



# Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

FORTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT  
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 11 May 2021



# Legislative Assembly

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**THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts)** took the chair at 2.00 pm, acknowledged country and read prayers.

## **DISTINGUISHED VISITORS — DANTU CHARANDASI AND NARESH SHARMA**

*Statement by Speaker*

**THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts)** [2.02 pm]: I want to acknowledge some special guests in the Speaker's gallery this afternoon. They are guests of Minister Tony Buti. It is the Indian Consul General, Ms Dantu Charandasi, and Mr Naresh Sharma.

## **STEPHEN KALESS — SETTLEMENT**

*Statement by Attorney General*

**MR J.R. QUIGLEY (Butler — Attorney General)** [2.03 pm]: I rise to inform the house about a settlement that the state recently reached with Mr Stephen Kaless, previously the senior media adviser to the former Treasurer. It is public knowledge that Mr Kaless was charged with indecently assaulting a female colleague at an office Christmas function on 13 December 2019. On 16 December 2019, prior to being charged, Mr Kaless resigned. The criminal proceedings against Mr Kaless proceeded to trial on 10 and 11 August 2020, after which Mr Kaless was acquitted.

The settlement achieves a full and final resolution of all current and any future proceedings initiated by Mr Kaless and all matters pertaining to the alleged incident and Mr Kaless's employment. Those proceedings included an unfair dismissal claim before the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission, as well as a Supreme Court action for defamation and tortious conspiracy. As occurs whenever a legal action is commenced against the state, careful consideration was given to the appropriate disposition of both sets of proceedings, and communications took place between the state and Mr Kaless's solicitors, the content of which is subject to without prejudice communication privilege and cannot be disclosed. Ultimately, I recommended to the state government that a full and final settlement of both proceedings take place.

The settlement amount of \$298 095 included, firstly, an amount to represent the salary and entitlements that Mr Kaless claimed that the state would have needed to pay him had his fixed-term contract ended at the last parliamentary term. The settlement includes a bar to proceedings to ensure that the legal action arising out of these matters is brought to an end. Mr Kaless will be placed in the same position that he claimed that he would have been in had his employment been suspended without pay pending the outcome of his criminal proceedings. Following Mr Kaless's acquittal, the state would have been required to back pay him for the duration of his suspension. Secondly, it included an amount to reflect the legal costs that Mr Kaless had incurred, together with a relatively small commercial amount relative to the amount that would have been needed to be spent to defend those proceedings. As part of the settlement, neither the state nor Mr Kaless had admitted any wrongdoing. Although the terms of the settlement are confidential, there is an exception to enable me to make this disclosure to Parliament. As this settlement resolves a high-profile matter and one that has seen not only criminal proceedings that led to the acquittal, but also the expenditure of public funds, it is appropriate that I inform the house of the conclusion of this matter.

## **POLICE — BRAVERY AWARDS**

*Statement by Minister for Police*

**MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Police)** [2.06 pm]: In my short time as Minister for Police, I have gained an even greater appreciation for the often unrecognised tasks that our police do, and the challenges they face every shift they work. I recently had the honour of attending the WA Police Force commissioner's bravery awards ceremony, recognising the actions of our police in protecting the community. The ceremony recognised 32 recipients for their actions in exhibiting the highest standards of selflessness and commitment to the community. These awards were presented to officers who placed themselves at considerable personal risk and, in some cases, at risk of serious injury or worse. On this occasion, nine officers were awarded the commissioner's Cross for Bravery, which is awarded for carrying out an act of conspicuous courage. Eleven police officers were awarded the commissioner's special commendation for an act of bravery while putting themselves at risk of injury. Nine officers received the commissioner's commendation for their meritorious conduct and devotion to duty under conditions of great stress. A further two officers received certificates of outstanding performance for their actions in assisting two of their colleagues who confronted an offender during a hostage situation.

I want to take this opportunity to further highlight some examples of the incidents for which these brave officers received these awards. In the course of their actions, nine officers were recognised for placing themselves at great

danger in disarming and arresting offenders armed with dangerous weapons, including knives and firearms. A further five incidents involved officers placing themselves at extreme risk while rescuing individuals who were in need of assistance and were trapped by fire. That is five members of the public who owe their lives to the bravery of WA police officers. On another occasion, a brave officer entered the water to rescue a driver from a submerged motor vehicle. These incidents serve to remind us of the situations our police find themselves in on a regular basis, and I am sure that all members will join me in taking this opportunity to acknowledge and congratulate these officers for their courage and dedication to duty.

### RESOURCES SECTOR — SALES

*Statement by Minister for Mines and Petroleum*

**MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington — Minister for Mines and Petroleum)** [2.08 pm]: I am pleased to inform the house that Western Australia's resources sector continued to break records in 2020, with sales of \$174 billion. Statistics from the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety reveal that iron ore led the way, with record sales of \$116 billion. Iron ore accounted for 79 per cent of mineral sales and 66 per cent of all mineral and petroleum sales in 2020. Gold was also a strong performer, with more than \$17 billion in sales, which is an all-time high, thanks to the high average gold price. Nickel sales increased to \$3.3 billion, which is the highest value in six years. In other good news, mineral sands sales increased to \$829 million and salt sales to \$431 million.

Employment in the resources sector also set new records. An average of almost 141 000 people worked in the industry last year. More than \$20 billion was invested in Western Australia's resources sector, which is an increase from \$17 billion in 2019. This represents the highest level since 2017.

WA and its resources sector have successfully navigated the pandemic to deliver these impressive figures. The sector kept not only WA's economy pumping, but also the nation's economy afloat. The sector's success in trading uninterrupted since the onset of the pandemic has enhanced our global reputation as a reliable and safe supplier of commodities. During a year made difficult by COVID-19, our exports enabled our Asian trading partners to keep their economies going, sustaining millions of jobs and livelihoods for their citizens. Our exports have also given WA a powerful competitive edge as the world's economy recovers. With around \$140 billion of resource projects in the pipeline, WA's future continues to look promising. The McGowan government's strong management of the COVID-19 pandemic has meant WA's economic recovery continues to outperform many other jurisdictions in Australia and around the world.

### ROYAL COMMISSION INTO INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES TO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE — RECOMMENDATIONS

*Statement by Minister for Child Protection*

**MS S.F. McGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Child Protection)** [2.10 pm]: I rise to table *A safer WA for children and young people: 2020 progress report*, a report on the Western Australian government's implementation of the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

We are now three years into our 10-year implementation journey and we are beginning to see a cultural shift in how we as a community understand and respond to child sexual abuse. This shift is occurring because of the work being led by this government, staff across multiple agencies and community service organisations and leaders in the community. The report details how we are realising our commitment to create a safer WA for all children, now and into the future, by meeting the 310 recommendations for which this state government is responsible, through initiatives like the \$3 million grant to support the establishment of the WA centre for excellence in responding to child abuse and neglect; the development of a reportable conduct scheme through the Parliamentary Commissioner Amendment (Reportable Conduct) Bill 2020, which was tabled as a green bill for public consultation last year; the work led by the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries to consult with 137 local governments and 38 sport and recreation organisations to support their participation in the National Redress Scheme; and the development of multiple training packages across agencies such as the Western Australia Police Force, the child and adolescent mental health service and the Department of Communities, and out in the community as well. The 2020 annual progress report demonstrates the strong working partnerships across state and local governments, the non-government sector and the community that are critical to our continued success in addressing systemic issues related to child safety.

As we move into the fourth year of the state government's 10-year reform plan, we will build on the foundational work of the first three years. The reason we do this work remains clear: the community has a right to expect that our children are safe, especially within the institutions entrusted to protect, educate, nurture and care for them. If we want to realise this, we must recognise that the safety of children is a whole-of-community responsibility.

I thank the Premier and my cabinet colleagues for their leadership and support in ensuring that we do everything we can as a government to stop the mistakes of the past from being repeated. I table the report.

[See paper [212](#).]

**QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE****GAMING AND WAGERING COMMISSION — CHAIR — DUNCAN ORD****57. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Premier:**

I refer to the *Gaming and Wagering Commission of Western Australia 2016–17 annual report* in which it is stated that chairman Barry Sargeant was stood down from this role as a result of the Labor government's machinery-of-government changes.

- (1) Was it wise to replace Barry Sargeant, a person with 25 years of gaming regulation experience, with someone who has no previous experience in gaming regulation?
- (2) Was training or support offered to the incoming chair to equip him with the skills required for this complex role?

**Mr M. McGOWAN replied:**

- (1)–(2) I vaguely recall the events at that point in time. In mid-2017, the government went through the machinery-of-government changes. At that time, when we came to office, there were 41 government departments in Western Australia—more than any state or territory in Australia. As I said on the radio this morning, Victoria has eight departments. Jeff Kennett reduced a few score down to eight, and that has continued ever since the Kennett government. New South Wales has 15 or 17 or thereabouts, Queensland has around 22 or thereabouts, and so on across Australia.

The Western Australian government took action on this, which was well overdue, and reduced the number of government departments from 41 down to 25. The reason behind that was to develop synergies between agencies with things in common and also to reduce red tape and have less investment in bureaucracy, if you like, and more investment in delivery. That was the reason behind the reform that we put in. As I said, that reform was not as stark as reforms in Victoria or other states, but it was still significant. There was a 40 per cent reduction in the number of government departments.

When we did that, of course, there were then fewer opportunities for people in director general or CEO roles. My recollection at the time is that Barry Sargeant, who I am quite fond of and who was a DG back in the 2000s when we did the small bar reforms, decided of his own accord that he did not want to be—he elected not to be, sorry. It is not that he did not want to be, but he elected not to be the director general of the new agency. That was his choice at that time. He suggested to me that Duncan Ord was the appropriate person to undertake that role. I listened to Mr Sargeant's advice, I listened to the advice of the minister at the time—I think the member for Mandurah was the relevant minister—and I appointed Mr Ord to the role. He is a highly respected public servant in Western Australia and he is well liked. I think he was a director general when the Liberals and Nationals were in office. He assumed the role.

Obviously, we recently called the Perth Casino Royal Commission that will look into all these issues. I am not going to pre-empt the outcomes of the royal commission.

**GAMING AND WAGERING COMMISSION — CHAIR — DUNCAN ORD****58. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Premier:**

I have a supplementary question. I refer to the chairman of the Gaming and Wagering Commission. Will the Premier now replace the current chairman of the Gaming and Wagering Commission with an independent person who has adequate gaming regulation experience, as identified by the current chairman himself, to ensure the integrity of gaming in Western Australia?

**Mr M. McGOWAN replied:**

The royal commission will make recommendations about all these matters. We called the royal commission. The issues confronting Crown were occurring when the member was in office, when the opposition was in government. We saw the outcome of the New South Wales inquiry and we put in place a royal commission to look at the issues. It is the first royal commission in Western Australia in 20 years or so. Therefore, we have actually taken action on these issues.

In terms of who the chair of the Gaming and Wagering Commission is, obviously, that is something we will consider in due course, but our record is very clear. We have taken very strong steps to deal with any issues of propriety in relation to the casino, with the first royal commission in 20 years.

**CYCLONE SEROJA — ASSISTANCE PACKAGE****59. Ms L. DALTON to the Premier:**

I refer to the state government's \$2.2 million assistance package for those affected by cyclone Seroja. Can the Premier outline to the house what this assistance will mean for those residents and businesses that were impacted by cyclone Seroja, including those in communities across greater Geraldton?

**Mr M. McGOWAN replied:**

Can I firstly congratulate the member for Geraldton on her election and her very strong majority in the electorate of Geraldton at the state election six weeks or so ago. I know that she is a very, very hard community worker, as we heard from her first speech. It was an outstanding effort, as indeed were many first speeches of members of this house.

Cyclone Seroja, obviously, has been a difficult experience for communities in Geraldton and the north. We announced an additional \$2.2 million in assistance for impacted communities. That was on top of the \$2 million we provided to the Lord Mayor's Distress Relief Fund appeal and in addition to the electricity and water financial relief packages and all the support provided by the Department of Communities. Under this latest package, \$4 000 will be provided to residents and businesses who were hardest hit by cyclone Seroja. It will be targeted at those people who lost their homes or their homes suffered significant damage. For small businesses, it will be for those who suffered financially due to the cyclone and from access being shut to their communities, particularly tourism and hospitality businesses. We estimate that at least 200 businesses will benefit from this assistance and recovery. The recovery process has obviously been well managed by the State Recovery Controller, the relevant ministers and agencies, but it will be a long process. We have also put in a range of applications to the commonwealth for disaster relief funding as well as provide a range of other items of assistance to the local communities.

The recovery efforts are well underway. There has been enormous government effort. I would like to thank everyone in the agencies in particular who have been up there doing the work. It is obviously difficult and sometimes dangerous work to fix these communities. All the work that has been undertaken allowed us to open the major roads into Kalbarri as of last Thursday, which will no doubt be welcomed by local tourism and hospitality businesses. The State Recovery Controller and the state recovery coordination groups are continuing to work to support those communities. I understand it is a long road ahead; I appreciate the forbearance and patience of people involved and I thank everyone doing all the hard work up there.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT — AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT

**60. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Premier:**

I refer to the Auditor General's report, *Regulation and support of the local government sector*, which found that the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries is not providing efficient and effective regulation and support to the local government sector and lacks fundamental aspects of a good regulatory framework.

- (1) Is the Premier satisfied with the report's findings that highlight multiple failings of the department?
- (2) Is this gross mismanagement the reason the Premier fired the Minister for Local Government and appointed a new one?

Several members interjected.

**Mr R.S. Love:** You sacked him and moved him off to some other place; found another job for him. What do you do when they fail? What do you do when you owe your mates?

**The SPEAKER:** Members, we would like to hear from the Premier, thank you.

**Mr M. McGOWAN replied:**

- (1)–(2) Madam Speaker, I am aware of some people who have been fired recently, but it is not the Minister for Tourism. If the member wanted detailed answers in relation to that report, he should have given me some notice or asked the Minister for Local Government. Since he decided to impugn the character of the Minister for Tourism, I want to staunchly defend him. He is an outstanding minister and a terrific person.

**Mr R.S. Love:** Have you read the report?

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I think I may have answered the member's question with my opening statement.

The Minister for Tourism is an outstanding minister, a great local member of Parliament and a valued member of this house by people on all sides. I will say to the member that it is a bit mean-spirited on his behalf to attack and impugn the character of the Minister for Tourism in the way he has. He is well liked on all sides and regarded as someone who has done a good job in the portfolios he has held. I realise some people have a bit of a vendetta against him, but I think it is a very, very small minority because most people know that he is diligent, hardworking, decent, effective and someone who does not play partisan politics at all.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT — AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT

**61. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Premier:**

I have a supplementary question.

- (1) What steps will the Premier take to ensure that the serious issues outlined by the Auditor General are addressed and rectified under his new minister?
- (2) Is the Premier comfortable with his decision —

Several members interjected.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** He is the Premier.

Is the Premier comfortable with his decision to appoint a minister on training wheels to address these serious issues? Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** I know there are a lot of people in here who would like to give the answer, but it is only the Premier.

**Mr M. McGOWAN replied:**

(1)–(2) As I said to the member, he might want to give some notice of specific details in the report so that I can provide him with a more comprehensive answer.

**Mr R.S. Love:** I started with a direct quote.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** The minister is back there behind me somewhere. In his negative commentary about this minister, the member for Moore might know that he is a former Mayor of the Town of Vincent with deep and long experience in both local government and the Western Australian Local Government Association, and is highly respected across the sector. I think someone with that level of experience in local government is worthy of being Minister for Local Government.

I might note also that the Minister for Tourism is a former Deputy Mayor of Mandurah. As part of the deputy mayors' club, of whom there are some of us in this chamber, I am very defensive of people who were deputy mayors. The Minister for Tourism, who is also the Leader of the House, is well experienced, and, again, well respected and well liked across local government.

The member for Moore can continue to come in here being nasty, mean and, frankly, awful or he can come in here and sometimes try to be a little bit constructive. That is his choice.

#### HOUSING — KEYSTART

**62. Ms K.E. GIDDENS to the Minister for Housing:**

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's unprecedented support for Western Australian home owners, which has included a significant boost to Keystart. Can the minister update the house on how the work of the McGowan Labor government is helping more Western Australians get into their first home, in particular those on low to moderate incomes?

**Mr J.N. CAREY replied:**

I thank the member for the question—her first question in this house—and bear with me because my training wheels may fall off!

Several members interjected.

**Mr J.N. CAREY:** It is fair to say that for many Western Australians, it is a major milestone, a first dream, to own their own home. I am proud to be part of a government that is genuinely committed to achieving that aspiration to get that first foot through the door. Keystart is an obvious vehicle for doing that because it enables Western Australians who, given the hurdle of the first deposit, might not otherwise be able to get their home. That is why I am proud that we have enhanced the capacity of Keystart to enable many more Western Australians to get their first home. We have increased the borrowing limit with an extra \$243 million on the books to enable more Western Australians to borrow.

We have also changed the eligibility requirements. We have lifted the threshold for both singles and couples. The dividend, the result, is very clear. Reports already indicate that from the last financial year there has been a 144 per cent increase in the number of loans. It is estimated that this financial year there will be 4 000 new loans. Most important, 81 per cent of those new customers will be first home owners. These are great results.

I want to say also that the regions will also have their fair share: \$200 million of those new loans are for homes in the regions. It is supported and complemented by our \$114 million Regional Land Booster program, which is about releasing more affordable land into regional markets. Those who are not eligible for Keystart are still seizing the opportunity. As the Premier reported to Parliament, we have seen extraordinary results with record growth with more than 23 000 building approvals in the past 12 months. These are incredible figures, and I am proud to say that this clearly demonstrates that our WA Recovery Plan is working in that we have created a pipeline of work; secured and protected jobs of 65 000 workers in the residential construction sector; and, of course, and, most important, enabled thousands and thousands of new Western Australians to achieve that first dream home.

#### MACHINERY-OF-GOVERNMENT CHANGES

**63. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Premier:**

I refer to the chaos in the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries as evidenced in its documented failure in the regulation and support of the local government sector and the shocking revelations in the evidence presented to the Perth Casino Royal Commission. Does the Premier concede that his government's sweeping machinery-of-government changes have failed to deliver an efficient and effective government and instead created a bureaucratic mess?

**Mr M. McGOWAN replied:**

No.

#### MACHINERY-OF-GOVERNMENT CHANGES

**64. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Premier:**

I have a supplementary question.

How confident is the Premier that these failures are not systemic throughout the public service? They are serious matters that have been raised by the Auditor General and revelations by one of his own directors general.

**Mr M. McGOWAN replied:**

I indicated to the former member that notice should be provided if she wants specific details about a specific report, but I understand that the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries is looking to implement the recommendations of the Auditor General's inquiry to put in place any changes that might be needed out of that. The machinery-of-government changes have now been in place for four years. From the tone of the Leader of the Opposition's questioning, we should just have more government departments—more and more and more. Maybe we should have 100 government departments! That might solve the problem, according to the Leader of the Opposition. Every time you have an issue, you create a government department. How many government departments do you want?

**Ms M.J. Davies:** We are just saying your model does not work, Premier. Your model is failing.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** What new members will learn is that whenever we pose a question to them, they never have an answer. We have 25 government departments, which is a 40 per cent reduction. I think we will find that most people across the state would say that it is better to have larger and more robust organisations that bring together synergies between important areas of government. Most people would think that is a reasonable thing to do. That is what our reforms have done. As I said, Jeff Kennett condensed the entire Victorian government into eight departments. We have condensed the number of Western Australian government departments—our state has a third of the population of Victoria—from 41 down to 25. Obviously, under the arrangement that was there before—there had been no reform for decades—it was too many. I think the synergies between the agencies are plain for all to see and the way that they are structured is obviously a sensible way forward. Perhaps we could have gone further with some departments. We elected not to because we thought that in the biggest reorganisation in government, perhaps in history, it was probably wise to stop at about 25. It is plain from what the Leader of the Opposition has to say that she thinks that there should be an unlimited number of government departments, and all that does is breed small agencies without great capability, more people in administration and fewer people in delivery.

#### SWAN RIVER CAUSEWAY BRIDGE

**65. Ms H.M. BEAZLEY to the Minister for Transport:**

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's record investment in transport projects across WA, including cycling infrastructure such as the new Swan River Causeway bridge. Can the minister update the house on the work being done to deliver the new Causeway bridge, including how this important project will support local jobs and Western Australian businesses?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:**

I thank the member for Victoria Park for the question, which I think is her first question.

**Ms H.M. Beazley:** Yes.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Thank you, member for Victoria Park.

We are seeing unprecedented expenditure on our cycling network across the state. Throughout regional areas and the suburbs, we are delivering a significant boost to cycling expenditure. I acknowledge the member for Thornlie for his work to promote cycling throughout Western Australia. A number of projects have been completed. The Mitchell Freeway principal shared path, member for Balcatta, has been completed. The Armadale Road PSP has also been completed. Members for Armadale and Jandakot, thank you very much. Of course, a lot of projects are underway. Stage 2 of the Fremantle–Perth PSP is underway. I note that the member for Cottesloe is a big supporter of that project. I thank him for his support for that project because acknowledging good things helps members get re-elected, member for Cottesloe. Look at that! Stage 1, of course, of the Fremantle–Perth PSP has been completed. Stage 2 is underway and, ultimately, both stages will connect the PSP right through to Fremantle. As part of our election campaign, we committed to improving the cycling network throughout Hillarys, member for Hillarys. Member for Geraldton, a significant boost—I am looking for the member for Geraldton —

**Dr A.D. Buti:** They're everywhere!

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** It is very, very hard to keep track of where everyone is in this chamber. Geraldton will receive a significant boost and I know the member for Geraldton is a big supporter of investment in cycling infrastructure throughout Geraldton.

The new Causeway bridge principal shared pathway is causing a lot of excitement out there. More recently, we announced that two tenderers are going through to the next stage; they are Civmec and Decmil. Civmec was a key producer of the beautiful Matagarup Bridge, a bridge that we supported; we brought its production back to WA so that it was locally produced. Remember that Liberal Party members criticised the work on that beautiful bridge. This new Causeway Bridge will take more than 3 000 cyclists a day. The existing Causeway takes more than 3 000 cyclists and pedestrians a day. This will be a major boost to cycling and support places such as Victoria Park and South Perth, member for South Perth, and the city, member for Perth. It is a great new initiative. We will be announcing the successful contract in the next six months. It will be an iconic bridge across the Swan and will help connect both sides and make cycling and walking even more attractive to more people in WA.

CORONAVIRUS — HOTEL QUARANTINE

**66. Dr D.J. HONEY to the Premier:**

- (1) Is the Premier aware that a security guard involved in hotel quarantine has been stood down and another is under investigation for noncompliance with the secondary employment rule?
- (2) Which hotel were these guards working at and what are the jobs that these workers had?

**Mr M. McGOWAN replied:**

- (1)–(2) I am unaware of any incident of that nature, but I do know that we brought in a range of changes, indeed contractual arrangements, to ensure that people working in hotel quarantine in those areas were required not to have another job in order to protect the public. If someone has been stood down for breaching those rules, that would be in accordance with the requirements that we brought in.

CORONAVIRUS — HOTEL QUARANTINE

**67. Dr D.J. HONEY to the Premier:**

I have a supplementary question. Given that the safety of the WA community relies on thousands of hotel quarantine workers doing the right thing, is the Premier confident that we have the processes to stop those people having second jobs or does the government need to look further into this matter?

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** You have asked the supplementary. We will have the answer now. Premier.

**Mr M. McGOWAN replied:**

The premise of the question, which I will get checked, is that someone has been stood down because they breached the rules. That is the premise of the question. If someone has been stood down because they breached the rules, that would indicate the rules are working. I think that is just logical. In hotel quarantine, we are dealing with thousands of people at any one point in time, and if people breach the rules and they are uncovered, being stood down is an obvious consequence of doing so. Hotel quarantine workers received a 40 per cent pay increase on the basis that they do the right thing. Obviously, working in hotel quarantine, just so members know, involves long hours. They work all hours of the day and night. Probably at times it is quite boring. We have a range of people who ordinarily would have a range of jobs, so they might do that and then they might have done part-time employment in other areas. Back in January or perhaps February, we sought to remove those opportunities for other jobs. If the system is working, that is a good thing.

In terms of other things that we have done, we have just implemented mandatory vaccinations so that people working in hotel quarantine have mandatory vaccinations. We have put in place a daily testing regime. All the people who go into what is termed the red zone in hotel quarantine are required to be tested every single day they are at work. There is also a testing regime when they are on leave, but it is not every day. We have upped the requirement for personal protective equipment. We are phasing out three hotels; they are on the cusp of being phased out as we speak. We have done a whole range of things to keep the system safe and secure, and we will continue to do so. But, as I have said repeatedly, the system itself is not perfect; it was never designed for these purposes. We have had 45 000 returning Australians come through it. Of course, there needs to be much more careful analysis by the commonwealth of people leaving the country, wherever they may be going, so that we do not have people leaving the country and then joining the list and displacing people overseas who might have been trying to get on the list. A range of changes could be made at a federal level, but as members can tell what from I have said, at a state level, huge improvements have been put in place.

NEW INDUSTRIES FUND — INNOVATION VOUCHERS PROGRAM

**68. Dr J. KRISHNAN to the Minister for Innovation and ICT:**

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's continued investment in creating local jobs and supporting new Western Australian industries. Can the minister update the house on how this government investment in the innovation vouchers program is supporting local WA businesses and helping create local jobs?

**Mr D.T. PUNCH replied:**

I thank the member for Riverton for his question and also for his outstanding election victory in the seat of Riverton and his very touching speech about his journey to this place. Congratulations, member for Riverton.

The innovation vouchers program is part of the McGowan government's new industries fund and is part of our agenda to diversify the WA economy and support small business. Since its inception, the innovation vouchers program has supported 178 metropolitan and regional small businesses, and since 2017, 96 of those vouchers have been provided by the McGowan Labor government.

I would like to tell members about two examples. VitalTrace received a voucher in 2017 and since then has grown from two employees to 16 and raised \$1.3 million in capital. It has also funded three patents, which are underway, with another five planned. The founders of VitalTrace have described how the voucher they received in 2017 was the majority of their budget for that year and allowed them to reach proof of concept, which in turn led to their initial seed capital funding. VitalTrace is developing a biosensor device that is designed to improve safety during the natural process of childbirth, so it is a tremendous Western Australian innovation. Soter Analytics is the second example and it has developed the world's first wearable solution—an artificial intelligence-driven coaching program to reduce back and shoulder injuries in the workplace by up to 55 per cent. Since 2017, Soter Analytics has increased its employee numbers from three to 28. The company has raised approximately \$A2.5 million, has multiple patents underway and has now expanded to new markets in the United Kingdom, the United States and Europe.

We on this side in the McGowan Labor government know the importance of accelerating our agenda to diversify the WA economy, and that is why, in 2020, the McGowan Labor government significantly expanded the IV program from 20 vouchers to 36, with a total value of \$690 000 to provide additional support to WA innovators during the COVID-19 pandemic. I recently opened the 2021 round of the program, which calls for applications by Tuesday, 25 May. I am very proud to be a part of a McGowan Labor government that is committed to diversifying the Western Australian economy through innovation. They were some great examples of the work that has been achieved.

QUARANTINE ADVISORY PANEL

**69. Ms L. METTAM to the Premier:**

I refer to the Premier's comments last Wednesday when he misled the house that a quarantine advisory panel had been established.

*Point of Order*

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I have a point of order.

**The SPEAKER:** Member, I ask you to sit down. That point of order is upheld; I do not need to hear it. Your question contains an imputation. I ask you to remove that and rephrase your question.

*Questions without Notice Resumed*

**Ms L. METTAM:** I refer to the Premier's comments last Wednesday when he stated that a quarantine advisory panel had been established.

- (1) Can he confirm that this panel has now been established?
- (2) Why has it taken over 60 days for him to act on this recommendation, given these hotels are the front line against this deadly disease?
- (3) Who is the new chair if it is not Professor Weeramanthri, as incorrectly stated last week?

**Mr M. McGOWAN replied:**

- (1)–(3) We will announce further details about the Quarantine Advisory Panel, I expect, later this week. Obviously, there is consultation going on about who the membership will be. I think my words last week were that my understanding was that it was Professor Weeramanthri. My understanding was incorrect and I corrected the record the next day in question time. If the member wants to make something of that, feel free, but I think it shows that the Liberal Party continues to undermine all our efforts in relation to COVID.

**The SPEAKER:** The member has a supplementary, which I caution you needs to be brief and to the point.

QUARANTINE ADVISORY PANEL

**70. Ms L. METTAM to the Premier:**

I have a supplementary question. Given the Premier's lacklustre response to this recommendation and his delays in improving the hotel quarantine —

**The SPEAKER:** Member, when I ask for a question, that is exactly what I want. I do not want the preamble; I want the supplementary question.

**Ms L. METTAM:** What confidence can the public have that the Premier will act on the recommendations from this newly formed panel with the urgency it deserves?

**Mr M. McGOWAN replied:**

The panel itself is yet to be formed. It is still to be formed. It will be formed and provide us with ongoing advice about the issues related to quarantine. I just note that Western Australia has had one of the best responses to dealing with the pandemic of any jurisdiction in the entire world.

Several members interjected.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** We have had the most outstanding public health response and the most outstanding economic response of any jurisdiction in Australia, and probably any jurisdiction in the entire world, yet for some reason the member for Vasse thinks that that is not good enough. Other countries around the world have had hundreds of thousands of people die in the streets and in corridors. They have had economic dislocation the likes of which have not been seen since 1929 and they have had death rates the likes of which have not been seen since the Second World War. That is the experience all over the world. In Western Australia, we have run a hotel quarantine system that was never designed for it and we have had 45 000 people come through it. We have had a handful of incidents, despite the fact that we have put in place some of the strongest protections we would ever see. The Liberal state of South Australia—I am good friends with Steven Marshall—has had an incident in hotel quarantine over the course of the last day because it was never designed for those purposes, and every state in the commonwealth knows it. The commonwealth will not take on the responsibility because it knows it is too hard and too difficult and there is risk involved, so we took on the responsibility and we are making it as safe as we possibly humanly can.

Despite all the trauma and all the effort, and despite the minister and me virtually every single day meeting for hours, making decisions, allocating money and resources, questioning advice and ensuring that all sorts of things took place across Western Australia over the last 15 months to keep our state safe, it has not been good enough for the Liberal Party. This is the same party that, at the height of the pandemic, joined Clive Palmer. It was out there backing his action in the High Court. In this house the then leader, who is now a private citizen, was backing Clive Palmer. Every time an issue came up, there was criticism and undermining. That is what occurred. I can bring in all the quotes for the member if she likes. She was sitting there, right behind her, backing her all the way. That has been the experience of this state over the last 15 months. I tell you what: if you think the public has not noticed the way you conducted yourself and the experience over the course of the last year, you are misrepresenting the evidence of 13 March!

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Warren–Blackwood, congratulations on your first question.

## CLIMATE CHANGE — RAINFALL

**71. Ms E.J. KELSIE to the Minister for Water:**

I refer to the impacts that climate change is having on Western Australian farmers through reduced rainfall.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on how the McGowan Labor government is supporting farmers in dealing with the challenges caused by climate change?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house on how the federal government can support these efforts?

**Mr D.J. KELLY replied:**

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for her question. It is absolute fantastic to have her in the house, and I congratulate her on her victory in Warren–Blackwood.

Despite the recent rains—we have had some pretty good rain in the last couple of weeks—the impacts of climate change in Western Australia are stark. The south west of Western Australia is one of the places on the planet most impacted upon by declining rainfall due to climate change. That has had significant consequences in Western Australia. Since 2019, we have in our first term of government dealt with an unprecedented 12 water deficiency declarations. There has only ever previously been two; we currently have 12 in place. That requires us to cart water to farmers so that they can provide water to their stock. That comes at significant cost and significant difficulty and stress for the farmers involved.

In addition to doing that, in 2019–20 we spent \$1.5 million on 37 community water projects to upgrade dams across the great southern and the wheatbelt so that non-potable supplies were available to the farming community, notwithstanding the declining rainfall.

But we are not resting on our laurels. In February this year, just before the election, we announced a project to upgrade 70 agricultural area dams across the great southern and the wheatbelt. That is a \$7.3 million project—the biggest investment of its type in that area in decades. Seventy dams will be upgraded to provide non-potable supplies to farmers who are facing difficulties. The state government will provide \$3.65 million for that project—again, an unprecedented amount of investment from a state government. For the other 50 per cent of that project, we have made an application to the commonwealth government's National Water Grid Authority. Today is federal budget day; we hope to get good news from the federal government that it is going to support our project through the federal budget and the National Water Grid Authority. Members

will be aware that much of the spending by the commonwealth government on water infrastructure has been centred on the east coast. Something like \$12 billion has been spent, most of it on the Murray–Darling Basin. Only two per cent of that has been spent on Western Australian projects.

We on this side of the house have a strong record of taking action on climate change and supporting farmers when they need it. We have put up 50 per cent of the money for this new project of 70 dam upgrades across the great southern and the wheatbelt; we are asking for some of the commonwealth government's water infrastructure funding to flow to WA. Let us see what it says in tonight's budget.

#### CORONAVIRUS — EVENT CANCELLATION INSURANCE FUND

#### 72. Mr V.A. CATANIA to the Premier:

I refer to calls from industry for a government-backed events cancellation insurance fund amid growing concerns about the future of festivals and events in WA.

- (1) Is the Premier aware that more than 500 events and festivals had to be cancelled at short notice following the Anzac weekend lockdown directives?
- (2) Is the Premier aware that event organisers behind events like the Bindoon Show and other community events have made the decision to cancel 2021 shows due to ongoing instability and uncertainty?
- (3) Has the Premier sought advice on the COVID-19 event cancellation insurance fund, as it was reported that he would in *The West Australian* of 28 April?

#### Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

- (1)–(3) I thank the member for the question. We are investigating this issue. I just want to make a few points. A whole range of events are still going on in Western Australia. Indeed, last year we were the first state to reopen, if you like, to allow for events, functions and activities to go ahead. All of that activity went on here before anywhere else. As I said repeatedly in response to opposition questions last year, the best thing we can do for the events industry is to have events, and we were able to do that. Treasury is currently considering the matter of an events fund. Having said that, a range of support initiatives were taken to assist the events industry.

A program was launched by the Minister for Culture and the Arts to allow for rental fee waivers, and I think last year we also brought in an underwriting scheme for a range of events. Both of them have received hundreds of applications, and \$15 million was allocated to the Getting the Show back on the Road program, including a venue fee waiver and a shared risk program. So, in effect, we have already done this, and I do not think that has been widely acknowledged. That was part of our recovery plan last year.

The other parts of the recovery plan included the upgrade of Perth Concert Hall and His Majesty's Theatre. There was also an allocation of \$6 million to the Holocaust education centre and museum in Yokine. There was \$15 million for Getting the Show back on the Road; from memory, \$20 million or thereabouts for a program that supports regional arts and concerts and the like, which is rolling out; the \$5 million Lotterywest investment in the Creative Communities COVID-19 Recovery artist-in-residence program; we allocated \$2 million towards the Aboriginal cultural centre; and a range of other programs around the state.

Obviously, COVID-19 is not easy. The member mentioned a Mingenew event. Events may not go ahead because the organisers do not want to put in COVID-19 plans, or whatever the case might be, but we will work as best we can with event organisers to make sure that they happen.

#### BILLS

##### *Appropriations*

Messages from the Governor received and read recommending appropriations for the following bills —

1. Supply Bill 2021.
2. Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill 2021.

#### PAPERS TABLED

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

#### SUPPLY BILL 2021

##### *Explanatory Memorandum — Correction — Statement by Speaker*

**THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts)** [2.58 pm]: I have received advice that the explanatory memorandum for the Supply Bill 2021, introduced on 5 May 2021, contains incorrect information. Specifically, the explanation for clause 3 mistakenly refers to the 2020–21 financial year, whereas it should refer to the 2021–22 financial year. I have authorised the explanatory memorandum to be replaced with the correct document and for the website to be updated accordingly. Members who previously obtained a copy of that document are advised to obtain the updated version from the Assembly office.

**BILLS***Notice of Motion to Introduce*

1. Financial Legislation Amendment Bill 2021.

Notice of motion given by **Mr M. McGowan (Treasurer)**.

2. Metropolitan Region Scheme (Beeliar Wetlands) Bill 2021.

Notice of motion given by **Ms R. Saffioti (Minister for Planning)**.

3. Conservation and Land Management Amendment Bill 2021.

Notice of motion given by **Ms A. Sanderson (Minister for Environment)**.

4. Sunday Entertainments Repeal Bill 2021.

Notice of motion given by **Ms A. Sanderson (Minister for Commerce)**.

5. Aquatic Resources Management Amendment Bill 2021.

Notice of motion given by **Mr D.T. Punch (Minister for Fisheries)**.

**TREASURER'S ADVANCE AUTHORISATION BILL 2021  
COVID-19 RESPONSE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT  
(EXTENSION OF EXPIRING PROVISIONS) BILL 2021**

*Remaining Stages — Standing Orders Suspension — Motion*

**MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Leader of the House)** [3.00 pm]: I move —

That so much of the standing orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill 2021 and the COVID-19 Response Legislation Amendment (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Bill 2021 to be dealt with while the Address-in-Reply has priority and to proceed through all remaining stages without delay between the stages.

In moving this motion, I need to highlight to the house—I also acknowledge the support of the opposition—how we will arrange matters this week. Shortly, we will move on to the second reading debate on the COVID-19 Response Legislation Amendment (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Bill 2021. We aim to deal with and pass that bill today. Of course, if that bill passes early this evening, the house will revert to debating the Address-in-Reply.

We will commence tomorrow with debate on the Address-in-Reply. The opposition has two speakers left to contribute to the Address-in-Reply, so perhaps one of its members will speak tomorrow. I expect that there may be an amendment moved to the Address-in-Reply motion, which we will debate and deal with. That will then allow us tomorrow to deal with the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill 2021, which, of course, is important and needs to be passed by this house. The opposition is aware that the government needs that bill to be passed by lunchtime on Thursday.

Both of these bills are urgent and need to be passed by this house this week so that they can be sent to the Legislative Council. If there is time left on Thursday, we will conclude any further Address-in-Reply contributions. I, again, acknowledge that the opposition may want one of its members to speak in that debate on Thursday morning and, again, I expect an amendment will be debated and dealt with. The intention of this motion is to allow the house to deal with the two bills that I have highlighted in the motion so that they can be passed by lunchtime on Thursday.

**MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Deputy Leader of the Opposition)** [3.02 pm]: On behalf of the opposition, I express our support for the motion. I thank the Leader of the House for keeping us up to date as changes have happened with some of the legislation. We will support the plan that he has outlined.

Question put and passed.

**COVID-19 RESPONSE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT  
(EXTENSION OF EXPIRING PROVISIONS) BILL 2021**

*Second Reading*

Resumed from 5 May.

**MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Deputy Leader of the Opposition)** [3.03 pm]: Today, we are speaking on the COVID-19 Response Legislation Amendment (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Bill 2021. At the outset, I would like to say that the opposition will not be opposing this bill; we will be giving it our support. There will be some discussion on some aspects of it and I expect that there will be some debate about some of the implications of the government's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic as it relates to the measures that will be outlined today.

This legislation has been before the house twice before: firstly, when it was initially put in place in April last year and, secondly, when a further six-month extension was granted for provisions in both the Criminal Code Amendment

(COVID-19 Response) Act 2020 and the Emergency Management Amendment (COVID-19 Response) Act 2020. In November, the government initially sought an extension of 12 months; however, a motion was moved in this house to limit that extension to six months because it would more closely tie the timing of further consideration of an extension of these powers to the political process. In other words, just after the election, there would be time for a new government to consider whether the provisions needed to continue and that period needed to be no greater than was necessary to allow for that consideration. I think we hit the extension of time pretty well spot on, because the government has ample time to bring in these provisions. There has been no need to change the standing orders; a simple suspension of standing orders and a declaration that this bill is an urgent matter have been enough to ensure that the bill will progress. I cannot guarantee the bill's progress through the other place—we can never do that—but the government will have a majority in that house, so if there are any delays, the government can blame its own members for that.

As we know, the bill seeks to amend the Emergency Management Amendment (COVID-19 Response) Act 2020. It will extend the current sunset date of 4 July 2021 that applies to section 72A of the Emergency Management Act 2005 so that the powers under that provision are available for a further six months. We know that the power provided for under section 72A enables hazard management officers and authorised officers to effectively manage the response to an emergency. It enables them to direct persons or classes of persons to take any action an officer considers reasonably necessary to prevent, control or abate risks associated with the emergency. It also provides for information-gathering powers that have been necessary to allow for contract tracing and information gathering through such measures as the SafeWA app and paper-based registers that keep the community safe and ensure that there is good knowledge about where people have been. Having that information enables contact tracers to quickly get on top of any situation that may develop if there is an outbreak of the disease.

The bill will also amend the Criminal Code Amendment (COVID-19 Response) Act 2020 to ensure that high penalties continue to apply. I am talking about situations in which there might be an assault or threat of an assault or even perhaps incidental contact whereby a person gives a false understanding to someone else that they are infected with COVID-19 that causes that person distress.

These measures are extraordinarily important at the moment, but we also know that this bill will extend powers that limit the expected normal rights and privileges of people in a free society. We should not in any way take for granted the extension of these measures. It is important that they are continually reviewed so that people's freedoms are protected, because, apart from feeling safe, our community cherishes its freedom and the ability for people to move wherever and whenever they need to.

Over the past 12 months, some extraordinary situations have developed in our state, situations we would never have believed would have been the case 18 months ago. Around Easter last year, the regions went into lockdown. That was a tremendously difficult time for many people in the various regions, be it the metropolitan region—Perth and Peel—the wheatbelt, the midwest or other districts. Areas of the Kimberley were in lockdown for some considerable time because of fears of an outbreak in the Aboriginal communities in the area. We know that those powers were extraordinarily important, but it was a shock to members of the community when they could not drive from Yancheep to Lancelin without having to give an explanation to someone about why they were going there or without having a reasonable excuse under the provisions of a direction that had been signed by the Commissioner of Police. There was very strict enforcement of these measures. At times, the Army helped the police on roadblocks. Community members in my electorate who go to the city for their shopping, schooling, employment, recreation or medical care had to justify the journeys they were taking. In some cases, the police would put traffic control measures not at the actual borders of the regions but at a point that was more manageable, with road safety dictating that they could do that. For instance, Tonkin Highway ends in my electorate, but it would be completely impractical to stop traffic along Tonkin Highway. Instead, roadblocks and traffic control measures were put in place beyond the end of the highway, which meant that the Shire of Chittering was virtually cut in half, with residents of one section able to travel into the metropolitan area and those of the northern section not able to. People going from one part of the shire to another, who were under no obligation under the directions and were not subject to any restrictions under them, were subjected to rigorous interrogation. I think quite erroneous decisions were made sometimes by officers who were not always well equipped to understand the geography of the area they were placed in. I was questioned at one of these roadblocks by a police sergeant who had not read the directions notice and did not know who was exempt and could travel through the traffic control measure. The sergeant said to me, “You think that just because you are a member of Parliament, you are above the law.” I asked this gentleman whether he had a copy of the directions notice and he replied that he did not. I then asked whether he had read the directions notice and he said no. I said, “I do not know what else to say to you.” Luckily, the Clerk had given all members a letter to say that we were able to travel from the metropolitan area—from the Parliament—to our electorate offices. I dug around in my glove box and eventually found this letter. I had tossed the letter in there because I never thought someone would really think a member of Parliament should not be able to go from one part of his electorate to another. With that letter I convinced the officer that I should be able to travel through the roadblock. Many officers had quite different interpretations of the directions, which caused a lot of confusion at the roadblocks. People who genuinely had to get to Perth to undergo medical treatments were sometimes turned back.

My office was flooded with inquiries. In that initial period, it was very good that the police gave me a number so that I could text the gentleman who was in charge of the whole operation, and I was generally able to get through a lot of the issues that we faced. As time went on, the ability of our office to directly communicate with people on the ground who were making these key decisions was curtailed, and we ended up being directed to a website and unable to provide the support that our community members needed. That was a very distressing time for a lot of people. As I say, people were really running out of food in some areas because there was no shop in their local area. People in the coastal areas of the Gingin shire were expected to drive to Northam to go to a shop, even though they were about a 20-minute drive from Yanchep and that was where they would normally do their shopping. The local IGA shops in the area were not being resupplied; some were getting 10 per cent of their orders sent. There was a real food shortage. Just before the control measures were first put in place, we saw the spectacle of busloads of shoppers arriving in places like Moora, Jurien Bay and Northam and stripping shelves bare and taking the product back to Perth.

**Mr R.R. Whitby:** Taking toilet paper, I guess!

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Yes; you cannot trust Perth people!

This was happening a lot. These are just some of the experiences that people have had throughout this time.

That is not to say that other people have not found this to be an inconvenient time. We have seen people forced to go into hotel quarantine. I will not go into all the problems of the hotel quarantine system, but when it was first mooted, I spoke in this place about the strain it might place on a person's mental health. Essentially, people were being put into almost airless rooms for two weeks, with very little contact with the outside world. The rooms would perhaps have a microwave oven and some food would be delivered, sometimes of good quality, but, I am told, sometimes of not so good quality. A lot of people found that two-week period to be very debilitating. Distressing circumstances were related to me, such as family emergencies. One constituent's girlfriend had been killed in a motor car accident, but he was unable to leave hotel quarantine to be with the family. That was very distressing for people like him.

These are extraordinary powers that have been granted to the authorities here in Western Australia. We should never take them for granted. We should always understand that we need to be diligent in the way we conduct ourselves when we use these powers and in the way the government manages this whole COVID-19 situation.

Just going back to hotel quarantine, I want to tease out a little how confusing this whole situation has sometimes been, especially for members of the opposition as we tried to get information. We actually do not get a lot of information from the government. Briefings are fairly controlled; not a lot of information comes out of them. However, community members expect me to have all the answers when they come to me to find a way through situations, such as whether they can travel somewhere, get a worker to come to their farm or pick their kids up from boarding school on the weekend because there is about to be an outbreak. As local members, we are expected to give advice on all those things, but we cannot because we do not get the necessary information.

It is a confusing landscape. It is even confusing for the Minister for Health at times. I listened to question time last week. I have here a copy of *Hansard*, and I have asked the clerks whether it is appropriate to quote from it. Apparently, it is, because it is no longer a draft, so this is the actual record of what was said. I want to highlight some of the problems that we see and why we think it is important that we do not just grant the government *carte blanche* to have a wide and open-ended head of power and for it not to be accountable, because the government does make mistakes. We know that the government makes mistakes. Just before the last lockdown, there was a press conference at 2.30 pm. I was driving somewhere in my electorate and debating whether I would go to Jurien Bay, because I was at a midway point, or head down to Perth, grab some gear and come back the next day. When the press conference came on, I thought, "No, I'm not going to Perth", so I changed tack and headed west to the coast. That was the occasion when the Premier, the Commissioner of Police and others were giving instructions about what was going to happen during the last lockdown. They told people that the lockdown would apply from midnight that night. Because no directions were prepared, they could not direct people not to travel out of the Perth area immediately. I doubt very much that it would have taken nearly 10 hours to get the direction notices prepared, because it is not the first time we have had such a lockdown. In terms of regional travel, one would have thought there would be a known process, and there would have been a way of determining what should happen next. Instead of that, a 10-hour window was left open and it was said that as long as people were out for the Anzac Day weekend by 12 o'clock, they would be able to go. Later, we heard that that was because there was no time for the police to set up traffic control measures, but I think most Western Australians are keen to do the right thing. I would say that most Western Australians would obey an indication that this was an expectation, rather than an actual roadblock or traffic control measure being necessary to stop people from heading out of the city. All major exits out of the city—the freeways, Tonkin Highway and the like—have big signs that can be programmed in a matter of minutes, and I have seen them flash and say "No travel to Kalbarri", "No travel because of bushfires", "Be careful of smoke", or "Double demerits apply". The one on Tonkin Highway seems to frequently say, "Beware of loose stones", but that is another story. An indication could have easily been put in place that the expectation was that people should not travel.

As I said, I was in Jurien Bay on the Saturday and people—obviously not locals—were all over the place not wearing masks, not taking any sort of social distancing measures and spreading freely throughout the community. That was not just in that town but in every town in my electorate. I believe that as far inland as Toodyay and Goomalling had reams of people coming into them. Towns not just on the coast but further inland were being inundated with people from Perth as well who were not taking any sort of measures. If there had been a serious outbreak in Perth, it would have been potentially spread right throughout not only the south west, but also the wheatbelt, the midwest and probably even the great southern. There was a huge amount of traffic. That was because there did not seem to be a set process of how to instigate this lockdown, even though it had been over 12 months since the first one. In 12 months, a seamless process had not been put in place. It worries me that there does not seem to be learning about what is going on and an ability to be more predictable in the response. I know this is an unpredictable situation and an unpredictable disease, but if the government is going to lock down the city in a situation as happened in April—it is not that much different from the last time that it locked it down—a much more seamless approach could have been taken for the lockdown measures.

I go back to last week's question time in here regarding the Quarantine Advisory Panel situation. We know that the Quarantine Advisory Panel was being formed and that it would be important in providing good advice to the government about equality, assurance and improvement of processes around not only the hotel quarantine situation, but also what would be good measures for the entire quarantine situation and whether there should be other methods of quarantine such as home quarantine, which in some circumstances might be more acceptable et cetera. On Wednesday, the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Central Wheatbelt, asked the Minister for Health in a supplementary question —

When did the government start doing the work to investigate other potential hotels to be used? When did the government commission and start that work?

The Minister for Health replied —

As the member would be aware, we have a quarantine advisory panel, which at all times has been undertaking an ongoing quality assurance and improvement process. That panel keeps us advised and apprised of any developments about how we can improve what we are doing.

That is pretty clear, is it not? The minister has been talking to the Quarantine Advisory Panel. There was a great in-depth discussion, and it has been integral in providing advice to the minister. Later that same day, the member for Vasse asked the Premier —

I refer to recommendation 1 of Professor Weeramanthri's interim advice from 4 February, calling for the establishment of a Quarantine Advisory Panel tasked with asking the difficult strategic questions and identifying program gaps and risks. Given that the Premier received that advice more than 90 days ago, I ask him to outline to the house answers to the following questions.

- (1) Who is on the advisory panel?
- (2) How many times have they met and reported?
- (3) What difficult strategic issues and program gaps has the panel identified, and what actions have been taken as a result?

The Premier replied —

- (1)–(3) Just for the information of new members, ordinarily when a question like this is asked, a bit of notice is given ...

There was a bit of a lecture to the member for Vasse—how dare she ask that question! I will skip over a bit of the other stuff. He said —

Member for Vasse, the Quarantine Advisory Panel was established. My understanding is that Professor Weeramanthri is the chair. The panel is examining a range of issues, but in particular it is looking at whether other locations or facilities can be used for quarantining purposes.

Not only the Minister for Health, but also the Premier has been consulting with the Quarantine Advisory Panel and getting valuable advice about locations and facilities. I do not know whom the Minister for Health and Premier has actually been talking to, because on Thursday, the good member for Vasse, noting that this time some notice was given for the question, so she learnt from the Premier's lecture from the day before, asked the Premier —

I refer to recommendation 1 of Professor Weeramanthri's interim advice ... calling for the establishment of the Quarantine Advisory Panel. Who is on the advisory panel? How many times has it met and reported? What alternative models for hotel quarantine has the QAP identified? What are the gaps, risks and strategic issues identified? And will the Premier immediately table the report and the advice?

The Premier replied —

The Department of Health, the Western Australia Police Force and the Department of the Premier and Cabinet are still working to determine the scope and composition of the Quarantine Advisory Panel.

Who had the minister and Premier been talking to? What was the august body that the Premier had been getting this advice from, Premier and Minister for Health? It seems quite staggering to me that they both claim to have been dealing with the Quarantine Advisory Panel, when it did not actually exist, even though we know it had been called for many, many days before. The member for Vasse then asked in a supplementary question —

Are there any other documents that the Premier and the State Emergency Committee have received from the Quarantine Advisory Panel?

Of course, there were howls of laughter aimed at her because there is no panel. I think she knew that. The Speaker even interjected at that point and said, “I do not think it has been established.” The Premier went on to say —

As I said, I anticipate it will be established very shortly. At that point in time, I assume we will get some documents.

I hope he does. It will make interesting reading; perhaps it will be backdated advice from all those times he has talked to it leading up to the situation we are currently in.

I spoke earlier about the curtailment of freedoms that Western Australians are going through from time to time in their daily lives, and on a continual basis if they wish to travel. We know that people are forced to go into home quarantine when they have travelled interstate and may even have to go into hotel quarantine. We know that businesses have struggled to get workers and that workers have at times struggled to get to their place of employment, especially if that has meant crossing a border. People have been unable to travel to see loved ones or go on holidays. From time to time, people have been forced to work from home and have spent a lot of time on Zoom. Other people have been unable to go to the gym, or have had their enjoyment curtailed by being unable to go to the football or to just get out and about and enjoy the company of friends and relations. For most people, that is an inconvenience; it is a restriction on their ability to go shopping or to the gym, the pub, the footy, a concert or whatever event they were hoping to attend. It is an inconvenience, but it is not a costly inconvenience.

When a lockdown is called, as a member of this place, I still get my pay cheque every fortnight. Other members get theirs every month, but I choose to get mine every fortnight. I know that a lot of other people who work in government or essential industries, such as some of the mining industries et cetera, have been able to keep going. Even though they have had to go through some difficult rosters and changes in arrangements, they have been able to carry on financially. Those people have not had to bear a huge burden throughout this time. Because of that, their experience of this pandemic has been one of inconvenience and annoyance, but also of gratitude for the way they have been kept safe and that they have not had to suffer the sort of situations that we have seen in other countries. But for some in our community, it has been more than an inconvenience. For those people, it has had a real cost on their livelihoods and business. In some cases, it may have even cost them their business—they may no longer have that business. It has had a cost for people whose profession it is to put on events, for instance, such as we see in many regional centres. Sometimes, concerts are privately organised by a professional event organiser, and they have had to cancel their event because a COVID outbreak has led to a direction being given that restricts those events.

Owners of gyms have been denied the ability to not only exercise, but also make a living to pay their bills and rent. Owners of shops are in an ongoing situation. In some circumstances, the pandemic and the response to it not only affected their trade when there is a lockdown, but also in some ways led to different spending patterns. It may have a long-term effect on those businesses. Owners of hotels and larger establishments may find it is just not profitable to open when they are restricted to only 20 people in a venue that is meant to house 300. These situations are not only an inconvenience, but also a real cost to people, and they are bearing a burden that has not been compensated. Other sectors of the community have been given compensation. Some people who were laid off were given JobSeeker or JobKeeper payments and a bit of that flowed through to some of those businesses earlier on, but in no way has that satisfactorily or completely addressed their losses. Of course, those programs have largely come to an end, and restrictions now have a very real and direct impost on businesses when they occur. When we go into lockdown on a Friday night, many businesses will have already geared up for the weekend. They will have all their food prepped and staff ready; they might have a band booked and all sorts of things organised. Those businesses lose not only their turnover but also all their product, and the workers lose their wages for the night.

This situation is affecting people right across the state. A lockdown that affects people in the Perth and Peel area will also affect people outside that area. If people cannot travel to holiday towns, there is a cost for those towns. That is sometimes what people want, and that was certainly the situation at Easter last year, when people called for travel to be curtailed to what are normally holiday locations. That would have had a real cost for all those businesses, but there was a community expectation that those towns needed to be kept safe. That is fine, but nobody is making up for the cost to businesses that are impacted by these measures.

That brings me to this point: we, in opposition, wonder whether this situation and this bill could be improved if the government were to look at providing some meaningful compensation to businesses that are directly impacted by these directions. It might interest some members to know that there is already a level of compensation available under the Emergency Management Act 2005 for persons in certain situations who are affected by the operation of a power in a state of emergency. That has never been contemplated in the past. I suggest that the government look at how

long the powers under section 72A(2) of the Emergency Management Act will remain in place. The power under that section will disappear in six months' time unless it is renewed. It is strictly tied to the current COVID emergency and is not an ongoing provision. If compensation were to be tied to the operation of this section of the act, it would apply only during the pandemic period; it would not become a general right for compensation that would endure in all circumstances under the Emergency Management Act.

I do not think it was ever contemplated that these measures would be in place for months at a time. I think that section of the act was meant to cover situations like bushfires, floods or cyclones—some short, sharp type of emergency. We recently saw tropical cyclone Seroja. That is actually a long-lived natural disaster in the sense that it is now weeks after the event and there is still a lot of work to be done. As natural disasters go, that was a big one. But the COVID situation is a whole different kettle of fish; it has been going on for months and months and probably will go on for years. Businesses are calling out for assistance because they are suffering real losses through no fault of their own; they are bearing the economic cost of the decisions of this government and the emergency management authorities when they make directions. The directions are necessary to keep us safe—I am not quibbling about that—but when these powers are used, a town or a region is directed into lockdown and some businesses are forced to shut. Some businesses are affected more than others. Gyms may be told to shut, but hairdressers may be allowed to remain open. I hesitate to use the word “unfair” in this situation, because I think it is unfair only in the sense that natural circumstances have led to this. It is unfortunate that it happens. I do not think anyone is deliberately trying to target them economically, but they are, if you like, damaged due to this exercise of power. The exercise of that power should be done only ever carefully, in a measured way, to ensure the least disruption necessary to those businesses. But when there is disruption, it is my view that the disruption should be properly compensated. Section 72A(2) of the Emergency Management Act outlines general powers, and states —

For the purposes of emergency management during an emergency situation or state of emergency, a hazard management officer or authorised officer may take, or direct a person or a class of person to take, any action that the officer considers is reasonably necessary to prevent, control or abate risks associated with the emergency.

That section is used only in consideration of the COVID situation. It is tied to the sunset provision of the Emergency Management Act; it will not apply forever.

I will move a reasoned amendment to the motion for the government to consider. I will not die in a ditch over this. I will not hold up the progression of this COVID-19 Response Legislation Amendment (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Bill; I am seeking to improve the government's bill, not to stop it, so the minister should not get up and say that I am against the government looking after the health of the community or the opposition is trying to hold up this measure. This bill will pass today; the government has the numbers in the house. We can only talk for so long anyway, so the bill will progress.

I am moving this amendment to clearly outline to the government what I believe should be done so the businesses of the state can be protected into the future. This is not an attack on what the government is doing; it is not a criticism of the state emergency authorities, the Chief Health Officer, the Commissioner of Police or anyone else. It is recognition that a section of our community is bearing a burden greater than others are bearing when we talk about the financial cost of the COVID-19 response. It is a financial cost that is directly tied to directions made under the Emergency Management Act. The provision I am seeking to introduce through this amendment will apply only while section 72A is in place. When the sunset provision kicks in, it will disappear and that head of power for compensation will disappear also from the Emergency Management Act.

*Amendment to Motion*

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** I move —

To delete “now” and insert after “time” —

after the government agrees to introduce provisions to ensure that section 78(1) of the Emergency Management Act 2005 applies to any order under section 72A(2) to “direct a person or a class of person to take, any action that the officer considers is reasonably necessary to prevent, control or abate risks associated with the emergency” where that direction entails “the owner or occupier or the person apparently in charge of any place of business, worship or entertainment in the emergency area to close that place to the public for the period specified in the direction”, as specified under section 75(1)(i)

I have a bit of time left, so I want to again put on the record that this is not about trying to hold up the bill. I expect that as the government has not considered this amendment thoroughly, it will probably knock it out, given its numbers in this house, and that the bill will progress pretty much as we expected. However, I think it is important that we put on the record that I believe there is a method the government could use to adequately compensate members of the community who are directly affected by its decisions that force businesses to shut down or to be, if you like, restricted in some way.

All the words that I have used in the amendment are in the Emergency Management Act. We know section 72A applies only because it is set to be sunsetted whenever the Parliament's authority under it runs out. In any case, it can occur only in a declared state of emergency.

We know that a head of power is contained within the act for compensation to be paid in certain circumstances. I acknowledge that heads of power do not cover these circumstances at the moment, otherwise I would not have moved this amendment. Certainly, that power is contained in the act. We can see under section 78(1) that an entitlement to compensation applies in some circumstances. I will read section 78(1) so people can understand what I am saying; it states —

Subject to this Division, a person who suffers loss or damage because of the exercise, or purported exercise, of a power under section 46, 47, 48, 69 or 75(1)(f) is entitled to be paid just and reasonable compensation for the loss or damage.

Basically, all I am suggesting is that we include section 72A of the Emergency Management Act in the section of the act that provides for just compensation. It is not difficult to do. It would, I think, be an important measure to ensure that all Western Australians bear equally the cost of the COVID response and all Western Australians contribute towards the wellbeing of especially our small businesses.

I have real concerns about some of the entertainment events and larger events that occur in my electorate. Events such as the Dowerin field day are hugely significant. If it were shut down, there would be huge costs to a range of people, and a whole year's work by the organisers would go up in smoke. Professional people organise that event. Many, many people rely on the event for finance for their club or community group et cetera. Many other people rely on the event to sell their wares to the community. That is just one example of events; I am sure plenty of others exist.

At the moment, we are seeing a disproportionate burden on people in businesses that are directly affected by lockdowns. The lockdowns do not badly affect people who can do their office work at home, such as people who work as accountants or who work for government or parliamentarians. The people who are badly affected are those who have no-one to pay their wages when their doors are not open. No-one will keep the little shopkeeper going when they cannot open their door and ply their trade. No-one will pay the cost of the rent for the gymnasium when no customers are allowed to enter that premise. These people are real Western Australians; they are the backbone of our community. I think it would be hugely important and beneficial for the whole state to get behind these people and support them when their circumstances are badly affected by decisions that, although well-meaning, are made by people who want to keep us safe and whose job it is to rely on advice that is all about the best way to curtail the disease or control people's traffic and people's movements.

In my view, the government is not tasked enough with considering the consequences to the economy of some of those measures. I think this would directly lay in front of it that there is a real cost for a certain section that is not being compensated adequately. I know that some measures have been put in place with a few dollars here and there, but it does not make up for the tens of thousands of small businesses that have been affected by the types of directions that we have seen in the past.

I urge the government to consider my amendment. I think it is a very worthy amendment. I am not going to die in a ditch over this amendment. If the government does not support it, we will still support the actual bill. We know that the bill is necessary, but I think there is also room for the government to spend a bit of time thinking about what it would be like to be one of those small businesses. I ask members to take themselves away from the comfortable world where we live. We have to do a job application every four years. Some of us make it through, some of us do not. But then every fortnight, every month, the pay cheque comes in. If someone is lucky enough to be made a minister of the Crown, like the two august gentlemen on the other side, it is an even bigger pay cheque. It is a very healthy one. The effect on us is not the effect on people in the small business community, and we should try to put ourselves in their shoes. For all the good intentions of the Chief Health Officer and the Commissioner of Police, they still get paid. They are not losing their income when these measures happen. I am in no way criticising them, but their life experience is not the lived experience of these small business people. I urge all members to consider a decent compensation measure for the small business community, which so badly suffers whenever we have these disruptions.

**MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Leader of the House)** [3.51 pm]: I have a meeting I need to go to, but I think this is an important amendment to the second reading of the COVID-19 Response Legislation Amendment (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Bill 2021. I know that the minister responsible for the legislation will make further comment, but I want to comment on the amendment. I acknowledge the amendment is well intended, but I think the member has made some assumptions in his comments, one of which being that there is not empathy and an understanding of the significant impact that the decisions made by government in its COVID-19 response have on individual business men and women and families in a range of sectors. I disagree with the member's comment about members of Parliament not being in tune with it. I think many members of this place have been speaking with small business people and people in their communities who absolutely have been affected by the impacts of decisions that have had to be made in the safety interests of all Western Australians, and those members are very, very well aware that those decisions have been very difficult. The Premier has on numerous occasions in this place, in public

media and in his huge number of media press conferences—when we were in the middle of the COVID-19 challenge, he was fronting the media every day—acknowledged the impacts of decisions, whether they be lockdown decisions or restrictions placed upon businesses and upon the citizens of WA. I am afraid I disagree with the member that members of this place of all political persuasions do not understand those impacts, as he might surmise. For many, many businesses and families, the impacts are deep and they are real. I think the general public understands that none of these decisions, whether to announce a lockdown or a period when severe restrictions are imposed, is taken lightly.

I previously sat on the State Disaster Council. The information that guides the State Disaster Council and, ultimately, the Premier as the leader of the government, to make decisions, is very carefully analysed. It is presented by the Minister for Emergency Services, who essentially has, under his legislative powers, the capacity to impose the restrictions that are arrived at. Those decisions, as I said, are not taken lightly. I refer to what I remember as the very dark days of the COVID experience, almost a year ago to the day, when we had a State Disaster Council meeting nearly every second day to analyse the information that came in from the Department of Health, the Commissioner of Police, the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner and, of course, the Chief Health Officer. That advice was based upon the very best information available and included analysis from overseas. The very strong leadership of the Premier, senior public servants, the ministers involved and the Chief Health Officer set a course for Western Australia that has become, essentially, the envy of many other jurisdictions around the world and, indeed, in Australia.

We made decisions that were very difficult, but they were based upon a premise that the Premier was absolutely robustly focused on, and that was about keeping the people of Western Australia safe and ensuring that everything possible to ensure that our economy was able to continue to function was done. The Western Australian public overwhelmingly understood that and, indeed, as the Premier and others have said consistently, the people of Western Australia responded remarkably well. I remember that in the early days, people were asked to stay at home unless they had four reasons to venture out. They did it. More recently, people were asked to wear masks. They have. People were asked to recognise the need to support the businesses, many of them small businesses, that have been impacted. In my community, as only one example, they have. Many people recognised that they needed to bunker down when called upon to bunker down, and to be very mindful that people were affected. They have done that in abundance and remarkably well.

I think the member has missed that it has also been recognised all the way through the pandemic that the public servants and ministers responsible for various portfolio areas have continued to have ongoing dialogue and conversations with sectors to address a number of the issues that the member has highlighted. In my previous portfolio area of local government, about which the member criticised me today, I was involved with numerous webinars organised through the Western Australian Local Government Association, which included presentations from the Commissioner of Police, the emergency services commissioner, other ministers and WALGA. There was something like 17 or 18 webinars, sometimes one every week, to connect with local governments throughout Western Australia. A number of them were, at various times, subject to regional restrictions. The dialogue has continued in all portfolio areas, including my area of culture and the arts, and that of course segues into events and festivals. The work of the department, and Mr Rob Didcoe in particular, has been remarkable. If the member talks to the sector that he has mentioned, he will find that the work of public servants such as Mr Didcoe and others in that team at the department has been exceptional. They are constantly on the phone and in contact with people about the impacts, whether it be from lockdowns or the square metre rule restrictions. The dialogue has been continuous because we recognise that there have been, and continue to be, significant impacts.

The member's amendment is interesting. Had this been a genuine attempt, he would have circulated it. He knew that the debate was coming on, so he could have circulated it, but he chose not to, which is fine. I know that he said that he is not going to die in a ditch over it, but his presumption that there is not strong empathy and understanding is, I think, ill founded.

I want to highlight a couple of issues about some of the regional boundary restrictions, particularly those that were put in place early last year when the decision was made based upon the consistent premise of the Premier to protect Western Australians, as the safety of Western Australians is of primary concern. When the decision was made in the early part of last year to effectively have regional boundary constraints, some local government areas were specifically ring locked, if you like, on the premise of health and wellbeing and safety. We know that those constraints, particularly in the north west of the state, were focused on ensuring that some of our most vulnerable communities, such as our Indigenous communities, were protected. Indeed, the movement of people in and out of some of those communities is still being carefully controlled, because there is a recognition of the importance of protecting those communities. What did that do? It protected them. Again, I remind the house that these decisions, difficult as they were, have put us in the position that we are in now—one of the safest places, if not the safest place, on the planet, unlike many other places in the world. That is not chest beating or being spectacular; it is the reality. I believe that the broader population of Western Australia understands why those decisions were made and that they have worked well. That is not to say that we are not facing an ongoing issue. There are people in the industries that I, as

Minister for Tourism; Culture and the Arts, am responsible for. If there are any industries that have been impacted the most, it is the industries that I represent as Minister for Tourism; Culture and the Arts. Wherever big numbers of people are required to gather, they have been at high risk.

Of course, international tourists are no longer coming here, so those in the tourism industry—there are many—who have predominantly relied on international tourism to support their business have been impacted, as have those who have relied predominantly on the patronage of interstate visitors. We know that in regional Western Australia there has been a two-speed experience in many respects, because some tourism businesses in Western Australia are doing very well. Accommodation and hospitality businesses are doing very well. The double-edged sword for hospitality businesses is that many have found it very difficult to find staff for their restaurants and cafes, and we recognise that. Tourism WA, along with the Australian Hotels Association and others, is working on solutions to that problem, which was caused because people took up the Premier's urging to wander out yonder. That campaign has been outstandingly successful.

**Mr V.A. Catania:** Because there's nowhere else to go.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** But it has been outstandingly successful, member. He was one of those members who got highly excited and did not want anyone to come to their region at one stage. The former member for Dawesville and the federal member down our way originally wanted the Peel region to be separated. They had no concept of the logistics of doing that. Although I will always claim to be a regional member, I also saw the logic of ensuring that Perth and Peel were treated as one entity in the context of protecting the people who live in the metropolitan and Peel regions. I can remember the former member for Dawesville jumping up and down and saying that we should close all the roads into Mandurah and the Peel region. Again, he was looking for cheap political points. A number of businesspeople in Mandurah rang me and said that they could not believe this guy and the other Liberal in the area who were espousing these things when they had no understanding of the fact that a number of the businesses in Mandurah rely on Perth-based patronage.

The government was very clear about safety being the first priority and it listened to the expert information and advice from the Chief Health Officer and the health authorities, but it also listened to the commissioners. I have to say that they have done an outstanding job. This state has the best Commissioner of Police and the best Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner. When called upon to respond, they have risen to that call remarkably well, and we are better off for it.

In the area of culture and the arts, which covers theatres, festivals and those sorts of events, the advice that has been given has changed over the period because of the changing nature of the health advice. Initially, of course, we were working within the parameter of the four square metre rule, which was then changed to the two square metre rule. In seated venues, we increased the capacity from 50 per cent to 60 per cent and then to 75 per cent. In more recent times, some of our major sporting places have had 100 per cent attendance. But that does change, and we saw that only recently with the football at Perth Stadium. It will always be based upon the sound advice of the health authorities.

As recently as last week, the Premier highlighted that consideration for support will continue, including business support, as we recognise that we need to continue to explore ways to support some of the businesses that the member has highlighted. We have not turned our backs on those concerns; they are constantly being considered. There has been a range of measures. In my area of culture and arts, there are a number of programs, one of which is called Getting the Show back on the Road. Getting the Show back on the Road looked at shared risk and at putting in a floor when a show becomes unviable because it has dipped below its bottom line, if you like, of profit and loss. Again, those initiatives came about because we kept talking to the industry. The events industry has been particularly impacted. When there is a larger festival event of between 2 000 and 10 000 people, there are implications involved in providing support so that those events can continue.

The former Minister for Tourism and the Premier have already highlighted that Western Australia continues to this day to hold a range of events, despite the uncertainty that still exists. Events are continuing. Why? It is because Western Australians have demonstrated that they want to continue to patronise them. They have also demonstrated that they are prepared to wear masks at seated events. They are willing to still go out because they want to do these things; these are important things for them to do, so we have invested, and will continue to invest, in regional festivals, regional tourism events and in getting touring musical events out into the regions. We will continue to invest in all those things because we recognise that they are an important part of the social fabric of the community, whether in the metropolitan area or in regional WA.

Although we will not be supporting the amendment the member has moved, I want to reassure the house and the member that there is a whole range of ongoing discussions, dialogue, programs, projects, funding and initiatives that are focused on assisting, wherever possible, many of the businesses that have been impacted. This challenges all of us to be able to pivot, if you like, when we find ourselves in a situation in which there might need to be a snap shutdown, as we have seen in the recent past.

I know the Minister for Emergency Services, who has responsibility for the COVID-19 Response Legislation Amendment (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Bill 2021, might wish to make some comment.

*Reasoned Amendment — Statement by Deputy Speaker*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr S.J. Price)** [4.12 pm]: Before the minister speaks, I have something I need to read out—a technical term! Members, as a point of clarification, during the second reading debate on the COVID-19 Response Legislation Amendment (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Bill 2021, the question before the chair was that the bill be now read a second time. The member for Moore has proposed a reasoned amendment to this question in accordance with standing order 170 to delete “now” and insert after “time” —

after the government agrees to introduce provisions to ensure that section 78(1) of the Emergency Management Act 2005 applies to any order under section 72A(2) to “direct a person or a class of person to take, any action that the officer considers is reasonably necessary to prevent, control or abate risks associated with the emergency”, where that direction entails “the owner or occupier or the person apparently in charge of any place of business, worship or entertainment in the emergency area to close that place to the public for the period specified in the direction”, as specified under section 75(1)(i)

Therefore, the question now before the chair is that the word to be deleted be deleted.

*Debate Resumed*

**MR R.R. WHITBY (Baldivis — Minister for Emergency Services)** [4.13 pm]: I appreciate that. I rise to comment on this amendment, but I also look forward to rising later to conclude debate on the second reading and to respond to members in the chamber and the issues they raise in relation to this bill.

As the Minister for Small Business, I entirely empathise and sympathise with the mover of this amendment in wanting to assist businesses that have been impacted by COVID-19. We all know of such businesses, and I am in daily contact with businesses that have been impacted by COVID-19. In fact, in recent days, I have been hard at work, along with my office and other ministers, working out ways we can assist businesses that have been impacted.

In spite of the member’s good and desirable intent, this amendment is not the way to proceed with a compensation arrangement. Attaching it to section 78(1) is haphazard and imprecise. These are compensation provisions that are not intended for general compensation. They apply in circumstances in which an officer has to take control or destroy property in the course of managing a COVID-19 emergency. It is a very specific part of the Emergency Management Act and is not intended to be a general compensation vehicle for businesses that have been impacted. Attaching the member’s amendment to this bill would be very difficult, would not deliver the outcomes the member is after, and might in fact present a whole range of other difficulties.

**Mr R.S. Love** interjected.

**Mr R.R. WHITBY:** I do not think it is a matter of the wording; the issue is attaching that provision to this bill in the way that the member has proposed. One of the unintended outcomes could be that it is not about compensation for businesses under section 78(1). We could have international travellers arrive in Western Australia and be told that they cannot enter or that they are required to follow directions; they might be able to seek compensation for the inconvenience to their travel plans. Likewise, if they are put into hotel quarantine, they might be able to use this mechanism to seek compensation for any costs involved.

**Mr R.S. Love:** If I could, minister, the wording is quite specific—“the owner or occupier or the person apparently in charge of any place of business, worship or entertainment in the emergency area”. It wouldn’t apply to an overseas traveller.

**Mr R.R. WHITBY:** Yet it is based on section 78(1), which is not intended for general compensation and is basically about applying to circumstances in which people managing the COVID-19 response have to take control and destroy property, so it is actually not —

**Mr R.S. Love:** It’s a reasoned amendment, not a clause.

**Mr R.R. WHITBY:** I understand. As I said, I understand the member’s motivation, but the government cannot support this amendment today. The other thing I need to remind the member is that there has already been an enormous amount done to benefit small business right across Western Australia, including medium-range and large businesses as well. About \$1.2 billion has been spent to stimulate economic activity and to benefit business. An amount of \$2 000 was recently announced for the COVID-19 lockdown grant. We have increased payroll tax thresholds. There were \$17 500 grants to businesses, utility waivers, the \$500 business electricity credit and a range of other specific arrangements that my colleague the Minister for Tourism recently outlined. There is also an issue about timing. The member said that this would be attached to the sunset clause, with reasonable intent, but I note that none of the arrangements we have announced to compensate or to provide grant assistance to business is attached to a sunset clause. That, again, throws issues into the mix.

The bill is very clear, specific and concise. It essentially deals with two simple issues that are of the same beast. It is about extending the sunset clause from 4 July to January next year, which will provide agencies and individuals dealing with COVID-19 the means and powers to do so, and to make directions. It also gives officers protection under the Criminal Code against acts of violence or threats that they may encounter when carrying out their duties

to protect the community. This is specific legislation. I know the member spoke about the issue of timing and that the opposition was prepared to grant another six months. In fact, the proposal by the government in its last term was for an extension of six months; it was the opposition that wanted to shorten it to three months. This is why we are here, not long after the election. We would have been here in October if we had got the six months' extension as we tried to in the previous term of government.

**Mr R.S. Love:** For clarity, it was six months from the time the discussion took place.

**Mr R.R. WHITBY:** We can have that debate, but here we are soon after an election and the opening of Parliament, and the clock is ticking on a deadline of 4 July. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition would appreciate that it is crucial that we are able to extend the state of emergency. I cannot tell the member when it will no longer be required—I do not think that he or anyone else on the opposition bench could make that call either—but we need underlying legislation in place so that the government can continue to extend the state of emergency for 14 days at a time to provide the government the mechanisms and the ability to respond in a way that keeps the state safe.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition referred to those businesses that have been impacted by lockdowns. We all have them in our communities—I certainly do. I want to relay one social media message to me from a small business owner in my electorate. When this was posted towards the end of last year—or it might have been during the February lockdown—I thought I was getting some criticism online because it was posted during a lockdown. In it, they said, “Thanks very much. You’ve just cost me a whole lot of cash.” I thought, “Here we go!” Then in the next line they said, “But thank you because I know you’ve saved my business. I’ll be able to open my doors a lot sooner.”

I think some people in the business community recognise that these are painful times and that there is a burden to bear but that the very best that we, as a government, can do is respond in the way in which we have been responding to the COVID-19 pandemic for more than a year—that is, using the provisions of this legislation, which we are seeking to extend for another six months, to manage and respond to the COVID risks as they arise. It is inconvenient and costly for businesses, but it is necessary, because the alternative is far worse. The alternative is prolonged lockdowns with massive economic costs to the community—business owners and employees—to say nothing of the potential for death and tragedy throughout the community if we do not respond correctly to stop this virus getting away.

I am glad that the opposition accepts that these provisions need to be extended. I appreciate the sentiment of providing compensation and assistance to business. I assure the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that that compensation and assistance and those grants are part of an ongoing process. We saw it during the recent Anzac Day lockdown; we saw it during cyclone Seroja. We have seen it all the way along. This government responds to the needs of small business and all businesses by helping and assisting them.

I want to touch on one other issue. Let us be honest, as much as lockdowns are impacting on small businesses and other businesses, businesses are also benefiting and doing very well at this time. I am sure that we all know those businesses. A number of business owners in my electorate have told me that they are doing better now and employing more people than they did pre-COVID. There have been all sorts of different reactions and responses to this emergency. I am not going to take away from the suffering that has gone on in many, many businesses and in many, many small business families. Our hearts go out to them. We sympathise with them. We have given and continue to give assistance—I am sure that will continue—but it is not always the same story wherever we look. We know that people are not going to Bali or elsewhere in the world but are staying home and turning to tradesmen to do renovations. They are investing in their own lifestyles. They are going to cafes and having breakfast. They are holidaying at home and touring in regional areas. I am sure that businesses in the regions that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition represents are getting extra business from time to time because of that impact.

We know that there are different stories out there. I am not saying that it has not had a negative impact on many small businesses. It is my job to be concerned about the welfare of small business owners and to support them in every way that I can. But I come back to one central theme: we can, and do, arrange grants and assistance from time to time as required. We are always looking for ways to assist small business. We have invested in massive infrastructure projects, which helps the economy and small businesses. However, the very best thing that we can do is ensure that we have the tools to protect ourselves under this legislation, which is basic, concise and to the point—a very simple extension of the emergency period beyond 4 July. That gives us the power to make sure that we can deal with the COVID pandemic, as we have for more than a year now, and that whenever there is a risk of an outbreak, we can deal with it so that we can get the doors of businesses opened quickly. That is the best thing we can do for all businesses.

**MR V.A. CATANIA (North West Central) [4.24 pm]:** I also support the amendment moved by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. Firstly, can I put on the record for the new members who are here that the opposition over the past 12 to 14 months has supported the government at every turn when it has come to legislation to protect Western Australia. The opposition over the past 14 months has supported and assisted the legislation that has gone through both houses of state Parliament to ensure that the government can do what it needs to do. I just wanted to put that on the record first.

Secondly, when it comes to this new term of government and this legislation, the government has absolute control. The government is saying to the opposition that it needs to get this legislation through. We totally understand that, like we have understood that over the past 14 months. We totally understand that the government needs to get this legislation through and we have given the government a guarantee that it will get through. But I want to ensure that I have this on the record: the government has absolute control. If it wants to get its legislation through, it can guillotine debate at any point. What I will not accept is any criticism of the band of six over here, when there are 53 members over there who are able to hold up legislation. We will not hold it up. I just wanted to make that quite clear and to get that on the record: we are not able to hold up any legislation in this house or in the other place. As I said, the opposition has always supported the government.

We appreciate the point and intent of the amendment moved by the member for Moore. It is about trying to provide some certainty for small businesses in particular and for events, places of worship and so forth. It is all about providing certainty. We have had three lockdowns in this state since the COVID-19 pandemic started. During the last two, which were due to errors in hotel quarantine run by the state government, the issue has been that there has always been a reaction to a lockdown that it may become common over time. Like I said, we have seen it happen three times—twice because of inadequacies in hotel quarantine. We have seen security staff who have had more than one job—it looks as though they are continuing to still have more than one job—and who have not been fully vaccinated. All this shows that there has been a lackadaisical approach. In reading the reports that have come through, I suppose that is the issue. If there is an outbreak, the government should be prepared to do X, Y and Z. As the member for Moore said, we know that a lockdown in the Perth and Peel region means that the roads going to regional WA need to be closed and roadblocks put in place straightaway. If there is an outbreak from hotel quarantine on a long weekend, there should be a plan that details that the government will do X, Y and Z and that the police will go to the major highways to prevent tens of thousands of people from leaving the Perth and Peel region for regional areas.

The point is that a lot of this stuff is avoidable. There should be a plan to ensure that the police get those roadblocks put in place before the Premier goes out and has a press conference. Let us get our messaging right and not say at midnight that people cannot go anywhere. If people need to travel, they need to travel. The government is sending mixed messages. If the government were concerned about the safety of people, it would ensure that it put these policies and procedures in place now so if there is a lockdown in the future, tens of thousands of people who may have COVID-19 are not allowed to leave a particular area. We are having a debate about the government ensuring that the safety of Western Australians is paramount and that it is doing everything it can to protect them from a COVID outbreak like we have seen around the world. If the government believes that, it would not have played the blame game with the federal government about responsibility for quarantining. Instead, it would have looked at the proposal in the media about building purpose-built quarantine facilities, I think in the member for Dawesville's electorate. The government should have taken that proposal seriously, because that is probably the only option to ensure that we do not have further lockdowns in the future. The question the member for Moore has raised is that given we know how important it is to have a plan, does the government have a plan in place to ensure that roadblocks are in place or that its messaging is correct before it makes an announcement?

I note that the cost of a lockdown is hundreds of millions of dollars. As members of this chamber have said, the impact on small businesses is huge. Lockdowns have a massive impact on tourism businesses. They do not just affect people in the area being locked down such as Perth and Peel, but also people who want to go to the Kimberley, the Pilbara, the north west or the south west. Businesses in those regions get impacted as well, with things such as booking systems. We saw the amount of work the travel agents had to do to fix up bookings for travel around the world when COVID struck. They were not making any money, but they were looking at everyone's bookings and trying to get refunds. The same thing happens every time there is a lockdown here in the Perth and Peel regions. There is a cost to small businesses, particularly tourism and hospitality businesses. They spend their time trying to refund people who cannot travel to those regional towns or hotels because of a lockdown. It is a massive exercise in cost and time, not to mention the cost of preparing food for a big weekend of trade or for an event for which people had geared up. The government is happy to say the things it is doing, but if we look, we see that the government has had to be pushed all the way through. The government has not said it has to lockdown. The Premier's rhetoric was, "We should feel lucky because businesses are booming. We are fantastic. We can't afford to fix everything." I think they were his words. The pressure that mounted weeks after the lockdown meant that the government suddenly cobbled together a \$2 000 package, when it still has not even paid businesses the \$500 for power from the last lockdown. There was this announcement for \$2 000 with no criteria attached to it. It really shows that the government does not have a plan. It only has an ad hoc plan that has been developed on the run. The point the member for Moore was making is that the government does not need to plan on the run; it can develop a plan now.

The opposition supports the legislation, but we are trying to make sure that we can improve it, so that if we do go into lockdown again because of a mistake in hotel quarantine, those businesses get compensation of \$2 000 or \$500—whatever it is. It will provide the certainty that businesses need so there is not a fight, and the Australian Hotels Association does not have to say it needs compensation and the Tourism Council WA or business organisations such as the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia do not have to say they need help. This government seems to react to negative publicity in the media; that is when we get some action.

Perhaps this is not the right amendment to make, but what is? I think we all agree that this is just about providing certainty. Let us put that in the legislation in some way. Perhaps the minister has the resources to amend his own bill to provide that certainty to our small business sector.

I also want to bring up the role that the government plays in the effect of lockdowns on small businesses, particularly in Perth and Peel. Were all government employees told to work from home if they were able? Perhaps the minister can confirm whether this was the case. Is that correct?

**Mr R.R. Whitby:** When that was the application for the general workforce, it also applied to the public sector during certain specific periods.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** During the lockdown? When did that directive, if you like, end? When the Premier made the announcement on the Friday, he said that if people could work from home, they should. When was the public sector told to come back? The point I am trying to get to is whether public sector employees were told not to return to work if they could work from home for a period of time, maybe a week. The point I am trying to make is that the effect on small businesses of not having people in government departments working in their offices is huge. The government is enabling that hurt to small business by not getting the public sector employees back to work in their offices as quickly as possible. As the minister knows, the large contingents of public servants in the CBD and other areas make sure that cafes, restaurants or pubs operate, providing the cash flow they need. They have set up their businesses in those places noting that there is a large public sector contingent there. Perhaps the minister can outline what the directive was to public servants of his department or departments in general, and how long it took for them to go back to work, because not having public servants go back to work maybe a week after a lockdown has an effect. Also, locking down Peel and Perth has an effect on the whole of regional WA.

Missing from this legislation is a plan—a plan that everyone knows to follow when we go into lockdown. Yes, COVID-19 is evolving, but the plans for knowing what to do when we have to lock down are pretty simple. Missing in the legislation is the ability for everyone to be fully aware of what has to occur when there is a lockdown and what the compensation is. Why I question the government's sincerity in supporting small business, particularly the tourism businesses, that have been impacted by lockdowns is that the Premier talks about the economy. Yes, the economy of Western Australia is going well. We are in a boom time, probably bigger than the boom back in 2007, 2008 and 2009. The iron ore price is the highest it has ever been. The commodities sector, the resources sector, is booming. All those industries that have spin-offs from the resources sector are booming. Yes, they are booming, but small businesses like cafes, restaurants, pubs or tourism businesses often do not have the capacity to suddenly turn off and on. To down tools costs food, and they have to tell their employees that there are no longer any hours that weekend because of the lockdown. Businesses that have to refund money and go through that exercise are not the same as the bigger companies that are driving the economy of Western Australia because—I cannot remember who said it today—iron ore prices and the iron ore industry are basically driving our economy. That is why we have these huge surpluses. We are going through a boom.

The Minister for Tourism spoke about the Wander Out Yonder campaign. Everyone knows that Western Australians have nowhere else to go. It is fantastic that people are travelling out to regional WA, but towns such as Exmouth and, prior to the cyclone, Kalbarri are experiencing an influx of tourists. Exmouth has a population of only 2 500 people, which is suddenly going up to 20 000 or 25 000 people a day. That puts huge stress on businesses that still cannot get people to work, because there is no-one to employ. There is increased pressure on water, power, telecommunications, accommodation and cleaners—the whole works—roads, national parks, beaches and the environment, but we have seen no investment. We are not able to keep pace with the influx of tourists because Western Australians have nowhere else to go. When the borders open up, Australians have nowhere to go, so they go to these iconic tourism destinations. We have seen no investment in the housing that is needed for people who could be employed by small businesses, which would help take the pressure off them. Ministers have not been able to take advantage of this situation and assist those businesses by providing certainty to regional communities, Perth and Peel, because it seems as though this government is a one-trick pony when it comes to COVID. That is the concern.

We have an opportunity here to amend the legislation to provide certainty to our businesses and say that if there is a lockdown, they can get a compensation package, rather than the government working it out two weeks later and announcing some funds without any criteria. That is what has been happening. The government is being pushed by the media, the opposition and industry to come up with a compensation fund. The Premier said it is not going to happen because we cannot afford it and it cannot do it. We are in a boom time. The government is swimming in that much money. Businesses and tourism operators need help. They need certainty, and the government is in a position to give them that. Perhaps the amendment is not in the right area, but I am sure that with all the resources the government has, it can come up with its own amendment during consideration in detail to ensure that we provide certainty to our small businesses, owner-occupiers and other industries that desperately need assurance from the state government that it is looking after them in their time of need. As I said, do not mistake our whole economy as being the resources sector, because that sector is very different from the small business sector, which cannot simply turn the tap on and off. We need certainty of support for our businesses, certainty for lockdowns and a proper plan to be put in place.

*Division*

Amendment (deletion of word) put and a division taken, the Acting Speaker (Ms K.E. Giddens) casting her vote with the noes, with the following result —

## Ayes (6)

Mr V.A. Catania  
Ms M.J. Davies

Dr D.J. Honey  
Mr R.S. Love

Ms L. Mettam  
Mr P.J. Rundle (*Teller*)

## Noes (44)

Mr S.N. Aubrey  
Mr G. Baker  
Dr A.D. Buti  
Mr J.N. Carey  
Ms C.M. Collins  
Mr R.H. Cook  
Ms L. Dalton  
Ms D.G. D'Anna  
Mr M.J. Folkard  
Ms K.E. Giddens  
Ms M.J. Hammat

Ms J.L. Hanns  
Mr M. Hughes  
Mr W.J. Johnston  
Mr H.T. Jones  
Mr D.J. Kelly  
Ms E.J. Kelsbie  
Dr J. Krishnan  
Ms S.F. McGurk  
Mr D.R. Michael  
Mr K.J.J. Michel  
Mr S.A. Millman

Mr Y. Mubarakai  
Ms L.A. Munday  
Mrs L.M. O'Malley  
Mr P. Papalia  
Mr S.J. Price  
Mr D.T. Punch  
Mr J.R. Quigley  
Ms M.M. Quirk  
Ms R. Saffioti  
Ms A. Sanderson  
Mr D.A.E. Scaife

Ms J.J. Shaw  
Ms R.S. Stephens  
Mrs J.M.C. Stojkovski  
Dr K. Stratton  
Mr C.J. Tallentire  
Mr D.A. Templeman  
Mr P.C. Tinley  
Ms C.M. Tonkin  
Mr R.R. Whitby  
Ms S.E. Winton  
Ms E.L. Hamilton (*Teller*)

Amendment thus negatived.

*Second Reading Resumed*

**DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe — Leader of the Liberal Party)** [4.50 pm]: I rise to make a brief contribution to this debate to add to the excellent contribution by the member for Moore. I want to touch on a couple of key themes in response to this proposed legislation. As was indicated by our lead speaker on the COVID-19 Response Legislation Amendment (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Bill 2021, I support the bill, and I will not be making any amendments, either.

I want to talk about a couple of issues in the bill. Some of this has been touched on by other speakers. The first is on the issue of how quarantine is handled. This bill will enable the powers under the Emergency Management Act 2005. Section 72A of that act, “General powers during emergency situation or state of emergency”, states —

For the purposes of emergency management during an emergency situation or state of emergency, a hazard management officer or authorised officer may take, or direct a person or a class of person to take, any action that the officer considers is reasonably necessary to prevent, control or abate risks associated with the emergency.

Of course, that is a power that allows, for example, the direction of people into hotel quarantine, the direction of a person to wear a mask in particular circumstances or any other direction enabled by that power.

I want to particularly focus on the issue of hotel quarantine. As I think I have said in this place already this year on a couple of separate occasions, I certainly recognise and we recognise the good job that has been done by the government in keeping the people of Western Australia safe, and the people of Western Australia have rewarded the government electorally very handsomely for that. We have certainly supported those efforts. As was mentioned by the member for North West Central, we have supported the government throughout this process. New members may not realise, but those members who were here in the last Parliament will know that this was a very urgent and evolving situation, and there was a requirement for the very rapid passage of urgent legislation to deal with it. In every case, we not only enabled that legislation but made sure that the legislation was passed strictly in accordance with the requirements that the Leader of the House requested. We have never tried to delay or hold this up.

**Mr D.A. Templeman** interjected.

**Dr D.J. HONEY:** We may have asked questions and queries, which is the right thing for the opposition to do. I am not alleging that the Leader of the House said that, but I think it is important to recognise that we have been in lock step with the government, supporting and making sure that these appropriate pieces of legislation get through the Parliament.

The reason I want to focus on the issue of quarantine is that when we look in the press at the moment, we see a lot of discussions with the government and concerns from the state government about quarantine. We have had, I think, nine people infected in hotel quarantine, or at least nine cases of people being infected by people in hotel quarantine, such as security workers working in the hotels. Quite recently, we have seen community spread from quarantine hotels because of the failures and breakdowns in that system. I think there is an opportunity here—I say this in a truly bipartisan spirit—for the government to take a greater and stronger lead in this area. The government has had the difficult task of establishing a hotel quarantine system. When this whole issue started 14 months ago, no-one knew all the answers. People had a sense, medical experts were providing advice and there was some information from overseas—clearly, a lot of jurisdictions overseas still have not managed to get this right—but the government, our

medical experts and, of course, national cabinet, which was guiding this process, worked cooperatively together. State governments, including this state government, wanted to take control of hotel quarantine because they wanted to have control over this process in their jurisdiction. The state government was keen to take control of that process.

However, in the last 14 months, a number of issues have evolved. One is knowledge. There is an excellent report. Newer members and other members may have heard reference to the interim advice. It is a report titled *Review of Western Australia's hotel quarantine arrangements: Interim advice #1* by Professor Tarun Weeramanthri. I would recommend this report to all people who write reports for government. It is a superbly brief report. It reminds me of Mark Twain's apparent statement when he was writing to someone and said, "I'm sorry my letter is so long; I didn't have time to write a short one." I think that this report is a well-considered, short report. In that report, Professor Weeramanthri makes very clear that the issue of aerosol transmission over long distances and for long duration in environments is a well-known vector for the transmission of COVID-19. Therefore, we have had these issues with the hotels. Subsequently, the Glossop report has reviewed that and gone through and identified deficiencies in three hotels. The state government has reacted to that and has now taken those three hotels out of the system. We have seen subsequent transmission in a hotel that was considered to be at medium risk of aerosol transmission, so, clearly, there are issues.

In the spirit of bipartisanship, the thing that I would ask the government to do is to very seriously consider taking control of establishing purpose-built quarantine facilities. I think that would be a major step forward for the state of Western Australia. I just completed a trip. Last Thursday, I went up to Kununurra and then drove with a colleague from Kununurra down through Halls Creek and across to Fitzroy Crossing and Broome. In each of those centres, the communities were suffering enormously from the shortage of workers in their area. We all want Western Australians and people who live in Western Australia—our children, friends, neighbours and colleagues—to have jobs, but those regional communities have a very heavy reliance on seasonal workers, both in normal businesses, such as hospitality businesses and the like, and in the fruit picking and other seasonal agricultural activities. That is a critical need for the state. The reality is that our quarantine process as it is simply does not enable enough of those workers to come into the state in the required numbers.

There is a tremendous opportunity here, and I think the reference has already been made this afternoon, but this is not beyond anyone to think about. Because we know that there is physical transmission from objects and from person to person, as well as aerosol transmission, we need accommodation that does not share air with other buildings and that allows for reasonable physical separation, where people can be isolated within a particular building. It was reported by the ABC and *The West Australian* that there is a third-party proposal to establish an appropriate quarantine facility. I think the state government has the ideal opportunity and all the expertise and knowledge required to build a facility like this. Western Australia, for want of a better title, probably could be called the donga capital of the world. I suspect that there is no place in the world that is as efficient and cost effective as Western Australia is at establishing high-quality accommodation using transportable buildings. In this case, that sort of accommodation is perfect for a quarantine facility.

Western Australia has plenty of land. There is plenty of land in the metropolitan area and plenty of land at the airport, for example, although I appreciate that is commonwealth land. There is plenty of state government land close to the airport and close to hospitals that can perform this function. This COVID crisis will be with us for another couple of years, and I think the state government has the perfect opportunity to work with the commonwealth, to take control of this and to make sure it is established. I have seen finger-pointing by the Premier at Canberra saying that it needs to do X and Y. We are now seeing a further reduction in our quarantine capacity in response to concerns about infection in those facilities. There is a solution to this—that is, to have purpose-built facilities. I think that is an opportunity for the government. As I say, I am not seeking to score any point against the government; I am doing everything I can to encourage the government to take up this opportunity because Western Australia is suffering due to its inability to get people home—not just people returning home for humanitarian or family reasons, but, importantly, to bring key workers into our economy. Our hospitals depend critically on health workers—doctors, nurses and other health workers—coming from overseas. This is contributing to our health crisis because it is becoming extremely hard for the government to open up new beds because it does not have qualified staff. Some loud warning bells are ringing in this area. If we look at accumulated leave in the public sector amongst health workers, we can see that it is increasing at an exponential rate. That is because health workers cannot take leave because so many are tied up in the hospital system, which is under strain. The state government should take this bull by the horns and work to set up purpose-built quarantine facilities that can handle larger numbers of people and bring them into the state. I am not talking about opening the borders; I am talking about using the great knowledge we have in government and among our medical experts to safely bring people in and at a higher rate to assist the economy of Western Australia. Outside mining, large parts of our economy are still doing it quite tough.

The other area I would like to touch on briefly is that of assistance to business. I know this was covered in detail during debate on the amendment to the second reading. I did not contribute to that because I did not want to hold up the bill any further but I wanted to cover it in this substantive part of my speech. If we look at business, we can bear in mind that the Emergency Management Act was written with a view to critical emergencies, not chronic emergencies. I think that is a fundamental opportunity. It is obviously not within the scope of this COVID-19 Response Legislation Amendment (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Bill; I fully appreciate its intent,

but, again, I think the government has an opportunity to perhaps reflect and come back to this Parliament at some stage with substantive amendments that deal with a chronic emergency such as this rather than an acute emergency. This Emergency Management Act was written with a view to covering, for example, a bushfire that goes through, an earthquake or a flood. It covers a single event that causes particular damage and harm. This bill will enable the relevant government or shires to take action they need to take to deal with that. It recognises that that may impinge on the rights and freedoms of citizens during that emergency period. That has certainly been the case here. Parts of our industry have not been affected at all by COVID. The government has very sensibly done an enormous amount of work with mining companies to make sure that that important driver of our economy is not impacted by COVID, and the mining industry has done fantastic work. It was way ahead of the curve on this. It had well-developed emergency response plans and sprang into action very quickly to do what needed to be done to make sure those industries could operate safely, and the government acted swiftly to work with them to enable that.

Earlier in debate, the Leader of the House and the Minister for Emergency Services both outlined that assistance had been given to certain businesses, but some businesses are really, really struggling because of this crisis. As I said, some regional accommodation and places like that are doing okay, but event organisers are suffering enormous damage. Typically, event organisers are just mum-and-dad businesses; they are not big firms, and they are really struggling. Gymnasiums, yoga studios, spin cycle studios and the like are really suffering due to lockdowns. They tend to have the longest lockdowns of all businesses. The other issue is that they do not lose business just on the day. Customers of those sorts of businesses tend to keep coming back on a regular basis, but when they are constantly interrupted, they lose customers for good or it takes them months and months to get back customers. I am sure if the minister talked to gymnasiums and like businesses, he would find that they are hurting enormously.

The effects on restaurants and the like had not occurred to me. Due to a shutdown, especially over the weekend, many restaurants not only have to throw out all their food, but also have to take on extra staff to do preparation before the weekend. They pay for additional labour, so when they lose the business over the weekend, they not only lose the food and its value, but also they pay wages and get no return from them.

*Point of Order*

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** There seems to be a bit of a meeting going on over there. I am having trouble concentrating with the background noise.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr D.A.E. Scaife):** There is no point of order.

*Debate Resumed*

**Dr D.J. HONEY:** Those businesses suffer. It has been put to me by a number of small businesses that small businesses write the cheque that underwrites these shutdowns. Mining has not suffered from this—nor have we, schoolteachers, people who are paid wages or others—but small businesses do. Small businesses employ 40 per cent of the work force in our economy. They are the single largest employer in our economy. Things that affect small business are very, very important to this state. Before the COVID crisis, we saw major issues with small business, so I encourage the minister, as I have said—Acting Speaker, I am finding it difficult with the amount of noise over there.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** I ask members to keep the noise down while the member for Cottesloe is on his feet.

**Ms J.J. Shaw:** We all know how he likes the sound of his own voice.

**Dr D.J. HONEY:** Can I say that I think it is a poor reflection on those very experienced members of Parliament that they would do this.

I encourage the minister to take a more codified approach to compensation for small business. I understand there have been packages, but if we look at the programs that have been rolled out, we will find that they are quite small in value and some of them are highly targeted and have benefited very few businesses in the state. I think there is capacity to look at a more substantial way to recognise small businesses in the context, as I said, of the Emergency Management Act never being intended to manage a crisis like this that has gone on for more than 14 months. I think everyone in this place recognises that it will probably go on for another 18 months to two years—maybe even more. As I said, this is not an acute incident; it is a chronic incident. I think the Emergency Management Act has to be reviewed. I understand the complexities of compensation and that the government has to be careful about not being too black and white in the way it does it. But I do not think compensation has been adequate for particular businesses that have been very badly affected by COVID lockdowns. I think it is within the wit of the government to examine that and to look at a longer term response to the way this bill could be amended. Otherwise, I fully support the bill as presented.

**MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) [5.09 pm]:** I would also like to contribute to the debate on the COVID-19 Response Legislation Amendment (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Bill 2021. At the outset, I support the comments of colleagues in the opposition—I can no longer say “on this side of the chamber”—in support of this bill. Like other bills that relate to COVID legislation, the opposition has been very supportive and continues to operate cooperatively on this important piece of legislation. This bill will extend the power of the provisions until 4 January next year. These are extraordinary powers, including special penalties for people who spit or cough on police after claiming that they have COVID-19. This is obviously an extraordinary period that we have been experiencing for about 14 months in Western Australia.

It is fair to say that not only has the government been well acknowledged for its response to COVID-19, but also the public has certainly done an outstanding job in undertaking the heavy lifting in the management of COVID in this state. I will touch upon it a little bit more later, but in particular our small businesses have in effect underwritten the real financial cost, at least, of managing the COVID-19 crisis. For many of us in this place, it has not had an impact on our incomes, but small businesses have had to adjust to the restrictions. Some have lost significant business and some people have lost their jobs.

From the outset, I would like to touch on the challenges in hotel quarantine. The government's management of hotel quarantine and its lacklustre approach to recommendations and lessons learnt from other states has cost the state significantly, particularly in relation to our small businesses that have had to shut their doors. I understand that the most recent lockdown came at a cost, according to the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia, of about \$170 million. The lockdown at the beginning of February was also costly. It raises the question about the government's lacklustre approach to addressing the real issues in hotel quarantine. The answer cannot just be to blame the federal government. The answer must be to learn from the lessons of other states and potentially invest in alternative quarantine avenues if it is not effective or feasible for the government to continue to manage hotel quarantine. I back the comments made by the Leader of the Liberal Party earlier about progressing some alternative avenues, as flagged by the quarantine assessment panel as one of the objectives and recommended or suggested by Tarun Weeramanthri in the interim report.

This government has dragged its feet in relation to hotel quarantine. Just today, WAtoday published an article on this matter titled "Pulling back the curtain on WA's 'festering' hotel quarantine conditions, ex-guard fears more virus leaks". It states —

The state's hotel quarantine system has been plagued by five virus transmissions to security guards ...

There is a reference to comments made by one ex-hotel quarantine security guard. I quote —

... he felt disgusted at the lack of sanitation. In one extraordinary revelation the guard said a guest was simply forgotten and stayed in the hotel for three months.

He likened the conditions of hotel quarantine to a "festering Petri dish". The article also states —

Out of the 2360 issues logged by quarantine hotel guards from April last year until January, one-fifth were guests not being compliant with quarantine regulations by opening their doors or coming out of their room.

It continues —

He said the state of staff eating areas and toilets was "horrendous", with food and takeaway wrappers all over the floor ...

It outlines many of the concerns that he had experienced working as a hotel security guard. It refers to one time that he had "cling wrap taped to my head with holes for my eyes and nose and mouth" in protest after asking for a mask for four days. He has since left that position with significant concerns, which he has raised with WAtoday. This is obviously very concerning. These issues are not new. We are aware that the government has dragged its feet on a number of issues with hotel quarantine, such as hotel quarantine workers undertaking a second job. That was certainly one of the issues that were exposed when we had the lockdown in late January and into February when there was a COVID-19 outbreak.

The Liberal opposition had called for the banning of second jobs at the beginning of February when concerns were raised in response to the outbreak and then the lockdown. We raised the matter on 2 February and it was pleasing that it was finally introduced by the McGowan Labor government on 15 February. It should be pointed out that this policy was implemented by the Victorian government several months earlier, in November the year before. Given that the government is managing hotel quarantine and that it is an area of responsibility under the government's control, and given what we know about COVID-19 and the significant impacts that it can have—firstly, from a public health point of view and, secondly, when the government responds by initiating such costly lockdowns—it is important that the government does all it can do within its power to ensure that there are no further outbreaks. These concerns about hotel workers undertaking second jobs were raised. Given what we have learnt from other states, it should be a bit of a no-brainer that someone working in a quarantine hotel by day and then as an Uber driver by night raises some obvious concerns.

There are also obvious concerns about the lacklustre response that we have seen with the quarantine vaccination program for hotel quarantine workers. We also raised this issue and although the government has finally introduced a mandatory vaccination for hotel quarantine workers, including security guards, it was concerning that as of Friday, only 70 per cent of hotel quarantine security guards had been vaccinated. That was ahead of the deadline, if you like, of 10 May. The government was very slow to act on this policy, which we had called for for several weeks before it was introduced, but it is worth pointing out that this policy had been implemented in New South Wales for all hotel quarantine staff by March this year. It was certainly implemented in New South Wales with the level of urgency that it deserves. We know the obvious benefits of COVID-19 vaccinations. We also know that those who have been vaccinated are significantly less likely to pass on COVID-19. It is a no-brainer that every effort must be made to ensure that those who are willing to work in such positions on the frontline are vaccinated.

I would like to touch on one of the recommendations contained in the *Review of Western Australia's hotel quarantine arrangements: Interim advice #2: Governance and related issues*. A lot of advice has been provided in response to COVID-19 outbreaks in hotel quarantine, including the outbreak in late January this year. Some reports were commissioned by government into ventilation issues and concerns about outbreaks in hotel quarantine. A number of reports were produced; the first was in early February this year. The report I refer to appeared on 11 March; the chair of the committee was Professor Tarun Weeramanthri. The report recommends the creation of a quarantine advisory panel. Recommendation 1 states —

This is a crucial part of enhanced governance and sustainability of the —  
Hotel quarantine —

arrangements in the medium–long term ... Membership should be drawn from at least the following agencies: WA Health, WA Police Force ... Its scope would cover the whole end-to-end quarantine process, and encompass important social, community and mental health aspects of quarantine.

That is a very worthy recommendation, I would have thought, and certainly one that deserves the attention of government. It is also certainly something about which any opposition should ask questions, given that we have in WA already recently experienced lockdowns that have incurred significant costs and distress to the state, and obviously some public health risks as well. That is the role of an opposition—to ask questions on behalf of the public. The recommendation by the author of this independent report for the creation of a quarantine advisory panel is certainly a worthy one and one that the opposition supports.

What is concerning is the response we received from the government on this matter. When the Leader of the Opposition asked questions of the Minister for Health about the panel, the minister said —

As the member would be aware, we have a quarantine advisory panel, which at all times has been undertaking an ongoing quality assurance and improvement process. That panel keeps us advised and apprised of any developments about how we can improve what we are doing.

I then asked the Premier a question in relation to this panel on the same day, last Wednesday. After lecturing me and telling new members of the house how not to ask questions, the Premier stated that the Quarantine Advisory Panel was established. He stated that it was his understanding that Professor Weeramanthri was the chair and he suggested that in future I put such questions on notice.

The following day I did just that, only to learn that the answer the Premier provided the day before was actually incorrect, or at least very different from the answer he provided the following day, and that was —

**Mr R.R. Whitby** interjected.

**Ms L. METTAM:** He stated —

Member for Vasse, the Quarantine Advisory Panel was established. My understanding is that Professor Weeramanthri ...

That was in relation to the chair of the panel. In relation to whether the panel had been established, he stated that it had been established. He said it was established. That was made very clear. The Minister for Health made the same comment on that day. The following day we heard something different. The Premier stated —

The Department of Health, the Western Australia Police Force and the Department of the Premier and Cabinet are still working to determine the scope and composition of the Quarantine Advisory Panel ... I will clarify something I mentioned yesterday. Yesterday, I said that my understanding was that Professor Tarun Weeramanthri was the chair.

Today we asked the question again and the Premier stated that the government was still in the process of creating that panel. My concern is not so much that we have had a range of different answers; my concern is about the responses we get when we ask questions. Quite obviously there is public interest in this. The lack of consistency in its responses highlights and raises concerns about how seriously this government is taking this issue.

[Member's time extended.]

**Ms L. METTAM:** Given the government's failings in hotel quarantine so far and given that this is one of the key recommendations from Tarun Weeramanthri, I would have thought this would be a real focus for the government, but clearly we are seeing something different. I could put that on a par with the lacklustre response we got to the first lockdown in early February. The government tried to bury the report on the ventilation issues in hotel quarantine. That lack of action led to the lockdown of Perth and Peel and saw three hotels set for closure for hotel quarantine purposes. Quite obviously, it was a damning report that was ignored by government, once again to the cost of the state and particularly our small businesses, which had to respond in a very short time to the obvious public health threat of the most recent COVID-19 outbreak.

I would like to also touch on how the government responds to COVID-19 outbreaks and, in particular, its response to the Perth and Peel lockdown. With regard to the Friday, 23 April weekend lockdown, although the government

was very much aware of how it would plan the lockdown for Perth, there was very little consideration given to the implications for our regional areas. As the member for Vasse, who represents a popular region encompassing Busselton, Dunsborough, Yallingup, Cowaramup and part of the Margaret River area, I saw that weekend the government backtracking on health advice. It had not considered the implications of shutting down an area for the Anzac Day long weekend, or at any other time. It had not considered the implications such advice would have for the people of that region, particularly given that the health advice stated that people from Perth and Peel would have to wear masks, but would not have to abide by stay-at-home orders.

That basically meant quite a significant influx of visitors from the city, many of whom were out and about wearing masks. It also raised some concern among local residents, particularly for those whose immunity is challenged for whatever reason, and many small businesses that were under pressure because they did not know how to manage the situation. I spoke to one restaurant owner who was managing a wedding that weekend. They said that the wedding guests from the Perth and Peel region were not wearing masks and that that meant all their staff had to make sure they were at least equipped with masks. It created a lot of concern. Unfortunately, many businesses also shut their doors that weekend because they felt pressured and concerned about the advice. They felt an obligation to take on responsibility from a public health perspective.

On the Saturday of that weekend, the Minister for Health flagged in a media conference that people who were visiting the regions from Perth should follow the stay-at-home orders. This had not been reflected in the earlier health advice and the health advice was then backdated and adjusted that evening. That created a significant amount of concern and raised questions about why the situation had not been thought through. I understand that the Commissioner of Police was concerned that there would be an influx of visitors from Perth, all rushing to head to the regions before the six o'clock cut-off. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the public of Western Australia has been overwhelmingly obedient and supportive of the government's directions. There is an opportunity now to make the guidelines clearer because that opportunity was certainly lost during that particular lockdown experience. The police commissioner and the government have flagged that there may be future lockdowns, so I urge the government to consider what the second order or other consequences will be for regions outside the metropolitan area.

Earlier I touched on the fact that the financial cost of the COVID-19 lockdowns has been carried overwhelmingly by our small business owners. In response to significant outrage from some small businesses, the government came up with a payment of \$2 000 for small businesses affected by the lockdown. Also, on 4 February, an announcement was made that a \$500 voucher would be made available for Synergy and Horizon Power customers. The government has since worked out that that \$500 bonus will not benefit small businesses that do not have a direct relationship with either Synergy or Horizon Power. I understand that those who missed out on that \$500 bonus will not be able to take advantage of such a credit until mid-June this year.

Although the government has been very clear when locking down the state, it has given very little thought to how it will support our small businesses. It has no clear plan in place to ensure that our small businesses will have the certainty and surety that they require. Overwhelmingly, our small businesses have worn the cost of the lockdowns here in Western Australia. They have borne the brunt of the restrictions. The Premier has been overwhelmingly popular and has obviously reaped the rewards of his management of the COVID-19 pandemic—we need only look around this chamber to see that. But greater consideration needs to be given to our small businesses. When the government takes a blunt approach and shuts down the whole state, or the metropolitan and Peel regions, in response to an COVID outbreak, it needs to consider not only what restrictions mean for people in other areas who are concerned about the implications of the health advice, but also what compensation will be made available to help small businesses, given that they have overwhelmingly carried a significant burden as a result of the government's response.

As I stated at the outset, the opposition has overwhelmingly supported the government's COVID-19 legislation that has needed to be passed. It is very clear that the McGowan government, and in particular the Premier, must play their part. It should not be so difficult to get information on the reports into hotel quarantine. The media had to ask many questions about the very first report into hotel ventilation issues, and it is concerning that the report took so long. There are also revelations that there was an outbreak because a hotel quarantine worker at the Duxton Hotel had COVID-19, which raises a whole raft of other concerns.

Given that the Western Australian public has overwhelmingly done the heavy lifting during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important that the government be transparent about not only the recommendations and undertakings of reports into how to improve our hotel quarantine system, but also any plans it has for our small businesses if there are future lockdowns. We do not want to see the blame game in relation to hotel quarantine; we know the system is not working. What we seek is that when investigations are undertaken and reports are written by experts, we see the recommendations are actioned, as opposed to seeing the Premier blame the Prime Minister and the federal government. It is fair to ask questions. We on this side of the house are seeking transparency from the government and its leadership on the obvious issues in the hotel quarantine system. We are also seeking certainty for our small businesses going forward, given that they have already worn the heavy cost of the management of the COVID-19 pandemic. I will leave my comments there.

**MR R.R. WHITBY (Baldivis — Minister for Emergency Services)** [5.38 pm] — in reply: I want to pass on my appreciation to everyone who has made a contribution to the second reading debate on the COVID-19 Response Legislation Amendment (Extension of Expiring Provisions) Bill 2021 this afternoon. I note that, without exception, everyone who stood up to speak said that they were going to support the legislation and that they saw the necessary need to extend its provisions. I very much appreciate the goodwill across the chamber and the fact that the opposition will support the bill.

I want to observe some of the commentary that has been made this afternoon. The member for Moore began the debate and spoke about how these matters relate to an extraordinarily important time. I saw that as recognition of the fact that we are facing extraordinary times and these are extraordinary measures that would not be required normally, but are needed when a global pandemic threatens our economy and, worse still, our very lives.

The member for Moore spoke about his concern about this legislation being a limitation on people's rights and that it was important to review it, and I agree. This legislation has been set up to last for a certain period and to deliberately have a sunset clause so that the provisions die at that date. At the moment, that date is 4 July, which I believe is uncomfortably close, and today we are extending that sunset clause, those provisions, out a further six months to 4 January 2022. Then towards the end of this year, we can give due consideration to what the COVID situation looks like in Western Australia and whether we feel it necessary to extend these provisions yet further, whether it be another three months, six months or year. I believe that at that time we will be much better informed about how we need to react. Given the rollout of the vaccine, I have a sense that we will be in a very similar position. I hope that Western Australia continues its very proud and enviable record in response to the COVID pandemic, which has been to keep the economy going, keep transmission to an absolute minimum and have only a very small number of deaths—which have been tragic, but a tiny proportion of the population—and continues the very careful and intelligent management of the COVID response we have seen from the McGowan government.

The member for Moore spoke about the lockdown in the regions and how there were issues with regional travel and difficulties in getting from one place to another. He had issues with a police officer or an Army person at a roadblock. I understand that. It was inconvenient, that is for sure. As Western Australians, we are not used to having our freedoms restricted. We get in the car to go to Bunbury, Albany, Geraldton or up north and we expect to be able to do it, so this is very unusual. But I believe the vast majority of Western Australians accepted the need for those requirements at the time. Indeed, I remember very vocal voices from the Nationals WA, and perhaps the Liberal Party, calling for these areas to be protected and cut off from Perth and calling for certain regional centres to have roadblocks to stop the movement of people out of Perth into those areas.

**Dr D.J. Honey:** We are still calling for that in Cottesloe!

**Mr R.R. WHITBY:** Are they? Okay. We might be able to arrange something, member. I hear the member might want to issue passports!

This was an inconvenience to people, but I also recall the stories from members of my community, naval officers, who were sent out to roadblocks in the middle of the bush. They were there from midnight to 8.00 am, and it was a real event. Being in the middle of nowhere as the sun came up in regional Western Australia is something they will always remember. They can recall the connection and the civility between local people. They were inconvenienced, but they got to know the people on the roadblocks. The officers tell great stories of having local people bring up scones, food and coffees for them. I think Western Australians took the inconvenience in their stride and turned it into a positive. We all have stories in our electorates of the positive civility that grew through a “being in it together” approach to COVID. As the government, we asked people to come together and be cooperative, and that was the response. It was a moment in time. We took time out, we got to know our neighbours and we got to help our neighbours. The kids took time out and engaged in things like drawing rainbows, getting to meet the neighbours and that sort of assistance. It was a very special thing. The driveway service for Anzac Day last year, and again this year for many people, was very touching and moving, and we were engaged in the community. We demonstrated the real value and power of community in Western Australia. It is often these shared challenges that bring out the best in people, and I thought we saw that.

The member for Moore also spoke about hotel quarantine, and this was an issue raised repeatedly. It is basically the tool in the shed for Western Australia to respond to this. We have been very good in protecting our community. The only place we will find COVID, the virus, is in a plane coming into the state, and that has to be dealt with. It is a necessary tool. It has been extraordinarily successful. There is literally a tiny handful of examples of a COVID case getting out through hotel quarantine and coming into Western Australia, and yet we have had well over 40 000 travellers, 40 000 people, arrive in this state and go through the quarantine system. That is extraordinary, and we have to recognise the amazing result that it is. We have to be grateful to the very hardworking security people, staff, police, bus drivers and everyone who has played a part in that incredible achievement that has played such an important role in protecting our state. It is very easy to pick up on this or that incident among 40 000-plus cases. It is very easy to point out things that go wrong, but so much has gone right and consistently goes right. We should be very proud in Western Australia that we have managed to achieve this.

A comment was made—I am not sure whether it was by the member for Moore, but certainly by subsequent speakers—that suggested that the answer, the silver bullet, was to create a purpose-built quarantine facility at great expense to taxpayers. I do not have an exact costing of one of these facilities, but I think we can confidently predict it would be in the order of hundreds of millions of dollars. The government is being asked by the opposition to commit hundreds of millions of dollars of taxpayers' money to build a purpose-built facility, whether it is at the airport, which was one suggestion, or somewhere else, and then hope and believe that we can build something that deals with a virus that not even scientists understand. We know this virus, with its various strains, is particularly contagious. We have had examples in our hotels already of it seeming to have gone around corners. We cannot still account for how some transmissions happened, yet we are being asked by the opposition to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on a specific purpose-built facility, and there is no guarantee whatsoever that we might not get the same result in that facility as we are currently getting in our hotel quarantine system, which I think is among the best in the world. I just make a comment about that. I will return to the hotel quarantine issue.

We should also remember that this COVID emergency has put an extraordinary strain on the government. It is very easy to criticise the Premier, the health minister and the senior agency representatives in health, various other agencies of government and community groups—everyone involved. It is very easy to criticise and second-guess, but I know the amazing workload that our leaders, our ministers and our agency heads have engaged in. It is literally a daily grind. There is no weekend off; there is very little time off. It is a grind. It is daily meetings. It is hour after hour. It is dealing with new issue after new issue, and it has been a tough, hard slog. That is the job of people who are elected to be in those roles, and they copped it on the chin, we all do, but it is easy to criticise when we do not realise the effort that goes into dealing with this issue behind the scenes. As I said, it is very easy to find holes. There is no perfect solution to this issue. We are still learning, scientists are still learning, but we are also dealing with human reaction and response. We are being asked to come up with a simple answer to every incident. The opposition is saying that we have to have more clarity, it has to be simple, we have to know all the rules straightaway and we have to respond immediately and have all the answers. Every issue with this virus is different. The scenarios are different—the people with it, the strain, where they might be, where they might have gone, where they live, how many others they share a house with, whether they love fast food or whether they are superspreaders or not. There are so many variations. We are never going to have an off-the-shelf solution that deals with the variations of life and human behaviour on one hand, and what we do not know about this virus and the various strains on the other. It is a very difficult issue. The member for North West Central talked about specific plans, which, again, I have answered. He wanted to know the key details. He wanted us to get it right every time and have a simple answer. As I said before, every response has to be bespoke to the circumstances; there is no easy solution.

The member for Cottesloe is again one of the people who spoke about supporting the bill. I was grateful to hear the member for Cottesloe say that he recognises the very good job the government has been doing. I think it is great and to be encouraged when people across the chamber are there to criticise and question, but when they throw us the occasional bouquet, we will catch it; thank you very much. He also said that the opposition are in lockstep with the government on its approach to COVID. We are grateful for that. There might be a few who might question that from time to time, particularly in the previous term regarding High Court actions and support for Clive—what is his surname?

**Mr D.T. Punch:** Palmer.

**Mr R.R. WHITBY:** Clive Palmer! Sorry; how could I forget that name? I was going to say Clive James. Both are comedians, but one is a bit more dangerous than the other.

There has been that bipartisan approach. The member mentioned again the fact that—this is interesting in terms of hotel quarantining—this virus is borne on aerosol and minute droplets in the air and we need to create a facility or place where physical transmission is blocked out, but people also do not share the air. I think someone else mentioned that the air cannot be moving. That is very true. That is why it is incredibly difficult, because people who go into hotels like to get fresh air, but we know that we cannot open windows because it creates a drift of particles throughout the interior of the building. The member spoke about the donga solution and that we could look at placing dongas on land at the airport. Again, I come back to the early comments. We could do this and it could cost hundreds of millions of dollars and it might not even be as good as the quarantine hotels we have now. We simply do not know. I do not know that there is any reason why we would believe that it could be any better.

**Dr D.J. Honey:** It's worth investigating, I think. It has been suggested.

**Mr R.R. WHITBY:** Yes, but short of actually constructing them and sending people to stay there, I am not sure how we would test that, particularly when we have a system, as I have described, which has had so few issues, yet safely conducted so many through this process.

The member mentioned some sort of codified compensation that should be highly targeted to small businesses. That was a theme also repeated by the member for Vasse. Again, the member for Vasse said she supported the bills and that the bills would have the support of the opposition, and that is something I am very grateful for. She mentioned that these are extraordinary powers, and indeed they are. This is for an extraordinary response and an extraordinary

period. She acknowledged that the response to COVID-19 by the government had been impressive and that the government's response deserved recognition. But she also said that the public of Western Australia deserves recognition for its response, which is something we can both agree on, and the role of small businesses, too. I told the story earlier here today how small businesses in my electorate have actually pitched in with the community effort. They have responded, they have shut down and they have sometimes changed the way they operate their businesses. They became takeaway businesses when they were sit-down cafes, they have introduced new products and, in a number of cases, they have emerged stronger and better businesses. They increased takings and increased employment. It has been a mixed story for many small businesses. Again, I understand the pressure that all small businesses face, but I repeat, and I do not plan to do that now, the incredible support that has been made available and the effort that has gone into delivering that support. It is very easy to say that we should immediately roll out compensation or grants to businesses that have suffered an impact, but we owe it to the taxpayer and recipients to make sure it is done properly, that we work out who is actually in need, who has been impacted, how much is a reasonable amount and what mechanism we can use to get that money out efficiently and quickly. We are working out delivery methods and what is appropriate to do all the time. I hope there is not another lockdown, but if there is, we will be contemplating a similar response depending on the circumstances. It is something we always think about. There has been enormous support for small businesses and there will continue to be.

The member for Vasse spoke about hotel quarantining in Western Australia compared with the situation in other states, and she talked about learning the lessons from other states. One lesson that I can never forget from another state was the lesson of the *Ruby Princess*, which was the single biggest spreader event of the pandemic in Australia. It saw hundreds of infected passengers get off a ship in Sydney Harbour and walk through the streets of our biggest major city. That resulted in and was connected to deaths across Australia. That was an incredible lesson to learn and it instructed, I am sure, our Premier's response when he was faced with other cruise ship threats off our own coast. It seems a long time ago now, but this is untried territory. This is ships filled with passengers whose ships' captains were trying to berth and disgorge all their passengers and crew, and the Premier held firm to protect Western Australia. There were some transfers of people who needed hospital attention, but the lesson of the *Ruby Princess*, I believe, was the single biggest lesson of this more-than-a-year pandemic. I am still scratching my head how that could happen in a state and how the Premier of that state could be heralded as someone who saved Australia, because that superspreader event was unprecedented.

The member for Vasse also commented about an article on the WAtoday website about issues of hotel quarantining in Perth. I have not read the article in its entirety; I looked through it. I note that in one comment from the quoted source, a security guard, I believe, he was angrily condemning the fact that the windows could not be opened at this particular hotel. Here we have a story attacking Western Australia's response to hotel quarantining saying that one of the issues, one of the problems, and one of the bases of that attack was the fact that the hotel window could not be opened. We just heard from the member sitting opposite and other members on the opposition that we cannot have air moving in hotel quarantine. I would question some of the stuff that gets reported about our response. We are doing the best job we can, but we are not going to let people open hotel room windows and have particles in the air spread out through floors of COVID-19 quarantine areas. That struck me as quite ridiculous, yet that is a source the opposition quoted in the debate today.

This legislation is incredibly important. It is about continuing our response. We have a proud record in Western Australia in this government. We do not get everything right; that is a human condition. It is very hard to deal with this virus for the reasons that I have spoken about, but we endeavour to do as best we can. This legislation is about allowing us to have the powers to do the job, to do the contact tracing, to make the directions in the hotels, to protect Western Australians' health and also give power and protection to those people we charge to do it, so that they will not be spat upon, threatened or abused when they are protecting our lives and livelihoods. I think, Acting Speaker, you are being told that it is time for me to wind up, am I not right?

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr D.A.E. Scaife):** Very close to it, minister.

**Mr R.R. WHITBY:** How long have I got?

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Seconds.

**Mr R.R. WHITBY:** I will do a dance or sing a song.

I look forward to the support of the opposition today. I am not sure whether we are going into consideration in detail —

**Ms M.M. Quirk:** Minister, can I ask you a question?

**Mr R.R. WHITBY:** Yes.

**Ms M.M. Quirk:** The proposition by both the members for Cottesloe and Vasse was unchallenged—that somehow the state should be assuming the constitutional responsibility for quarantine. Is that in fact the case?

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Minister, given the time I will vacate the chair until the ringing of the bells.

*Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.00 pm*

**Mr R.R. WHITBY:** I have concluded my response, Madam Speaker.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

[Leave granted to proceed forthwith to third reading.]

*Third Reading*

**MR R.R. WHITBY (Baldivis — Minister for Emergency Services) [7.02 pm]:** I move —

That the bill be now read a third time.

I take this opportunity to thank all members who made a contribution this afternoon and this evening. This is important legislation. It provides the tools for our COVID response teams to make directions and keep the community safe, and it also protects those frontline workers from abuse, threats or danger. This bill will allow the sunset clauses to be extended a further six months from the current date of expiry of 4 July to 4 January next year. There will now be ample time over the rest of this year to consider our journey beyond 4 January next year. Hopefully, with the cooperation that we have seen this afternoon in the chamber between the government and the opposition, we can continue working together to deal with the COVID threat and we can face a future in which we get on top of this scourge and this threat to our community. Again, I thank all members for their contributions, including the Minister for Tourism for his inspired contribution.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Thank you. I do try!

**The SPEAKER:** You are very trying!

**Mr R.R. WHITBY:** I also thank all members of the opposition—the Liberals and the Nationals WA—who made a contribution, so thank you.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

**ADDRESS-IN-REPLY**

*Motion*

Resumed from 6 May on the following motion moved by Ms L. Dalton —

That the following Address-in-Reply to His Excellency's speech be agreed to —

To His Excellency the Honourable Kim Beazley, AC, Governor of the State of Western Australia.

May it please Your Excellency —

We, the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of the State of Western Australia in Parliament assembled, beg to express loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to thank Your Excellency for the speech you have been pleased to address to Parliament.

**MS M.M. QUIRK (Landsdale) [7.05 pm]:** I start by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet today, the Whadjuk people of the great Noongar nation. I recognise their continuing connection to the land, water and community. I pay my respects to their elders, past, present and future, and I extend my respect to all the First Nations people throughout this great state.

It is an enormous pleasure to also extend my welcome to the many new members in the chamber. That pleasure is magnified many times over, because those new members all belong to the WA Labor Party, and, even more of a bonus, there is a large number of women amongst this cohort. As Nancy Pelosi, the Speaker of the House of Representatives in the US, has famously said, "Maybe it will take a woman to clean up the house." In their inaugural speeches, we heard an impressive array of life experiences from these new members. Their reasons varied for wanting to represent their local communities, but they shared a passion for working diligently in their electorates. They are part of history and I have no doubt that they will continue to make their own mark in the future.

While speaking of history, I congratulate Premier McGowan on his leadership and unstinting hard work to secure what was an election victory of magnificent proportions. In government he will be ably assisted by his cabinet, and I extend my best wishes especially to those ministers newly appointed. It is a great honour and privilege to have the opportunity, and I am confident that all will fulfil their ministerial duties with distinction.

I, too, join in congratulating you, Madam Speaker, in your new role. You have already had a distinguished career in this place, and you are what is quaintly termed the mother of the house, having served the longest in this place. It is well known that Madam Speaker and I are good friends of longstanding. For that reason, I have been asked by some what sort of Speaker you will make. At this point I need to digress slightly.

I am not sure that Madam Speaker will resemble the first female Speaker of the House of Commons, Betty Boothroyd, who served in that role between 1992 and 2000. Boothroyd maintained strict order in the house. She was memorably

described by one commentator as a mixture of headmistress, nanny and pub landlady. That said, it is surprising to learn that Boothroyd ejected only one MP during her time in the chair. That MP was Ian Paisley, who was suspended for 10 days after he accused a minister of lying. The story goes that Paisley went to visit Boothroyd sometime after in what she expected to be a clear-the-air meeting, but the Democratic Unionist Party leader, whom Boothroyd speaks of with great warmth and affection, was grateful. Excuse me, members, but I cannot do the Belfast accent. He said, “Madam Speaker, I’ve come to thank you for the gracious way you threw me out the other day. I got the front page of the Belfast Telegraph and you got page 3.” Boothroyd replied, “Step inside, Ian. You’re welcome. I’ve never been a page 3 girl before!”

I do not expect such colourful exchanges in this Parliament. I am, however, confident, Madam Speaker, that you will perform your duties with aplomb and composure. You have an encyclopedic knowledge of standing orders, and I do not anticipate being able to get away with anything unparliamentary!

**The SPEAKER:** Excellent! That is good to hear!

**Ms M.M. QUIRK:** While we are on firsts, I am honoured to stand here as the first member for Landsdale. The new seat includes Alexander Heights, Darch, Hocking, Landsdale, Madeley, Pearsall and Wangara. These are areas facing the challenges of rapid growth. Community facilities and infrastructure are struggling to keep up with demand. This is especially so in road infrastructure, school capacity and sporting facilities at Kingsway Regional Sporting Complex. I am poised for the task. This afternoon, I was pleased to be able to attend the site of the new Southern Suburbs Library at Landsdale with Mayor Tracey Roberts from the City of Wanneroo. The state government has donated \$3 million to that project for a youth innovation hub attached to the library, so I can say with some confidence that my 2017 election promise is being fulfilled.

In taking on this new electorate, sadly, I lost Girrawheen, which was the only suburb I have continuously represented over 20 years. I will miss that diverse and lively area, but I know that the member for Mirrabooka will be a terrific advocate for and supporter of the good people of Girrawheen, and also Marangaroo, which I surrendered under the redistribution.

Before thanking those who have helped me in my endeavours not only during the campaign, but also over the last term, I want to make a few observations about the unique position in which we find ourselves. Although the word “unprecedented” has become a little hackneyed over the last year, it seems the most appropriate when we consider the vast majority in the Legislative Assembly and the comfortable and workable numbers in the Legislative Council. This scenario requires a change in approach—as they would say in *Star Trek*, “to boldly go where no man has gone before”. We need to consider what this rare opportunity affords us. We need to fast-track those laws that will materially improve people’s lives but keep dropping off the agenda. We must better integrate the recommendations of parliamentary committees into law reform and not just leave them gathering dust. We can no longer trot out the excuse that the lengthy parliamentary process and the likelihood of opposition resistance and recalcitrance makes the prospect of meaningful change remote. An example I give, but it is not a reflection on the new Minister for Commerce, who has only recently been briefed on the issue, is the need for amendments to the Retirement Villages Act. Recommendations of the Economics and Industry Standing Committee chaired by Hon Bob Kucera were tabled in 2008. That inquiry identified bullying of residents, non-completion of works promised in contracts, improper conduct and flouting of building approvals. This conduct had caused distress to many residents in many retirement homes over many years.

In 2012, a first tranche of recommended laws was passed. That bill included the less contentious issues and another bill was foreshadowed at the time that would deal with the remainder of the committee’s recommendations. Since 2012, a series of consultation papers have been released, with a final one currently under consultation. We have the unique opportunity to expedite laws such as this. It is hard to imagine that stakeholders have not had ample opportunity to express their views and concerns by now. Likewise, a minor amendment to the equal opportunity laws was identified some years ago to protect parliamentary staff from unwelcome harassment and molestation. Maybe events in Canberra will focus minds sufficiently so that we can make these minor amendments with expedition.

Next, I observe that not everything has to be accomplished with the aid of legislation. In recent years, for example, there has been much discussion about systemic racism. Examining where that is identified and changing administrative practices does not require legislative reform. A recently tabled report of the Inspector of Custodial Services, *2020 inspection of Bunbury Regional Prison*, is germane in this context. Under his recommendation 10 at page 41, he notes —

**Aboriginal men were receiving lower gratuity levels**

Aboriginal prisoners were under-represented at the higher gratuity levels (levels 1 and 2), and over-represented at the lower levels (4, 5 and 6). Aboriginal prisoners made up 26 per cent of unit workers, and 19 per cent of those unemployed. And, as mentioned previously, Aboriginal prisoners made up 20 per cent of the prisoner population.

The highest gratuity level (level 23) pays \$90 per week. Only those prisoners who are approved to leave the prison for work (under section 95 of the *Prisons Act 1981*) are eligible for this level. There were no

Aboriginal prisoners on level 23 gratuities. Only 10 per cent of employed prisoners receiving the next highest level ... were Aboriginal, against 20 per cent of non-Aboriginal employed prisoners on a level 1 gratuity. Similarly, 17 per cent of Aboriginal prisoners were on level 2 while 25 per cent of non-Aboriginal prisoners were paid a level 2. And at the lower end of the gratuity levels (level 4, which paid \$30 per week), Aboriginal prisoners made up 41 per cent of the group receiving this pay level, as opposed to non-Aboriginal prisoners who made up just 17 per cent of this cohort.

Yet this recommendation, when addressed by the department, does not anywhere address the notion of systemic racism. I use this example only to demonstrate that throughout the public sector and government activity instances of systemic racism can be readily identified that can be remedied administratively.

While we are on the subject of boldly going where no man has gone before, I raise the framework for legislation that could guard against disparity of the impact of our legislation. I have mentioned this previously in this place and have had the opportunity to travel to the United States and discuss the operation of such laws. A number of jurisdictions in the United States of America have passed what they call racial impact laws. It does not mean that laws cannot be passed, but at the time of passing legislation, it is acknowledged that it may disproportionately impact on one racial group or another, in which case the proponents of the legislation then need to explain how they will ensure that public policy mechanisms or administration or the provision of resources for other remedial programs will even out the resulting inequality and that disproportionate impact on one particular group. It is kind of like an environmental impact statement. It differs between jurisdictions as to what agency is responsible for the preparation of such statements—it might be a sentencing commission, a budget or fiscal agency, or the department of corrections. I cite this framework to emphasise that we are blessed with the opportunity to do public policy better in WA and to consider the consequences of our legislation in a more holistic manner, reducing the unintended consequences. I leave members to ponder on these issues.

It now only remains for the inevitable thankyou's. I am grateful for the support of my federal colleague, Dr Anne Aly; upper house member Hon Martin Pritchard, MLC; and campaigners James Rowe, Mary Monkhouse, Adam Blackheart and Steve Curtis. I thank Anthony Harris for his social media skills and for spreading corflutes from one end of the electorate to the other, then picking them up afterwards, minus the many displaying the Premier's face, which had already been grabbed by souvenir hunters. I am also thankful to my doorknocking buddy Craig Shannon, who bore the merciless WA sun with equanimity and a pair of orthotics. I thank Lauren Cayoun and Ryan Pavlinovich, whose job it was to hose me down from time to time, which they did marvellously. I thank the queen of the Malaga pre-poll, Kimberley Peck, and also my colleague the member for Kingsley, who managed the Warwick pre-poll extremely capably. I thank party secretary, Tim Picton, and assistant state secretary, Ellie Whiteaker, and the workers at party office, who were readily accessible and always helpful. I thank the many who cheerfully came to help either at pre-poll or on the booths on the day. Your smiling presence was much valued. Without meaning to single out individuals, I will name the usual suspects: Dom Zappa, Marino Salinas, Trung Pham, and Lara and Bobby Mitic.

My comrades in the union movement are acknowledged for their support, in particular Brad Gandy, state secretary of the Australian Workers' Union; Ben Harris, assistant state secretary of the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association of WA; and Steve Catania of the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union.

I thank my family, of course, for their love and support: Chris, Sherry, Nell, Charlie, Tom, Jack and Anna.

Last but by no means least, those members who have been here for a while know implicitly how important our electorate officers are. They are on the front line, especially when the member is absent sitting on the relative comfort of the blue-green leather in Parliament. I have been enormously fortunate to work with some amazing electorate staff. I do not take that for granted. Michelle Sweet has worked with me as an electorate officer for 15 years. I will not be overly effusive about Michelle, as she is extremely humble and is likely to be embarrassed. It has been a real pleasure to work with Michelle. She is enthusiastic, hardworking, loyal and, most importantly, gets results on even the most intractable of cases. Simply put, she goes above and beyond. I feel blessed to have had the rare pleasure to work with someone of Michelle's calibre. She is ably assisted by James Rowe, who we welcome back to the office.

And last but not least, there is Ingrid Telikostoglou—I will give *Hansard* the spelling of that name—who will be retiring soon. For that reason, I pay her a special tribute. Ingrid has worked tirelessly with me for 17 years. She worked mostly in the Girrawheen office, but also had a bit of respite for a little under three years in my ministerial office as executive officer. I can still recall her first days in my office in Girrawheen. The week Ingrid started, I was in Parliament. A good western suburbs girl, she fronted at this exotic and strange place—Girrawheen—with trepidation. A day or so later, I received a phone call at Parliament. There had been an armed robbery at an ATM outside my office. A bullet had grazed the front door. To this day, the indentation of that bullet can be seen. Happily, no-one was hurt. Police commandeered the office as an incident room. Happily, Ingrid was not deterred and returned the next day.

[Member's time extended.]

**Ms M.M. QUIRK:** I cannot speak highly enough of Ingrid. She is reliable, diligent, loyal and possesses a dry sense of humour. She is assertive in a subtle but pleasant way. Ingrid has social justice ingrained in her and is

compassionate with constituents without being a soft touch. She could charm the most curmudgeonly. She would persist and prevail long after the rest of us had given up on such grumpy people. Ingrid could be my conscience but was also a one-person cheer squad when I became despondent. In recent years, Ingrid experienced ill-health. She soldiered on. Characteristically, she would unselfishly consider she was letting the side down; nothing could have been further from the truth.

**Dr A.D. Buti:** She's a great person.

**Ms M.M. QUIRK:** Yes, I agree with that, minister.

Working with Ingrid was a family affair, with her delightful daughter Natalie a frequent cheerful visitor and helper. And Ingrid's mum, Thea, a renowned pastry chef in her younger days, would send up pastries filled with custard and liberally laced with Austrian brandy. We will miss Ingrid enormously. Constituents hold her in great affection and she is an integral part of a happy team. It has been an honour and a privilege to know Ingrid and to call her a friend. I wish Ingrid well for a relaxing and fun retirement.

**The SPEAKER:** I, too, congratulate Ingrid and wish her all the best for her retirement in the future. It is certainly well deserved; she has been an exceptional electorate officer.

**MS E.L. HAMILTON (Joondalup)** [7.24 pm]: Madam Speaker, it is an honour and a privilege to be standing in the forty-first Parliament, elected for my second term as the member for Joondalup. I would like to start by congratulating you on taking the chair as Speaker of the house. It is a historic moment to have the first woman elected Speaker in the history of our Western Australian Parliament. In light of it being the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first woman elected to any Parliament in the nation, Edith Cowan, let us take a moment to embrace this significant milestone. One hundred years ago, Edith Cowan took her seat in this chamber. It is a moment etched into the fabric of our history. At the time, she was considered a trailblazer. She ran a great campaign to get here. Of note, first speeches are often heard in silence, but she was heckled. She was relegated due to her gender, not her ability. As the member for Joondalup, which is home to a university in her name, her achievement is echoed in day-to-day conversations in my electorate. Today, I am the forty-sixth woman to hold a seat in this place and I will not let a day go by without being proud of this achievement. Parliament has now seen the 106<sup>th</sup> woman elected since Federation. My hope is that we do not have to wait another 100 years to see the 200<sup>th</sup> female member elected to this place.

I would like to congratulate Premier Mark McGowan and the cabinet for the strong leadership they have provided and continue to provide. We have been listening to the first speeches of newly elected members of the forty-first Parliament, and I commend and welcome all our newly sworn-in members. My sincere congratulations to each and every one of you who is here to represent your community. Each of you bring something special to this Parliament. Parliament is also known as the people's house. We can almost say this Parliament is truly reflective of our WA community, with 47 per cent of the members elected being women.

I spend a lot of time with young people in Joondalup—our leaders of tomorrow. I am often heard saying that our Parliament is elected to represent our WA community. But more importantly, I challenge each and every young person I meet to aim high, dream big and strive for their best, with the understanding that one day they, too, could take a seat in this place. A democracy is based on the ability of individuals to represent the views of their community. Today, this is what we see. We have in this Parliament mothers, fathers, grandparents, caregivers, lawyers, police, doctors, teachers and many more—a rich and diverse representation of our community.

It was a privilege to hear from His Excellency the Governor Hon Kim Beazley, AC, upon our swearing in. He detailed the achievements of the McGowan Labor government so far and the work that we intend to continue into our next term. I want to sincerely thank the people of Joondalup who have again placed their trust in me to represent them for a second term. I want to thank my dedicated team of volunteers who joined me in talking with our community and those who were actively involved in my campaign.

The state electorate of Joondalup encompasses the suburbs of Heathridge and Ocean Reef to the south, Iluka and Joondalup to the north and Edgewater to the east. Over the past four years, I have been dedicated to ensuring that I serve the people of Joondalup and to ensure that we, as the McGowan government, deliver the infrastructure and services that our maturing city needs to grow our home to be a second CBD for Perth. Situated about 20 minutes north of Perth's city centre, we have a thriving local economy that is home to over 13 000 small businesses. We have achieved so much over the past four years, and I would like to take some time to provide an update on the commitments that are rolling out and to highlight the areas that I will be dedicating my time to moving forward.

Securing local jobs has been the cornerstone of the work that we have been focusing on, and the Ocean Reef Marina is exactly the project that we need to continue to boost our local economy for not only now, but also years to come. I am excited to be able to inform the house that this project is well on its way to becoming a landmark waterfront precinct. It is exactly the sort of project WA needs right now. It is a key economic driver for the north-west metropolitan region. Since 2017, the McGowan government has tripled its pre-election commitment to funding the Ocean Reef Marina to \$120 million. To support a strong economic COVID-19 recovery, the state government

committed a further \$6.5 million in funding that will help relocate the Ocean Reef Sea Sports Club, Marine Rescue Whitfords and Joondalup City RSL to new facilities within the multimillion-dollar development by 2023. All up, on top of the \$126.5 million that the state government is putting into the project, the Ocean Reef Marina redevelopment is expected to attract approximately \$650 million in private sector investment and provide an additional \$3 billion boost to the WA economy.

In the past few weeks, the first rocks have been placed at the \$62 million breakwater construction project, which is expected to take 18 months to complete and create 56 jobs. There will be 680 000 tonnes of limestone extracted from a Neerabup quarry and 300 000 tonnes of granite is being mined in Byford. The rocks will be used to create two breakwater structures at the marina, which will be approximately two kilometres in total length and up to 18.5 metres high from the ocean floor.

In the coming weeks, the Hodges Drive extension will be open, which will be the ultimate entry to the Ocean Reef Marina. There will be 8 600 construction jobs created by this iconic development. It is timely that I am on my feet this evening, given that the federal budget has just been handed down. I note that earlier this year the federal member for Moore recognised the significance of this project in our federal Parliament. Today, I am yet to see any public calls from the member for Moore to the federal government to invest in this major project in the northern corridor, so I have written to the member and hope that the Morrison government will support the McGowan government and the City of Joondalup by providing specific funding for this project. I have not yet had an opportunity to work my way through the federal budget, but I hope to see specific funding allocated for this project.

Interestingly, the benefits of sourcing the limestone for the marina locally will be not only a reduction in transport costs and the creation of local jobs, but also unlocking up to 25 hectares of industrial land for future use at DevelopmentWA's Meridian Park industrial estate, which will go on to create an additional 550 ongoing jobs in the corridor. This reinforces the state government's commitment to creating local jobs and providing valuable infrastructure in this fast-growing northern corridor. Last Friday, I had the pleasure of representing the Minister for Lands, Hon Tony Buti, and addressing the City of Joondalup business forum. With the theme "shaping our future economy", I spoke about this project and a number of other projects that are happening now or will be taking place in the not-too-distant future and will provide an ongoing pipeline of works.

Located in the Neerabup Industrial Area, DevelopmentWA's 390-hectare Meridian Park estate has been designed to meet the business needs of Perth's fast-growing north-west corridor for the next 30 to 50 years. The development is expected to ultimately generate up to 20 000 new employment opportunities and has experienced strong demand. Located in a former limestone quarry adjoining Meridian Park, I am excited to see that the Australian Automation and Robotics Precinct, which will serve as a development and testing ground for new and innovative industries, is taking place. In 2020, the state government provided a \$20 million funding injection to help kickstart this project, which will support testing, research, development and training in autonomous, remote operation and robotic systems and equipment. The strategy is to create and manage access to a globally linked and locally relevant test facility with test laboratories, virtual laboratories and design co-labs.

Located within Joondalup's southern business district, the Quadrangle estate is positioned to service Perth's rapidly growing northern corridor, an area expected to house more than 400 000 people over the next 20 years. The 33-hectare estate is already home to a range of businesses, including Edith Cowan College, employing hundreds of local people. In early 2020, a new bridge across the Joondalup rail line was completed, unlocking a 5.7-hectare site earmarked for the future growth of Edith Cowan University. It is clear that as one of the fastest growing regions in Australia, the northern corridor is well on its way to becoming a powerhouse. All this development and opportunity is backed by the transport links that the McGowan Labor government is establishing in the northern corridor.

Reflecting on the last term, we have achieved so much in Joondalup. Connectivity is a fundamental element of a thriving city. We recognise this, and the Yanchep rail line extension as part of Metronet is a welcome addition for Joondalup. As Joondalup matures, this new transport link will connect those residents living north with all that our city centre has to offer. It should not be a necessity any longer for people to have to travel to the city centre, in Perth. Easing congestion and saving time travelling will all add to the lifestyle that we love. This particular transport link is an addition to our network. Located at Joondalup station we also have an active CAT bus service. I have advocated for and we are seeing the delivery of the state's first electric CAT bus trial.

After doorknocking in Edgewater and talking to locals like Timothy Lawrence and Leo Kerr, who asked about the Public Transport Authority's bus contract a few years ago, I was able to talk with the Minister for Transport to ensure that we are equipping our network with technologies that will become the way of the future. Modifications to the Joondalup bus depot are 75 per cent complete, and I am advised that we will have the first of the new vehicles on the road in October this year. The CAT bus in Joondalup is a fantastic one that links locals around our city centre.

I am of the opinion that more work can be done. Our learning precinct is serviced by many students, and the area is growing. Not only is there the Western Australia Police Academy, ECU, North Metro TAFE and Edith Cowan College, but also we are continuing to grow this area, geographically and also in reputation. Electrical Group Training

is located slightly to the south. Ensuring that we are able to move students with ease to our transport nodes is important. It would be great to see an extension of our CAT bus not only to this area, but also to provide increased connectivity with our Winton Road business park, for example. This would make sure that the locals and visitors in the Joondalup CBD were able to freely move about to visit and support local business on the west side of Joondalup Drive. More work can be done to connect our tourism providers.

The post-COVID world is going to be different from the world that we once knew. Although not stark in comparison, the needs and challenges that have arisen provide an opportunity to lean into and embrace something that will be different from, though not dissimilar to, the world we once knew. For those living in the outer suburbs of Perth, like Joondalup, this presents its own opportunities and challenges, but these are not to be feared; rather, they should be embraced. Prior to COVID it was the case that one in 20 people worked from home. During the height of COVID, this changed to seven in 20. Moving forward, this looks like three in 20. Gone are the days of the expectation that those living in the northern corridor would need to spend an hour out of their day travelling each way to and from work. This presents a unique opportunity for flexibility in the workplace for perhaps work from home, or a hybrid of such, to enable the much sought after work-life balance.

Western Australians enjoy a certain way of life, and much of this revolves around family, time spent at home and being in close proximity to the services that meet the needs of our local families. I look forward to continuing to advocate for the decentralisation of government offices from the Perth CBD to the outer CBD of Joondalup. We have seen this with the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation, and I look forward to welcoming more state government offices to the Joondalup city centre.

The McGowan government is also heavily invested in and committed to health infrastructure in Joondalup. In fact, Joondalup Health Campus is set to become WA's largest hospital. I am excited to advise the house that work has commenced on the new 12-bay unit within the emergency department at Joondalup Health Campus. This first package of works is another milestone in delivering on our commitment to health care in Joondalup. We have already seen the opening of the mental health observation area, known as MHOA, and the stroke unit. We now also have five interim palliative care beds that have been allocated following recommendation 7 of the end-of-life choices report. I look forward to continuing to advocate for support for palliative care at JHC.

Stage 2 of the Joondalup Health Campus development project is advancing, with the early contractor involvement tender awarded to Multiplex Constructions Pty Ltd. Significant work has been undertaken by Ramsay Health Care and Multiplex, which have worked together on the detailed design. We have now seen the rollout of the first package of early works in the creation of a new 12-bay infectious diseases unit within the emergency department. These new beds will increase the hospital's capability to safely manage patients who may require isolation, including those with COVID-19. I have already put on the record in this place that JHC's response to COVID-19 was second to none. It handled one of the largest single intakes of COVID-19 patients with a zero rate of accidental transmission. Behind our front line—the doctors and nurses at Joondalup Health Campus—are thousands of hardworking people who keep our hospital running, and I will thank them at every opportunity I get.

The new unit can be negatively air flowed if required, and contains two isolation rooms with a sterile anteroom through which staff enter and exit to help prevent the transmission of infection. It will pave the way for the next step in the multimillion-dollar expansion due to be completed in September this year—the development of a three-bay behavioural assessment urgent care clinic. This will be designed and appropriately staffed to safely care for patients who are affected behaviourally, including those who are affected by drugs and alcohol, away from other patients within the main ED. The full ED expansion is on track, with works having commenced in April, which includes the refurbishment of the emergency admissions unit, scheduled for completion in November this year.

With two high school-aged children, I understand the importance of education in setting our kids up for the jobs of the future. But, more importantly, I understand that families want the reassurance of knowing that their child can have a bright and positive future here in WA. We have seen significant investment in every aspect of our education system in Joondalup. Schools are being equipped with science labs, high schools now have performing arts centres, and there has been investment in allied health care and cybersecurity in our North Metro TAFE and at our university.

On TAFE, I know that the extension of the fee freeze on all TAFE and vocational education and training courses has been welcomed by our community. At the start of last year, the Premier and the Minister for Education and Training visited the Joondalup campus of North Metropolitan TAFE and met with student chefs to see firsthand how the 50 per cent cut to TAFE fees was having a positive impact. At that time, early data was showing that there had been a 20 per cent increase in enrolments. We met a first-year student, Amy Van Der Weide, who had benefited from the fees reduction for her certificate II in hospitality. The 16-year-old had started the course in high school as a VET student. Her passion for cooking desserts definitely shone through, and she hoped at that time to work in a commercial kitchen. We also met students enrolled in a certificate III in commercial cookery, who are learning in fully equipped kitchens in the Pavilion restaurant, providing real-life training for the chefs, waitstaff and front-of-house staff. I might add it is a lovely restaurant that the public is able to book.

We are starting to see the positive impacts in the number of people who are choosing TAFE, and that is continuing to grow quite significantly. There have been more than 50 000 enrolments in low-fee courses that lead to qualifications in areas including defence, Metronet, construction, engineering, information technology, hospitality, and I could go on. Everyone deserves a pathway to a quality job, and it means that we are continuing to invest in a skilled workforce for WA.

We have an active lifestyle in Joondalup and this can be seen in the number of sporting and recreational groups.

[Member's time extended.]

**Ms E.L. HAMILTON:** Grassroots sport is at the heart of our communities, and it brings benefits to everyone involved. One of the challenges that local groups have been raising with me is the growth in participation numbers and the physical constraints of the size of clubrooms and grounds. On the one hand, it is very pleasing to hear that there is such an active number of people participating in club sport, but, on the other hand, we are understanding the need to continue to invest in and grow local sport.

The McGowan government is committed to upgrading local sporting and community facilities. We will be delivering a boost for women in sport, with \$520 000 for a new public amenity toilet block at HBF Arena near the netball courts and hockey ground to cater for the thousands who play netball, hockey and other sports at the facility throughout the year. This builds on the already delivered support for the growing number of women participating in sport and the upgrades that we have seen at the Joondalup Sports Club clubrooms at the western side of HBF Arena, with works completed to enable female participation in those sports.

We are also going to be seeing over \$250 000 in funding to local sporting groups in Joondalup, with a whole host of recipients. It covers things from improved lighting to sporting equipment, a kitchen extension for a clubroom and making sure that we are providing sporting and training equipment to women's teams. With around 3 000 athletes playing sport or participating in recreational activities at the Heathridge Park Clubroom, I have been very proud to have secured \$2.5 million towards the upgrade of the clubrooms to ensure that women and girls have access to top-quality facilities. These particular facilities are the second oldest community facilities in the area of the City of Joondalup, and I look forward to collaboration with all levels of government in the delivery of this project, ensuring that there is meaningful engagement with local neighbours, the clubs and the user groups that call this park home.

I have said before, and will continue to reiterate, how honoured and privileged I am to be able to continue to stand here representing our Joondalup community. I thank all the volunteers who worked on the campaign and have allowed me to take a position in this house. Each and every day I am striving to speak with, interact with, understand and represent the voices of our community so that we can continue to grow Joondalup. Like I have done over the past four years, I plan to come and speak with you at your front door, on your phone, and when you are out and about in the community. I have been elected to serve our community, and that is exactly what I will continue to do. Thank you.

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

*House adjourned at 7.43 pm*

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