of the staff who were administratively based suddenly took up opportunities to become lifesavers at the pool. They were properly trained to allow them to move into other areas. That way, they were retained in jobs, offered new employment opportunities, and managed what would be an incredibly stressful time with support from the City of Bayswater.

My own staff member—a big-shout out to Fran Hickling, who many members on my side of the house know very well—loves the Inglewood and Bedford local delivery options that have popped up. Fridays from Finlay and Sons

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 October 2020]

p6656e-6708a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

was a favourite. She would order the lasagne and lamb shanks—not together; separately. She ordered the classic garlic prawns from Our Table in Bedford, and delicious meals from Bedford's Chef and Co Restaurant also managed to make their way to her house during this very strange time. She is probably going to kill me for mentioning her name in Parliament, but she will get over it!

**Mr B.S. Wyatt** interjected.

**Ms L.L. BAKER:** Yes, she eats a lot!

I also make a special mention of the Black Pig Deli and Co. It just opened the Little Pig yesterday, right next door to the Black Pig Deli. It has done so well that it has expanded the business. The Little Pig is a cafe where people can go to have coffee, cake and a sandwich.

I also make a special mention of Bloom Vietnamese, the most fantastic Vietnamese restaurant in my electorate. It does fantastic vegan dishes, for my vegan colleagues on both sides of the house. King Somm Bar and Fodder and Forge also quickly adapted to this difficult time.

[Member's time extended.]

**Ms L.L. BAKER:** In my office, my volunteers, the office staff and I made 1 853 calls to check in with people and see how they were going. The phone was running hot. I am sure that all members had a similar experience and did similar things. People were so delighted to hear a voice and to know that someone cared enough to check in to see how they were going. We gave out a lot of information to people who were confused and trying to pick their way through the new rules. It was a productive time and I really enjoyed talking to many people who appreciated a call.

In Inglewood, we noticed teddy bears in shop windows and people's homes; there were teddy bears everywhere. I stole my dog's toys, three of which are very large teddy bears, and put them in my office window. We had a large rainbow-coloured teddy bear and a couple of others sitting there waving to people as they drove by. They were very cute, but I had to take them down because the dogs were missing them.

Because no events were held during this time, all the event posters that I usually have up in the windows of my office on the Beaufort Street side were removed. I thought that we needed to brighten up the window panes and so we held a drawing competition. We invited the local kids to get creative and draw their favourite animals. We had some very cute entries. The two Inglewood local winners were Liam, who is all of five years of age, and Emily, who is 10. I particularly like Emily's artistic skills. She painted a panda bear, and it is amazing. It looks as though it could have been a Vincent van Gogh or one of the masters—not quite the surrealists! It is a beautiful panda. Little Liam, at just five years of age, knocked everyone's socks off by drawing his family's cat, Enid. Enid is remarkable. She is a little longer than I thought she might be. She is long and skinny with a great big long tail. He did an amazing job. Those pictures are now in a frame and take pride of place on the walls in my office.

We hosted our annual principals and parents and citizens association morning tea, although it was done differently, of course, because it was held virtually. We had fantastic educators and parents chat to Minister Ellery and me. We also had a small business virtual meeting with the small business minister, Minister Papalia. There were a few teething problems running that first Zoom meeting, but we learnt what to do pretty quickly after that.

I want to finish by referring to some other groups in my electorate and around the state who have found it particularly challenging to deal with COVID. Some things have been really good and some have been really bad. The rescue and fostering groups work tirelessly to save and rehome animals in our state. I could refer to many different groups, but I want to mention one in particular, Perth Rescue Angels. I am mentioning this, Treasurer, because the Town of Victoria Park is involved in this. In the midst of the COVID-19 restrictions, the Town of Victoria Park had to cancel its annual animal microchipping day, which is when residents would usually have their pets microchipped for free. Instead, because the microchips have a limited shelf life, the microchips were donated to the not-for-profit Perth Rescue Angels, which rescues animals and changes people's lives by rehabilitating and rehoming homeless, neglected, surrendered and abused animals. A big shout-out for the Town of Victoria Park for that good work. Many rescue groups found that when people were confined to their homes, they started looking for pets to adopt to keep them company. Cat and dog homes saw a big spike in applications and had to change some of the application criteria to move the animals quickly but safely into new homes. We are waiting to see how this will pan out when people go back to work. I am sure that there will be a bit of a structural change in the way we approach work. I am sure that more people will take advantage of working from home and alternative arrangements. Nevertheless, as people in the workforce go back to office buildings and leave their homes, what will they do with those animals that they have fostered or rehomed? We want to make sure that those animals are not mistreated or left isolated, having got used to having a family at home around them. Places such as Cat Haven have had a huge spike in applications and have had very high adoption rates. However, they are very concerned because some of those animals are coming

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 October 2020]

p6656e-6708a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

back. The thing that has not changed is the number of kittens and pregnant cats coming in off the street that they have had to deal with and rehome.

The Dogs' Refuge Home in Shenton Park does a remarkable job. I should point out to members that it is my very great privilege to be going there this Friday to celebrate its eighty-fifth anniversary. That is 85 years of finding homes for homeless and abandoned dogs and puppies. It saw a huge number of dogs being adopted, but is now seeing a lot of dogs coming back. There has been an explosion in the number of puppies that it is trying to find homes for.

**Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup:** Member, is that because of the number of people who got them during isolation?

**Ms L.L. BAKER:** Yes. We thought it was always going to happen like this. This is a whole new challenge for groups like the Dogs' Refuge Home. It is one of the bigger not-for-profits that does this, but there are many. In fact, my database of groups across the state that do this work is some 250 strong.

Some of these groups have lost hundreds of thousands of dollars from their annual working budgets because they could not hold fundraising activities. They simply could not go out and raise money from donors. As I have said before, some of them pirouetted very gracefully and ran online fundraisers and the like, but they have still taken a massive hit to the amount of operating capital that they have been able to raise from their donors, the public and all of us. Of course, we have tried to help them. I put a call out to my parliamentary colleagues asking them to look at a number of animal welfare groups in their electorates and to offer them, if they could, a small donation to help them do that work.

With the Dogs' Refuge Home in Shenton Park having its eighty-fifth anniversary this week, I think it is really important that this house bears in mind that it has taken a massive cut in the number of donations it has received over the last eight months while COVID has been with us. That has put great pressure on that organisation, its volunteers and the dogs that it rehomes. We need to do more to help those groups. That is one of the things that I am deeply committed to achieving.

We have in our sights the WA recovery plan, the McGowan government's unprecedented \$5.5 billion investment to support us through the pandemic and into the future. The 2020–21 budget contains over 500 recovery initiatives on 21 priority streams to boost things such as local manufacturing; investing in new technologies; reskilling our workforce; and investing in schools, hospitals, community infrastructure, culture and the arts, and tourism. Many of these things are demonstrated by the Metronet project in Bayswater. We have just released the latest drawings of what that will look like. I am very proud to say that my community has been engaged all the way along through a very active consultation process that Metronet has driven. Because of that, we have a product that is elegant and matches the heritage requirements of my community, the Bayswater village, and lays the ground for a remarkable and major redevelopment in the City of Bayswater. It will become the second biggest transport hub in the state. Never forget that. This is a major project. It takes a lot of work and a lot of consultation, and it will take the McGowan government to do it. I remember standing here some six years ago asking what was happening with the Bayswater train station when the Forrestfield–Airport Link came through, and I was told that a disability access ramp would be put into Bayswater station. That was the extent of the Liberal government's commitment to the Bayswater train station, ignoring the fact that there was going to be a 100 per cent increase in traffic on the line and a lot of other things happening. Because we have now committed to the Morley–Ellenbrook line, which also starts just north of Bayswater, we have committed a massive amount of money in the budget to get the project up and running. It will create 350 jobs. Again, that is part of the amazing recovery and support program that we heard the Treasurer talk about when he spoke about the budget. He said that 70 per cent of those jobs in Western Australia have come back, and I am pleased to say that 350 of those jobs will be in building the Metronet project in Bayswater as we redevelop that area.

I refer to the additional police that we will recruit. That is always a challenge. We have to find good people and we have to find the right people to apply for those positions and get them on board, and I know that historically, when governments have made commitments to increase police numbers, the challenges are always there. The Western Australia Police Force has to make sure that it can put in place recruitment strategies to bring people on, train them and get them into jobs as quickly as possible. That is a challenge, but I have every reason to believe that it will do very well. I met with the Western Australian Police Union just a week ago and we talked about some of its needs, particularly around the numbers of police. I am sure that this budget has gone a long way to making people feel confident in the government's commitment to policing in the state.

Retail is up in WA; building is going ahead and major infrastructure projects are going ahead. We have a massively renewed focus on capital works and infrastructure in this state. John Forrest Secondary College will be getting a \$50 million rebuild. There are many things happening in my electorate. I would just like to tip my hat to Patrick Gorman, the federal member for Perth. He has always been there to support the work that I am doing in

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

my community, and he offers me a really good channel into what is happening federally. He is always there when I need him and he has been particularly helpful in navigating through the Metronet of the future.

**DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale)** [10.31 pm]: I have the privilege of being the last speaker for the night on the Appropriation (Recurrent 2020–21) Bill 2020 and the Appropriation (Capital 2020–21) Bill 2020, so I will try to make my contribution very good, but also as brief as possible. This year, 2020, has been a remarkable year, not only because South Fremantle won the premierships, beating the Claremont Tigers by three points in a great cliffhanging match down at Fremantle Oval!

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr T.J. Healy)**: Members, some outrageous statements! Member for Armadale, please continue.

**Dr A.D. BUTI**: But also, of course, 2020 has been remarkable because of COVID-19. The “CO” in COVID-19 stands for “corona”, the “VI” is for “virus” and “D” is for disease, then “19” is for 2019. I thought I would quickly outline a little bit about the time line to show what a remarkable job this government has done for us to be in the position that we are in today. There is no other place in the world that one would rather be than in Western Australia at this stage. That is a remarkable statement to make and a great achievement.

The first case of coronavirus was reported in Wuhan in December last year. On 31 December, Wuhan officials talked about an atypical viral pneumonia of unknown cause. On 11 January 2020, China reported its first case. It then went to Thailand on 13 January. On 21 January, the first case was reported in the United States near Seattle. On 24 January, the first European case was confirmed in France. The first Australian case was reported on 25 January—a person travelling from China to Victoria. That was the beginning. The first death from COVID-19 in Australia was reported on 1 March 2020. As we know, the first Australian cases of community transmission were reported on 2 March 2020. If members cast their minds back to March, they will remember that the Minister for Health and the Premier talked in this place about the issue of COVID-19. We were also looking at Europe and what was happening in Italy and then in England. As we know, the United States has gone from worse to worse, but hopefully it will be better in three weeks’ time.

The World Health Organization declared it as a pandemic on 11 March 2020. In mid-March, the Australian government introduced measures to slow the spread, with voluntary self-isolation of all arriving travellers, the implementation of contact tracing and the expansion of testing services. We also had the first economic stimulus package on 12 March 2020. I am sure the Treasurer remembers that. The first economic stimulus package now looks like a few crumbs that were thrown at the problem.

**Mr B.S. Wyatt**: It is the same with the commonwealth. There has been an interesting ramp-up as it became more apparent that restrictions were going to be required. It was extraordinary.

**Dr A.D. BUTI**: Exactly. The *Ruby Princess* cruise ship docked in Sydney on 19 March 2020. It is interesting how the Morrison government keeps talking about New South Wales being the gold standard. It is not the gold standard; it is the *Ruby Princess* standard. We are quite fortunate that it was not a greater disaster than it was. How can anyone say that New South Wales is the gold standard when Western Australia has not had community transmission in how long?

Government members: Over six months.

**Dr A.D. BUTI**: We have not had community transmission in WA in over six months.

**Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup**: That’s not true. The Premier is slightly wrong with his impression. In question time, I think he was saying that it was 134 days.

**Mr B.S. Wyatt**: But it’s six months now.

**Dr A.D. BUTI**: Put it this way, it is a long longer than in New South Wales. Do members remember the day in March when the health minister basically said that he thought our hospitals would be overrun. I think it was five o’clock on a Thursday afternoon. I got in my car and I got onto the freeway at five past five, which is usually very difficult to do, and there was no-one on the freeway. For the next few weeks, we were basically in lockdown. The Premier, with the support of the health minister, gave us an update every day and told us what the situation was and what the state government was doing to reassure people, to give certainty and to show leadership. That is why we are in a situation in which we have not had community transmission for six months, or whatever we want to say it is. It is an absolutely brilliant achievement.

We have an economy that is improving. Many people would not even think there is a pandemic; people who live in Western Australia do not actually think there is a pandemic. The government is doing its best to ensure that people

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 October 2020]

p6656e-6708a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

remain vigilant and that they still observe the various safety requirements that they should follow. Members will remember that we went through the phases. There was the lockdown and then we started phase 1 on 27 April 2020. Then we went to phase 2 on 18 May 2020 and then to phase 3 on 6 June 2020, and phase 4 started on 27 June 2020. This government behaved in a very orderly, responsible and logical manner.

One of the other major measures is, of course, the hard border. The Leader of the Opposition does not know where she stands on the hard border. She has flip-flopped and flip-flop-flopped. What we do know is that the Liberal Party of Australia, which includes the Liberal Party of Western Australia and the federal Attorney-General, Christian Porter, backed Clive Palmer against the state of Western Australia. Then it was embarrassed and pushed to withdraw after giving evidence at the Federal Court hearing. It gave evidence in support of Clive Palmer at the Federal Court hearing. Christian Porter is right that commonwealth governments often intervene on constitutional matters, but it did more than that; it intervened in support of Clive Palmer. It did not present a neutral position of the legal issues; it presented functional medical evidence to try to support Clive Palmer. Of course, as we know, in that case, the Federal Court held for Western Australia on the factual scenario that will be now tested in the High Court.

The hard border has been a very important part of the Western Australian government's strategy. It is not just me who is saying that. An article in tomorrow's *The West Australian* titled "WA's tough tactics get green light—IMF backs State's hard border" states —

The International Monetary Fund last night released its latest World Economic Outlook, and warned the recovery for the global economy would be slower and harder than first imagined.

The top fiscal body warned if measures to prevent the spread of the virus were lifted too early they could negate all the progress made so far.

What are we talking about here? This is what we are doing. We are being criticised by certain people like Mathias Cormann, for instance, who is now seeking a position with an international organisation. It will be interesting to see whether he is supported once that organisation realises his position on climate change! To be fair to Mathias Cormann, he has been a great servant during his time in Parliament. But he has said recently, backed up by the federal conservative government and elements of the Liberal Party in WA, that we should not have restrictions and a hard border in WA. The article continues —

"Lockdowns are powerful instruments to reduce infections, especially when they are introduced early in a country's epidemic and when they are sufficiently stringent," the report, released last night, said.

"Considering also that lockdowns appear to impose decreasing marginal costs on economic activity as they become more stringent, policymakers may want to lean towards rapidly adopting tight lockdowns when infections increase rather than rely on delayed mild measures."

The comments come as the Federal and State Budgets both assumed WA's hard interstate border would remain in place until April next year ...

"The effectiveness of lockdowns in reducing infections suggests that lockdowns may pave the way to a faster economic recovery if they succeed in containing the epidemic, and thus limit the extent of voluntary social distancing," the report said.

"Therefore, the short-term economic costs of lockdowns could be compensated by stronger medium-term growth, possibly leading to positive overall effects on the economy."

I need say no more. That is a ringing endorsement of the policy measures the WA Labor government has instigated since March and we now have this incredibly fantastic budget. I cannot believe that in the midst of a global pandemic the Treasurer of Western Australia handed down a budget like the one he handed down last week. There would be nowhere else in the world, Treasurer. Do not worry about Mr Swan being "best Treasurer in the world", surely the Western Australian Treasurer will get the gong next time round. It is without doubt. I do not know whether state jurisdictions qualify for that title, but if not, we should instigate the best Treasurer in the world award, and I think without doubt it would go to the member for Victoria Park. It is quite incredible that Western Australia has not had community transmission for six months. Our hard border policy and the restrictions we have imposed over the six-month period have been endorsed by the IMF.

**Mr B.S. Wyatt:** Member, that's quite interesting. We are seeing that effective now; we have not got a final for the September quarter, but we saw the contraction in the June quarter—a large one of six per cent. The data suggests quite a different result in the September quarter.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** That is right. I think one of the important points, Treasurer, is about the decreasing marginal cost of economic activity as lockdowns become more stringent. The increase in restrictions reduces the slowing down

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 13 October 2020]

p6656e-6708a

Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Dean Nalder; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Tony Krsticevic; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Shane Love; Mr Donald Punch; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Mark Folkard; Ms Lisa Baker; Dr Tony Buti

---

of the economy, because the major economic impact is when it is initially locked down. Obviously, because we have done such a great job in the health part of the strategy, we have been able to open up. As I said, on Saturday for instance, within the space of three hours I went to a junior soccer tournament in Armadale, where there would have been a couple of hundred children playing; from that I went to the opening of the lawn bowls season at my local club, and at six o'clock I went to the Kelmscott Junior Football Club trophy presentation night. Of course, social distancing regulations were in place, but we would not actually think we were in the midst of a global pandemic.

I do not want to keep people here for much longer, because I think the International Monetary Fund report is just a ringing endorsement of what the Premier, the Minister for Health, the Treasurer, the rest of cabinet and the backbench have been saying for the last six months, and what the people of Western Australia have been saying. They are very, very supportive of the policies that this government has implemented and I think they are very confident and happy to have Premier Mark McGowan as the Premier of Western Australia, with an able team behind him to continue the health and economic measures that have ensured that we remain safe and that economic activity is improving. If we cast our minds back to March, remember that people were scared. I remember leaving that Thursday night feeling a bit uneasy. A lot of people were feeling very uneasy. I know in my household I was the only one who was going out for a couple of weeks. It has been an incredible effort and of course when history is written in 40 or 50 years about this period—Zak will probably still be here, but I do not think I will be—they will look back at the incredible efforts that the McGowan Labor government implemented and performed in the season of 2020. Congratulations to the South Fremantle Bulldogs for 2020, congratulations to the Premier, the Minister for Health, the Treasurer, the whole government, and may I say congratulations to the people of Western Australia.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr D.A. Templeman (Leader of the House)**.

*House adjourned at 10.47 pm*

---