



# **Parliamentary Debates**

**(HANSARD)**

FORTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT  
FIRST SESSION  
2022

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 26 October 2022

# Legislative Assembly

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**THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts)** took the chair at 12 noon, acknowledged country and read prayers.

## PAPERS TABLED

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

### OWNER-DRIVERS (CONTRACTS AND DISPUTES) AMENDMENT BILL 2022

*Returned*

Bill returned from the Council without amendment.

### DIRECT FLIGHTS — MELBOURNE–EXMOUTH

*Statement by Minister for Tourism*

**MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Minister for Tourism)** [12.02 pm]: I am very excited to inform the house that on 14 October 2022, I announced that the first nonstop Qantas flights between the eastern states and Exmouth will commence next year. From 30 April until late October 2023, Qantas will fly two services a week between Melbourne's Tullamarine airport and Learmonth using Boeing 737-800 aircraft. This will deliver over 18 000 seats into Exmouth and Australia's Coral Coast region across the peak tourism season, with one-way fares starting from \$399. The five-hour direct flights will significantly reduce the time taken for visitors from Melbourne to reach Exmouth, delivering them directly to the gateway of the world-famous Ningaloo Reef. This is in line with our strategy of attracting more tourists into our regions, which helps to sustain businesses and jobs in those areas and further diversifies Western Australia's economy.

As we have seen with the launch of Jetstar's service into Busselton, attracting more direct services from the east coast into regional Western Australia improves the connectivity of our state and makes it easier for interstate visitors to experience our unique natural attractions. It is fitting that the announcement of the flights comes only weeks after the launch of our new Walking on a Dream global brand campaign, which features images of Ningaloo and the iconic whale sharks. Exmouth was recently named Australia's Top Small Tourism Town for 2022, recognising the work that the community and businesses there have put in to make it a hero destination to visit in Western Australia.

The state government has worked closely with Qantas and the Shire of Exmouth to secure these new flights, which are being supported through the \$195 million Reconnect WA initiative. We are confident that this will become an ongoing seasonal service and could act as the catalyst for more direct services from the east coast into Exmouth in future years. As the latest Tourism Research Australia figures show, the McGowan government's strategy to turbocharge the tourism industry is working, and we will continue to focus on attracting more tourists to support local businesses and sustain more local jobs.

### VISITORS — RACO FAMILY

*Statement by Speaker*

**THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts)** [12.04 pm]: Before I give the call to the Leader of the House, I would like to acknowledge some guests in the Speaker's gallery. I acknowledge Mrs Enza Raco, wife of the late Giuseppe Raco; Mrs Francesco Cutri; Mrs Diana Cutri; Mr Domenico Raco; and also the president of the Western Australian Italian Club, Mr Sal Vallelonga. Welcome to the Speaker's gallery today. I understand you are here at the request of Minister Buti as he reads in a very important piece of legislation. Welcome to the Parliament of Western Australia.

### BASKETBALL AND FOOTBALL SUCCESS

*Statement by Minister for Sport and Recreation*

**MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Sport and Recreation)** [12.05 pm]: September has gone and so have the winter sports finals. I would like to share with members a few stories of sporting success across the state. The future of basketball is bright in Western Australia, with the NBL1 women's Warwick Senators and the men's Rockingham Flames being crowned the inaugural NBL1 National Finals Champions in Melbourne on 11 September. Following stellar performances on the court, WA's Leonie Fiebich and Ryan Godfrey were respectively awarded the women's and men's National Finals Championship Game MVP awards, which secured the clean sweep for our state. We also congratulate, of course, all athletes, coaches, officials, administrators and fans of the Warwick Senators, Rockingham Flames and Basketball WA for their contribution to these historic wins.

In 2008, the Albany Sharks Football Club formed an under-16s and colts team in response to an increase in the local population and to provide additional opportunities for junior football participation. Following a surge in

numbers, the club then formed a league team in 2012. Unfortunately, the Albany Sharks league team registered only two wins in a seven-year period. However, under the leadership of Tracy Blaszkow, the first female president in the Great Southern Football League, the club is finally experiencing success on the field. This season, the Albany Sharks under-16s team won the premiership and the league team made it through to their first ever grand final. Railways Football Club were too strong on the day; however, making it to the grand final was an outstanding achievement for the Sharks.

Finally, I would like to reflect on a visit to Broome, during which time I officially opened the lighting upgrade at Nipper Roe oval, that was jointly funded by this government. Joining me were members of the Roe family, Kimberley football stakeholders involved in the state government and AFL joint football investment for the region, and, importantly, some talented young footy players from the Broome Bulls Football Club year 6/7 team who were preparing for their grand final match on the day that I was in attendance with the member for Kimberley.

I challenged them that if they took out the win in the grand final, I might chant their club song. Madam Acting Speaker, they won by two points and I am going to fulfil my promise. It is a Bulls one that goes —

We are the mighty Bulls  
For everyone to come and see  
So wont you come and join  
Us on the road to victory!

Boom! Boom!

All for one and one for all  
Were fighting to the end  
Cause were the mighty  
Bulls! Bulls! Bulls!

They are the Broome Bulls. Well done, fellas. Good job.

### KIMBERLEY VISIT

*Statement by Minister for Culture and the Arts*

**MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Culture and the Arts)** [12.08 pm]: Madam Acting Speaker, I have been around, I can tell you now! I am delighted to inform the house of my recent visit to the Kimberley. Last Tuesday, 18 October, I officially opened a water playground in Kununurra, and then launched the Yawuru dual language *Baby Ways* book in Broome.

The \$3.2 million water playground in Kununurra was fully funded by the McGowan government as part of the WA recovery plan. It features a life-size crocodile figure, waterslides for all ages, a water cannon, tipping buckets, a splash pad and a water spray area. It opened in time for the upcoming wet season and will be a hit with locals and tourists alike. I can say from personal experience, with the member for Kimberley, that those waterslides are a lot of fun for all ages. I will not talk about what happened afterwards!

The Better Beginnings *Baby Ways* book has been translated into the Yawuru language for the first time, giving the local community an accessible and culturally appropriate way to introduce reading to their children. The Yawuru dual language *Baby Ways* book is designed as a book for families to share Yawuru language and enhance literacy outcomes. As we know, literacy has lifelong impacts on employment, education attainment and health outcomes. I am very proud that the McGowan government committed \$2 million at the last election towards the Better Beginnings program, including \$1 million for further development in the Kimberley and Pilbara regions.

I thank my good friend and slide colleague the member for Kimberley for attending both those events in her electorate and congratulate her on the wonderful job that she is doing.

### PARLIAMENTARY SITTING DATES 2023

*Statement by Leader of the House*

**MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Leader of the House)** [12.10 pm]: I rise to inform members of the parliamentary sitting dates for 2023. As is usual practice, the dates are divided into autumn and spring sittings. Next year, 20 sitting weeks are scheduled for the Legislative Assembly, with one of the autumn sitting weeks to be vacated for budget estimates hearings. Generally, the house is scheduled to sit for two or three weeks followed by a one-week or two-week recess, including breaks around scheduled school holiday periods. For the Legislative Assembly, autumn sittings will commence on Tuesday, 14 February—Valentine's Day—2023 and conclude on Thursday, 22 June 2023. There will be a six-week midyear break. Spring sittings are scheduled to take place from Tuesday, 8 August 2023 to Thursday, 30 November 2023. For the information of members, in high anticipation, I table the 2023 parliamentary sitting dates.

[See paper [1618](#).]

**KEVIN HAMMOND, AO — TRIBUTE***Statement by Attorney General*

**MR J.R. QUIGLEY (Butler — Attorney General)** [12.11 pm]: I rise to recognise the passing of Kevin Hammond, AO, a titan of the law in Western Australia, who died on 21 October 2022 at the age of 86. Kevin Hammond is perhaps best known for the high office he occupied towards the end of his legal career as the inaugural Corruption and Crime Commissioner from late 2003 to 2007, and, immediately before that, Chief Judge of the District Court, but his 47-year service to the law is distinguished by many other notable achievements. His entire body of work was recognised in the Australia Day honours list of 2009, in which he was appointed an Officer in the General Division of the Order of Australia for his service to the law, particularly in criminal trial procedures and corruption investigation through judicial roles, review and administration.

Kevin Hammond was born in Wiluna in 1936. He was educated at CBC Highgate and was a foundation student of St Thomas More College at the University of Western Australia. After completing his law studies, he became a partner at Mayberry Hammond and Co in Northam from 1960 until 1978. From 1978 to 1982 he was a partner at Lavan and Walsh, a city law firm. Judge Hammond, as he then became, served as a judge of the District Court from 1982. He was president of the Crime Prevention Council of Western Australia from 1983 to 1984 and from 1996 he chaired a landmark review of all aspects of remission and parole. He was the Chief Judge of the District Court from 1995 to 2003 before departing to help set up the Corruption and Crime Commission. He was a man who lived by a meticulous standard of integrity. He was a superb choice as the inaugural commissioner.

During my previous career as a practising lawyer, I often appeared before Kevin Hammond in his capacity as a judge of the District Court. I can attest to the fact that he not only was well steeped in all aspects of the law, but also always displayed enduring patience and courtesy to all legal counsel who appeared before him. As a judge, he was highly regarded by the entire legal profession.

Kevin Hammond was also a devoted family man. He was married to Derryn for 61 years and was a father of four and grandfather of eight children. In every respect, he was an oldschool gentleman. On behalf of the Parliament of Western Australia, I recognise Kevin Hammond's enduring contribution to justice in Western Australia and offer my condolences to his family and friends.

Vale, Kevin Hammond.

**WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECKS***Statement by Minister for Child Protection*

**MS S.F. McGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Child Protection)** [12.14 pm]: I have the great pleasure of updating the house on another record-breaking milestone for the working with children check scheme. The scheme is compulsory in Western Australia and the Indian Ocean Territories for people engaged in certain paid or unpaid work with children. It aims to increase the safety of children in our community by helping to prevent people from gaining employment in child-related work if they have a criminal history that indicates that they may harm a child. When the scheme went live, a total of 9 374 applications were lodged for the 2005–06 financial year. Each year, the uptake has grown. The Department of Communities continues to focus on broadening its community outreach to educate the public and relevant organisations on the importance of working with children check requirements and their compliance obligations. This includes targeted education through workshops, industry bodies and government departments, as well as a social media campaign. This increased focus on outreach resulted in the identification of cases of noncompliance, with the department taking steps to address any noncompliance with those organisations and individuals. The proactive outreach also resulted in another record-breaking year of working with children checks, and, in 2021–22, the unit received 146 193 working with children check applications. These proactive measures and the introduction of amendments to the Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004 through this house in August will continue to add to the protection of WA's children.

These checks are just one way that, as a government and a community, we can keep children safe. These checks alone cannot keep children safe, but they are a vital part of our armoury. I commend the Department of Communities for its efforts in preventing child abuse.

**16 DAYS IN WA TO STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN***Statement by Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence*

**MS S.F. McGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence)** [12.16 pm]: I rise to inform the house about the work the McGowan government is doing to prevent and respond to family, domestic and sexual violence. Sadly, not a week goes by when we are not reminded of high levels of violence in our community. The message from our government is that this violence must stop. As a government, we are challenging the underlying drivers of violence and focusing on changing attitudes, norms and behaviours.

In less than a month's time, our successful annual 16 Days in WA campaign will commence. This year's campaign theme is "Ending violence against women—it's everybody's business". This message reminds us that we all have a role to play in calling out disrespectful behaviour where we live, work, learn and socialise. It is also about

promoting workplace cultures that prioritise safety and respect. The 16 Days in WA campaign is in its sixth year. It has successfully engaged the corporate, philanthropic and sporting sectors to take up this crucial issue, which has sadly remained out of sight for too long.

The McGowan government has demonstrated its commitment to preventing and responding to domestic violence with our unprecedented investment of \$150 million in new funding. This includes a \$7.3 million prevention package, expanding our Respectful Relationships program in schools and sporting organisations, and training more frontline responders to better recognise the signs that someone may be impacted by violence. These investments are crucial to ensuring we make progress in ending violence against women and children. Since we came into government, the expenditure on family and domestic violence services has increased from \$49 million per year to \$89 million per year in 2021–22. We have not only supported a range of new initiatives, but also made a commitment to provide five-year contracts to the sector to provide stability and allow organisations to plan longer term. We continue to work with the sector to ensure that these contracts strengthen and improve the service system and to show our support for a sector that was neglected for too long by the previous Liberal–National government.

Every year, the 16 Days in WA campaign gives us the opportunity to learn more about family, domestic and sexual violence. I encourage all members of this house to get involved in this important campaign. Ending violence against women—it's everybody's business.

### HOUSING FIRST HOMELESSNESS ADVISORY GROUP

*Statement by Minister for Homelessness*

**MR J.N. CAREY (Perth — Minister for Homelessness)** [12.19 pm]: Our government is committed to reducing homelessness across Western Australia. I am very proud to outline to the house that we have announced the opening of expressions of interest for the establishment of the Housing First Homelessness Advisory Group. The Housing First approach is evidence-based and, through the state government's Housing First homelessness initiative, a key initiative under the state's *All paths lead to a home: Western Australia's 10-year strategy on homelessness 2020–2023*, a significant level of support has been provided to vulnerable people experiencing homelessness in our community. Across WA, the Housing First Homelessness Initiative has seen 170 people receiving support from a case manager, 51 people supported in transitional accommodation and 58 people assisted into long-term housing. This is one part of a broader program of support and housing for rough sleepers, consistent with the Housing First approach, such as Boorloo Bidee Mia, Koort Boodja, HEART and many others. This demonstrates that we are investing in what we know works, and it is having a tangible impact and result.

To strengthen our focus on the Housing First approach, I am establishing the Housing First advisory group, which will consolidate existing advisory groups and other parties in the homelessness system to provide a refreshed focus on the approach. As part of its key functions, the group will progress implementation of the strategy, identify key reforms and work towards removing barriers to a Housing First approach in the homelessness system. This is part of a broader package of reforms that our government is pursuing in both housing and homelessness, including better coordination, more effective outreach services and boosting social housing. We are seeking a diverse range of representation for the group, which will consist of up to 12 members and be chaired by me, as the Minister for Homelessness. Expressions of interest are now being run jointly by the state government through the Department of Communities and Shelter WA, with membership of the group expected to be announced by the end of the year. I encourage all interested people and organisations from across Western Australia to engage with the EOI process, and I am looking forward to getting started as we continue to drive reform in this space.

### NAMBEELUP KAADADJAN — PEEL BUSINESS PARK

*Statement by Minister for Lands*

**MR J.N. CAREY (Perth — Minister for Lands)** [12.21 pm]: I rise to inform the house about the renaming of the Peel Business Park, which will adopt a dual name from the Noongar language. This park is a key component of the Peel Development Commission's \$49.4 million Transform Peel project. We have seen the park continue to grow, creating significant economic and employment opportunities. The 1 000-hectare business park is a strategically located industrial estate that will support a range of sectors in the region, including manufacturing, transport, warehousing and agri-innovation, and I am very proud to see it embrace a dual name. The new dual name will be Nambeelup Kaadadjan, which acknowledges both the location, which is Nambeelup, and the knowledge-sharing focus of the precinct, which means kaadadjan. This name not only recognises the rich Aboriginal heritage of the area, but also is apt for this precinct as it recognises the role of innovation and learning at the site. The dual-naming project was led by the Peel Development Commission and DevelopmentWA and worked closely with local Bindjareb Noongar elder Mr George Walley to engage with other elders across the Shire of Murray and the City of Mandurah to capture their life experiences and memories through storytelling. I would particularly like to acknowledge Mr Walley for his contribution to this renaming. The philosophy behind the naming also mirrors the Bindjareb Noongar people's beliefs and values of sharing knowledge and information. I note that there are already two other key sites within the park that have been given Noongar names. This of course builds on our government's strong record in acknowledging Aboriginal heritage through dual naming. I am very proud that we can continue this record at this site.

**LIQUOR CONTROL AMENDMENT (PROTECTED ENTERTAINMENT PRECINCTS) BILL 2022***Introduction and First Reading*

Bill introduced, on motion by **Dr A.D. Buti (Minister for Racing and Gaming)**, and read a first time.

Explanatory memorandum presented by the minister.

*Second Reading*

**DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale — Minister for Racing and Gaming)** [12.25 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

In July 2020, Giuseppe “Pep” Raco was attacked from behind by a stranger in Northbridge. The attack was unprovoked and Mr Raco tragically died as a result of the injuries he suffered. Despite her immense grief, Mr Raco’s wife, Enza, has since led a tireless campaign to improve the safety of Western Australia’s entertainment precincts. A key element of her campaign was the concept of a “coward’s collar”, or the introduction of a five-year prohibition from licensed premises and entertainment precincts for individuals convicted of a one-punch attack that results in death or disability. I want to thank Mrs Raco for her strength and unwavering commitment to see changes to our laws to better protect members of our community.

Western Australia is home to some fantastic entertainment precincts. The McGowan government believes that everyone should be able to enjoy going out in our entertainment precincts and get home safely. Families should be able to go out to enjoy dinner at a restaurant without being threatened. Women should be able to go out to a nightclub and not be assaulted. Someone working in a venue, like Mr Raco was on the night of his assault, should be able to do a day’s or night’s work and return home to their loved ones unharmed.

This bill is all about protecting people, who just want to go out and have a good time and do the right thing, from those who do the wrong thing. The bill will send a clear message to those who come into our entertainment precincts and behave in an unlawful, violent, disorderly, antisocial way and impact on the safety and wellbeing of others: you are not welcome here.

Under the Liquor Control Act 1988, there are some mechanisms—namely, barring notices and prohibition orders—that restrict or prohibit individuals from attending licensed premises. However, those mechanisms are primarily limited to licensed premises and cannot deal with antisocial, offensive and disorderly behaviour and violence occurring in other public areas in our entertainment precincts. It is this inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour that this bill seeks to deter and respond to.

I turn now to the bill. To reflect this new broader response, clause 4 of the Liquor Control Amendment (Protected Entertainment Precincts) Bill 2022 will amend the long title of the Liquor Control Act 1988 to read —

**An Act —**

...

- **to minimise harm and adverse effects, and public disturbances and disorder, in areas with a concentration of licensed premises, by providing for offences and orders that prohibit people from entering or remaining in those areas ...**

This is complemented by the proposed object of new part 5AA of the act, which will be to minimise, in areas with a concentration of licensed premises, harm to people; adverse effects on safety or welfare; adverse effects on the atmosphere, ambience, character or pleasantness of the areas; and public disturbances disorder.

The bill will introduce protected entertainment precincts—or PEP, named in honour of “Pep” Raco—and allow for people who act in an antisocial, offensive, violent or threatening way that impacts on others in a precinct, or are convicted of serious offences that occurred in a precinct, to be excluded from the precincts.

Clause 17 provides that protected entertainment precincts will be prescribed in the regulations, which means that precincts can be amended, added to, or removed when necessary. Prior to prescribing a protected entertainment precinct, the bill requires the Minister for Racing and Gaming to be satisfied that the precinct is an area that contains a concentration of licensed premises, and the Commissioner of Police, the relevant local government authority and any other persons considered appropriate, must be consulted. Subject to that consultation, the initial proposed five precincts are Northbridge–Perth, Fremantle, Scarborough, Hillarys and Mandurah.

The bill will create two types of exclusion orders. Division 2 allows for a short-term exclusion order to be issued by a member of the Western Australia Police Force, subject to approval from a senior officer, for a period of up to six months. Division 3 allows for an extended exclusion order to be issued by the director of Liquor Licensing on application by the Commissioner of Police for a period of up to five years for adults and two years for juveniles. In relation to short-term exclusion orders, proposed section 152ND(3) requires a police officer to obtain the approval of an inspector or a higher ranking officer prior to issuing a short-term exclusion order. For extended exclusion orders, proposed section 152NJ provides that the Commissioner of Police—or, under proposed section 152NZG,

an inspector or a higher ranking officer—may apply to the director of Liquor Licensing for an extended exclusion order to be made. Pursuant to proposed division 5, the penalty for breaching a short-term or extended exclusion order will be two years' imprisonment and/or a fine of \$12 000.

In addition to the orders, under proposed section 152NZJ, a person convicted of a specified serious offence in a protected entertainment precinct will be subject to a mandatory exclusion period of five years for an adult and in the case of a juvenile, two years. The specified serious offences are: murder; manslaughter; unlawful assault causing death; grievous bodily harm/intent to cause grievous bodily harm; wounding; sexual penetration without consent; aggravated sexual penetration without consent; and drink-spiking offences. These offences are to be specified in the act, not in the regulations, which means they can be amended only by the Parliament. Under proposed section 152NZJ(5), the five-year mandatory exclusion period will pause while an offender is in custody awaiting sentencing or serving a sentence of imprisonment, and will recommence after they are released. This provision will also apply to an extended exclusion order under proposed section 152NZ if an individual is imprisoned at any time during the period of the exclusion order. The penalty for breaching the mandatory exclusion will be up to five years' imprisonment, or up to two years' imprisonment and a \$12 000 fine for summary offences.

To ensure that individuals who are issued with an exclusion order or are subject to a mandatory exclusion period are aware of their exclusion, proposed sections 152NX and 152NZQ outline how orders must be served and explained to individuals, with specific service provisions applying to juveniles. With regard to juveniles, service and explanation of an exclusion order must be undertaken personally by either a member of the police force or a custodial officer. Further, pursuant to proposed section 152NZK, an individual subject to an order or an excluded person may enter a protected entertainment precinct for limited, appropriate reasons such as if they reside or work in the precinct, go to school or university in the precinct, and for various other specified reasons if being in the precinct is necessary in the circumstances. These reasons can be asserted by the excluded individual as defences.

Compliance and enforcement of the exclusion order provisions and post-conviction exclusion will be undertaken by the Western Australia Police Force. Pursuant to proposed section 152NI, the Commissioner of Police will be required to develop guidelines for officers in relation to the types of behaviour that should give rise to the issue of a short-term exclusion order. I understand that work on these guidelines has commenced. The commissioner has also made public comment on how he will require his officers to utilise the exclusion order provisions in this bill.

To support compliance and enforcement, pursuant to proposed section 152NZM(3), a police officer may request a person who is in a protected entertainment precinct to provide their personal details for the purposes of making a short-term exclusion order, the Commissioner of Police applying for an extended exclusion order, or serving a document on an individual. A police officer may also make the request if they reasonably suspect that an individual may be subject to an exclusion order or is an excluded offender.

Other parts of the bill will amend sections 115AC and part 5 of the act to support compliance and enforcement through amended disclosure provisions to assist in identifying individuals who are subject to a barring notice, prohibition order, exclusion order or a mandatory exclusion period. Importantly, the bill also provides that individuals subject to short-term exclusion orders that apply for one month or more will be able to seek a review by the Commissioner of Police and/or the Liquor Commission. Individuals subject to an extended exclusion order will be able to seek a review by the director of Liquor Licensing and/or the Liquor Commission. A review of this kind could result in a variation or revocation of the exclusion order.

Although short-term and extended exclusion orders will apply 24/7 unless the order is varied by the Commissioner of Police, the director of Liquor Licensing or the Liquor Commission, a person will be permitted to enter a protected entertainment precinct for limited, appropriate reasons, such as if they reside or work in a precinct, go to school or university in the precinct, and for various other reasons if it is considered necessary in the circumstances. These exceptions will also apply to persons subject to a mandatory exclusion period; however, the mandatory exclusion will apply 24/7 and cannot be varied.

Compliance and enforcement of the exclusion order provisions will be undertaken by the Western Australia Police Force. Pursuant to proposed section 152NZM(3), a police officer may request a person who is in a protected entertainment precinct to provide their personal details for the purposes of: making a short-term exclusion order; the Commissioner of Police applying for an extended exclusion order; or serving a document on an individual.

That has been given to me twice!

Other parts of the bill include amendments to sections 115AC and part 5 of the act to ensure consistency in relation to publication and disclosure of details of barring notices and prohibition orders. The amended disclosure provisions will assist licensees and their staff in identifying patrons who are subject to a barring notice, prohibition order, exclusion order or a mandatory exclusion period.

Pursuant to section 152NZV, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations will oversee and scrutinise the operation of the amendments three years after their commencement and prepare a report for the Minister for Racing and Gaming to table in Parliament. To identify whether the provisions disproportionately impact on any particular group in the community, the report will be required to identify any such impact.

I wish to thank my parliamentary colleagues for their support and assistance in the development of this legislation, including the Premier, the Attorney General, the Minister for Police and the Minister for Transport. I would also like to thank the Commissioner for Police for the work he and his officers will have to undertake once this legislation has passed.

Again, I would like to thank Mrs Enza Raco, and her family and supporters. These laws arise from her advocacy, and I will conclude with her words, which capture the government's intent in introducing this legislation. She said —

“We are now presented with a solution to a major problem in the Entertainment Precincts across Perth that continually experience the types of behaviour that took my husband's life.

We will now have Protected Entertainment Precincts ... what a nice way to honour a man that lost his life and now 'PEP' will help save others. It was not in Vain ... I believe it will be a large step in keeping families like mine safe; and preventing horrific attacks on innocent people like Pep and the many others who have suffered greatly from these senseless acts of violence.

Let's bring Entertainment Precinct's like Northbridge back into the hands of good people; and let us see families back in the precinct enjoying a meal at the many restaurants and cafes, so that it is a safe place to be for all.”

I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr P.J. Rundle**.

### **DIRECTORS' LIABILITY REFORM BILL 2022**

#### *Introduction and First Reading*

Bill introduced, on motion by **Mr J.R. Quigley (Attorney General)**, and read a first time.

Explanatory memorandum presented by the Attorney General.

#### *Second Reading*

**MR J.R. QUIGLEY (Butler — Attorney General)** [12.40 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

The Directors' Liability Reform Bill 2022 will limit and standardise the provisions in the Western Australian statute book that impose personal criminal liability on officers of bodies corporate in a body corporate's offending in circumstances in which those officers have failed to take reasonable steps to prevent the offending.

The bill has had a very long gestation. Directors' liability reform was one of 27 deregulation priorities under the National Partnership Agreement to Deliver a Seamless National Economy, a now-concluded project that was overseen by the Council of Australian Governments' National Federation Reform Council through the business reform council working group. On 29 November 2008, COAG agreed to increased harmonisation across Australian jurisdictions in the imposition of personal criminal liability on directors for corporate fault. There was a drive to reduce provisions that impose personal criminal liability on directors for corporate offending and harmonise these provisions using a principle-based approach. This was because, and I quote from the official guidelines produced by COAG —

... there appeared to be an increasing tendency for such provisions to be introduced as a matter of course and without proper justification, and because of a concern that inconsistencies in the standards of personal responsibility both within and across jurisdictions were resulting in undue complexity and a lack of clarity about responsibilities and requirements for compliance.

COAG developed an agreed set of principles to guide this reform, which are as follows. First, when a corporation contravenes a statutory requirement, the corporation should be held liable in the first instance. Second, directors should not be liable for corporate fault as a matter of course or by blanket imposition of liability across an entire act. Third, a “designated officer” approach to liability is not suitable for general application. Fourth, the imposition of personal criminal liability on a director for the misconduct of a corporation should be confined to situations in which there are compelling public policy reasons for doing so—for example, the potential for significant public harm that might be caused by the particular corporate offending; liability of the corporation is not likely on its own to sufficiently promote compliance; and, it is reasonable in all the circumstances for the director to be liable having regard to factors including: the obligation on the corporation and, in turn, the director is clear; the director has the capacity to influence the conduct of the corporation in relation to the offending; and, there are steps that a reasonable director might take to ensure a corporation's compliance with the legislative obligation. Fifth, when the fourth principle is satisfied and directors' liability is appropriate, directors could be liable when they have encouraged or assisted in the commission of the offence or have been negligent or reckless in a corporation's offending. Sixth, in addition, in some circumstances it may be appropriate to put directors to proof that they have taken reasonable steps to prevent the corporation's offending if they are not to be personally liable.

In 2015, a version of this bill was introduced into Parliament by the previous Liberal–National government. However, that bill did not progress; indeed, it was never brought on for debate and it lapsed when Parliament was prorogued in 2017. This bill is an updated version of that 2015 bill. Demonstrating the McGowan Labor government’s commitment to bipartisan microeconomic reform, the bill’s policy intent has been maintained and it is substantially the same as the 2015 bill.

I will briefly go through the bill’s key policy underpinnings. The first point to note is that the bill’s reforms will apply to “officers” as defined in the commonwealth Corporations Act 2001. The bill’s title reflects the nomenclature used in the original COAG reform project and associated principles and guidelines, which referred to directors’ liability. The bill will not operate as a standalone act with enduring force once it is passed, and the amendments it makes to the Criminal Code and other legislation make it clear that they apply to officers of bodies corporate rather than only directors.

I note that the bill’s focus is purely on provisions that make officers personally criminally liable for offences committed by bodies corporate in circumstances in which the officers have not taken all reasonable steps to prevent the body corporate committing the offence. I will refer to this type of liability as derivative liability. The bill does not seek to delete or amend any provisions that make bodies corporate criminally liable, nor will it affect any provisions that make officers liable for offences they have committed directly. The bill will not affect situations in which officers are liable as accessories because they have been involved in a body corporate’s offending.

The bill upholds the COAG principles by deleting provisions that impose a blanket derivative liability in all offences in an act. When it is considered that particular offences in an act merit derivative liability, the bill replaces the deleted provisions with a reference to one of the three standard derivative liability provisions proposed to be included at sections 39, 40 and 41 of the Criminal Code and specifically imposes liability when the underlying offences merit such liability. This is a departure from the present system, under which most pieces of legislation contain provisions that state that officers may be prosecuted in respect of every offence in the act.

Proposed section 42(2) of the Criminal Code included in the bill provides that the bill’s amendments do not affect the liability of an officer, or any other person, under chapters II, LVII, LVIII and LIX of the Criminal Code. These chapters contain provisions relevant to what is commonly known as accessorial liability, such as sections 7, 562, 563A and 563B.

In some instances, the bill will delete legislative provisions that impose a mixture of accessorial liability and derivative liability. Once the bill is passed, officers who are accessories to offences committed by bodies corporate under those acts will be capable of being prosecuted using the relevant provisions contained in these chapters of the Criminal Code.

The bill will substantially reduce the number of provisions in Western Australia that reverse the onus of proof, requiring an officer to prove that they took reasonable steps to prevent the body corporate from committing particular offences. The bill retains a reversed onus of proof in respect of some particularly serious offences, for example, offences in the Medicines and Poisons Act 2014 of Western Australia that relate to the manufacture or supply of dangerous poisons. The bill will, of course, not prevent agencies from prosecuting bodies corporate who commit offences, or from prosecuting officers who were involved in the commission of offences. It will remove or standardise only the extra layer of liability that allows agencies to prosecute an officer when they have failed to take all reasonable steps to prevent the body corporate from committing the offence.

I want to make it clear that an officer will not be liable in circumstances in which there are no reasonable steps that they could have taken to prevent a body corporate from committing a particular offence. In this context, I refer to the case of *Miller v Miller* of 2011 in the High Court of Australia, reported at page 9, in which the High Court considered section 8 of the Criminal Code, which also uses the language of “reasonable steps”. In that case, the majority of the High Court noted that section 8(2)(c) “does not require that there have been some steps available ... of the kind specified in that paragraph.” Similarly, the provisions that will be inserted into the Criminal Code by this bill are not intended to result in a situation in which an officer may be convicted of failing to take all reasonable steps when no reasonable steps could have been taken. In determining what amounts to reasonable steps, the court must consider the knowledge of the officer about the commission of the offence, whether the officer was in a position to influence the body corporate’s conduct in relation to the offence, and any other relevant matter.

There are some differences between the bill that was introduced into Parliament in 2015 and the bill before us today. For instance, the numbering in the draft provisions of the Criminal Code has changed and the bill has been updated to reflect changes to the statute book. In terms of more substantive changes, I draw members’ attention to the following. Firstly, the bill no longer proposes to amend the Mines Safety and Inspection Act 1994 of Western Australia on the basis that the relevant provisions have been repealed and replaced by the Work Health and Safety Act 2020 of Western Australia, based on national model work health and safety laws.

Secondly, the 2015 bill proposed to amend section 109 of the Taxation Administration Act 2003 of Western Australia with consequent amendments to the Duties Act 2008 of Western Australia, the Land Tax Assessment Act 2002 of Western Australia, the Pay-roll Tax Assessment Act 2002 of Western Australia and the Stamp Act 1921 of

Western Australia. These amendments have been removed from the 2022 bill for two reasons. The first of these reasons is that section 109 of the Taxation Administration Act 2003 of Western Australia imposes accessorial liability and was therefore not included in the Council of Australian Governments' original director liability reform commitment. There was no agreement to remove or standardise accessorial liability provisions. The second reason is the importance of ensuring that Western Australia's tax legislation remains consistent with contemporary measures to address illegal phoenixing schemes and to ensure that bodies corporate comply with their tax requirements. I note that the equivalent provision in the commonwealth's Taxation Administration Act 1953, section 8Y, also remains in place following the commonwealth's implementation of the COAG reforms to officer liability.

Thirdly, the 2015 bill proposed to delete section 154(3) of the Mining Act 1978 of Western Australia, which imposes accessorial liability on officers of bodies corporate. However, the 2022 bill does not propose to delete this section, given that the relevant section imposes accessorial liability only.

Fourthly, the 2015 bill previously removed derivative liability from the Emergency Management Act 2005 of Western Australia. Following further consultation with the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, the 2022 bill provides that derivative liability will apply to particular offences in that act that warrant it.

Finally, a review clause has been included that requires that the operation and effectiveness of the amendments made by the bill be reviewed after five years, with the resulting report to be tabled in Parliament.

The bill before the house takes a sensible and measured approach; that is, it does not strip derivative liability from Western Australian legislation altogether, so that officers are never held appropriately accountable for their failures to prevent bodies corporate from offending. Neither does it maintain the present approach, in which officers are, by and large, exposed to personal criminal liability in respect of every single offence that a body corporate might commit. The bill holds officers to account in appropriate circumstances. It ensures that when legislation looks to impose derivative liability, it does so not as a general blanket provision but rather with specific consideration of the seriousness of the offence and the extent of the liability that ought properly be imposed on an officer to act as a deterrent and protect the public. The bill steers a steady path through the statute book, substantially reducing the number of derivative liability provisions, and further confining those provisions that reverse the onus of proof, whilst leaving in place a sufficient layer of regulation to ensure that officers of bodies corporate take all reasonable steps to protect the public from corporate offending.

I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr P.J. Rundle**.

## TEACHER REGISTRATION AMENDMENT BILL 2022

### *Second Reading*

Resumed from 25 October.

**MR S.N. AUBREY (Scarborough)** [12.58 pm]: I rise in support of the Teacher Registration Amendment Bill 2022 to join the chorus of my parliamentary colleagues in singing the praises of Western Australian teachers and acknowledging their contribution to our community. It is very much fitting that this Friday is 28 October, World Teachers' Day. It gives me a wonderful opportunity to recognise the contribution of all teachers in the Scarborough community and their impact on us all. Teachers have shaped all our futures. No individual in Australia can go through life without recognising the powerful impact our teachers have on our lives. As a passionate student of history, my contribution will be laced with quotes from historical figures about the importance of education in our society and the importance of supporting our teachers, as this bill does. The first is by Aristotle: "Those who know, do. Those who understand, teach". All teachers in my life have influenced the human being I am today.

Today in this speech I want to focus on one teacher. For those members who do not know, I left high school in year 11 to pursue my electrical apprenticeship. After completing my apprenticeship and spending a few years working up in the north west, I chose to return to school and complete year 12. I attended Tuart College in Tuart Hill at the age of 24 where I completed a certificate IV in adult preparatory studies—equivalent to year 12. This later allowed me entry to the University of Western Australia to study political science and international relations. I sometimes think it is silly, as year 12 is something that most people have achieved in life—I am no more special than everyone else who has completed year 12—but I am actually very proud of the certificate. In fact, I am so proud that I included it in my biography on the Parliament website and keep it in my office today. To me, it is a symbol of the risk I took to change my path in life and the first waypoint of success on the journey that led to me being in this place as the member for Scarborough, where I can work hard to have a positive impact on my community and WA.

Thomas Jefferson said —

bigotry is the disease of ignorance, of morbid minds; enthusiasm of the free and buoyant. education & free discussion are the antidotes of both.

The teacher who was most influential in helping me complete the certificate IV was Claire Morrison, an academic studies and English teacher formerly of Tuart College. Claire Morrison taught me many things, but one of the most

profound was critical thinking and analysis. The education and knowledge she gave me empowered me to see beyond emotive language, the bias of others and my own bias. She gave me the ability and confidence to use my rational judgement to understand and face issues in a logical and pragmatic way. She freed me from the manipulation of those who use fear, bigotry and division to manipulate others into acting against their better interests and judgement. She opened the door for me to discover my objectivity. She made me a better person and, I believe, a better member of Parliament as a result—a member of Parliament who works hard to inform and engage his community, rather than take the easy road of spreading fear, misinformation and manipulation, and a member who seeks to find the middle ground and common purpose to play my part in delivering a better future for Scarborough and Western Australia. I am forever grateful to Claire Morrison and all the teachers in my life for the positive influence they have had on me as an individual and as a member of Parliament.

The Teacher Registration Amendment Bill 2022 seeks to enhance the registration system that has been in place for around 20 years in Western Australia. It aims to promote a skilled teaching workforce, strengthen the powers of the board to respond to matters of child safety that involve teachers, improve fairness for teachers, and much more. Above all, the paramount consideration of the Teacher Registration Board of Western Australia is acting in the best interests of the children—children who are our future.

Teachers like Claire Morrison and many others know and live this every day in their profession. I am lucky to represent, engage with and support many schools in the Scarborough electorate. I reached out to my local school principals and asked them whether they were willing to provide a quote to acknowledge the service of the teachers at their schools and whether they had any stand-out teachers. I am lucky to have received an overwhelming response from my schools, which is a testament to the high esteem in which our teachers are held. It was widely acknowledged by all the principals that it is an almost impossible task to single out individual teachers, as they operate as part of a team—a community.

I will quote many of my local school principals. The quotes may mean little to those outside the Scarborough electorate, but to my community these quotes are an important acknowledgement of our local schools and teachers. I ask my parliamentary colleagues for their indulgence and patience while I read through these quotes. Before I do, I want to take a moment to acknowledge the principals of these schools who provided the quotes, all of whom are teachers themselves and have dedicated their lives to the children they teach, their schools and their professions.

I will start with Newborough Primary School in Karrinyup. Principal John Worthy, a man of good humour, provided me with what he believes to be a “worthy” quote —

*“Everyone is a teacher. It’s a special group who make it their profession and want to be known as a ‘teacher’ by continually improving their skills, working collectively, and focusing on what is best for their students.*

*There are a wonderful group of teachers at Newborough Primary School. Every one of them is dedicated to their profession, the school, and the children they teach. That helps Newborough Primary School absolutely stand out.*

*To single out one teacher is difficult, but I have chosen to acknowledge Ms Kristine (Kris) Williams, who has retired only a few weeks ago after being at Newborough Primary School for over 32 years, 29 of which she was the PE teacher.*

*Kris is so highly regarded by her colleagues, parents and most importantly all students she has influenced. She is greatly loved and admired for her teaching and the wonderful person she is.*

*On behalf of Newborough Primary School students, parents, and community, thank you Ms Williams and all teachers at our wonderful school for your passionate service.”*

**John Worthy, Principal, Newborough Primary School.**

Before I move to my next school, I would like to thank Principal John Worthy for his service to Newborough Primary School and to our local community. John will be enjoying some well-deserved rest on long service leave next year, and I wish the best of luck to Deputy Principal Karen Tucknott, who is stepping into his very big shoes.

On the northern edge of my electorate is North Beach Primary School. Principal Gary Bryant sent me this quote to share in Parliament on his behalf —

*“It is very difficult for any principal to single out a teacher or staff member for notoriety because education is a team event and all of the teachers at North Beach Primary School deliver the best educational opportunities to our students, but from time to time one educator does stand out.*

*I have Jenelle Avins who is a teacher in a Year One/Two class, she is the leader of a Collaborative Team consisting of 6 other teachers along with being North Beach PS’s English Curriculum Coordinator.*

*Jenelle has been teaching for 5–6 years and started at North Beach Primary School in a part time capacity and is now full time with permanency attached.*

*Jenelle is an Early Childhood trained teacher as well as being a qualified nurse.*

*While Jenelle is among many of my staff who do an outstanding job on a daily basis, she also is totally unaware of the positive impact she has on her students. She gives all of her time and effort to ensuring each student receives the quality education they deserve. She is thoughtful, well planned and engaging. She has the best interests of her students at heart in all the work she does.*

*Now Jenelle is not alone among her colleagues at North Beach Primary School—our staff all possess these qualities, but Jenelle is the teacher that parents remember, and she is the teacher whose qualities are brought to my attention by the community most often. Jenelle is the teacher that best embodies our school values and represents our vision of “best teachers, contemporary curriculum”.*

*As principal, I receive more positive feedback from our community about Jenelle Avins than I do any other teacher.*

*I end where I began, I do not like to single teachers out because ours is a team game but every now and then a teacher comes along that represents all that is good about our profession, and we should be confident to celebrate the efforts of that lighthouse teacher.*

*I acknowledge her as member of a fine teaching team for her contribution to the improvement in learning at North Beach Primary School commencing where it makes the most difference—in Early Childhood Education.”*

**Gary Bryant, Principal, North Beach Primary School**

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms M.M. Quirk):** Sorry, are you still going, member for Scarborough? That was a pregnant pause rather than a permanent pause.

**Mr S.N. AUBREY:** I have a fair while to go.

Further to the south of my electorate is Scarborough Primary School. It was the first primary school built in Scarborough, and the original school is still intact and heritage listed. I would like to note that we almost lost Principal Sarah Dawson recently to a health scare and, on behalf of the Scarborough Primary School community and the wider Scarborough community, I would like to express how very grateful we are that you are still with us, Sarah. Your dedication, passion and hard work for our local school impacts well beyond the school’s boundaries. It was special to share a moment with you recently turning the sod on our major upgrade of Scarborough Primary School, alongside Premier Mark McGowan. Sarah provided me the following quote to share with the Western Australian Parliament —

*“In the spirit of developing the whole child, I would like to acknowledge the dedication and ongoing work of Debbie Potter in ensuring Scarborough Primary School has a top-quality literacy program that allows all students to reach their potential.*

*Also, Sandy Cooke for being an outstanding ambassador for the Your Move Program, encouraging and providing opportunities for our school community to engage in active travel, supporting sustainable transport options and keeping us fit and healthy.*

*The Your Move program is an initiative of the Department of Transport and run through local governments, is a free program helping students get active by increasing walking, scooting, and riding to school.*

*Scarborough Primary School has been the top ranking Your Move school for the last two years and is currently first on the leader board in an attempt to claim a threepeat!*

*In conclusion, I would like to thank on behalf of the Scarborough Primary School community, all of our teachers for their dedication and service to our school, students, parents, and community.”*

Sarah Dawson  
Principal  
Scarborough Primary School

Just a little bit up Brighton Road and into the family suburb of Doubleview is Doubleview Primary School. Principal Greg Fisher and Deputy Principal Nicole Tolev are both currently in the dining room with student leaders from Doubleview Primary School. My colleague Christine Tonkin and I have the privilege of hosting them today for lunch. Greg and Nicole provided me with this quote to share —

*We have many passionate and dedicated educators at Doubleview PS working tirelessly to support the learning needs of our students.*

*One of the many excellent educators is Christina Birch, she leads our Early Years Extension Program “Hearts and Minds:” This is a unique program incorporating Philosophy for Children, Habits of the Mind and develops Higher Order Thinking skills.*

*All our ECE students engage with this program and are exposed to terrific thinking and learning opportunities through artwork. Christina is valued deeply by students, staff, and parents.*

These are the words of Principal Greg Fisher and Deputy Principal Nicole Tolev from Doubleview Primary School.

I look forward to welcoming the student leaders of Yuluma Primary School to Parliament for lunch tomorrow as well as to acknowledging them for their service to our local schools and community. Over in Innaloo, Yuluma Primary School principal, Janine Moses, gave me this quote to deliver —

*“I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge all of our wonderful teachers at Yuluma Primary School. But also acknowledge the efforts of three of Yuluma’s standout teachers.*

*Jessica Fraser—Pre-primary teacher, together with Charlie Wade—kindergarten teacher, have rejuvenated our early childhood program introducing directed play and explicit teaching into the program.*

*The results have seen increased educational outcomes with our on-entry results in Pre-Primary and Year 1 over the last couple of years, resulting in increased enrolments.*

*Our Year 6 teacher, Kathryn Kaaks, has introduced a strong student voice to our upper primary students by rejuvenating our student council and giving increased opportunities for student leadership within our school.”*

**Janine Moses, Principal, Yuluma Primary School**

Further north is Lake Gwelup Primary School, one of the largest primary schools in my electorate. Principal Lynne Anderson said that they have a terrific team of teachers at Lake Gwelup Primary School who all go above and beyond their salaries to provide a rich, welcoming and fun learning environment, so it was difficult to single out one teacher. She gave me the following acknowledgements to share —

*“I would like to recognise Rebecca Morgan as a standout teacher at Lake Gwelup Primary School.*

*Bec, is an extremely hard working, energetic and passionate teacher. She has mastered the complex task of bringing out the best in every student through a combination of warmth, humour and differentiated teaching.*

*She inspires her colleagues by encouraging, mentoring, and coaching them as the Lake Gwelup Primary English curriculum leader, often meeting teachers out of hours to help them with their planning and assessment.*

*Bec Morgan lives and breathes education, spending hours and hours of her own time to plan at a classroom and at a school level. She is an outstanding person and educator.*

*Thank you to Bec and all teachers at Lake Gwelup Primary School, all who provide a positive education environment for our students, truly enriching their lives and giving them the best opportunities in the future.”*

**Lynne Anderson, Principal, Lake Gwelup Primary School**

Lastly, I refer to Churchlands Senior High School, which services most of the Scarborough electorate. Most of our local primary schools feed into Churchlands Senior High School, which is celebrating its sixtieth anniversary this year. Churchlands Senior High School is a big part of our local community and the futures of our local kids in Scarborough. Principal Neil Hunt and Deputy Principal Kate Grayson have asked me to share the following quote to recognise the many teachers at Churchlands Senior High School —

*“We would like to recognize all the teachers at Churchlands Senior High School for their dedication and care for all students at Churchlands SHS. All staff consistently embrace the school’s motto of “aim high”*

*We would also like to acknowledge the individual teachers for their dedication.*

*Jane Sanders for her dedication to our academic extension program through her work with gifted mathematics students, and her constant work with students, coaching them to always aim high.*

*Rochelle Coleman for her work in Aboriginal education especially her Aboriginal student leadership development program, her work with follow the dream, her working alongside staff to improve their cultural competence, and her mentorship of young aboriginal students.*

*Alice Wells, who has been working at Churchlands SHS since 1989, her work with HASS students, and her leadership in Modern history, including delivery year 12 study program in the school holidays. Alice is highly regarded by all colleagues, has mentored early career teachers, and spent countless hours ensuring all students are provided with challenging and engaging program.*

*Dr Grant Pusey for his leadership in STEM education, and contributions through his extracurricular work with his STEM club, STEM competitions and STEM camps and tours. Grant has built the program from scratch and delivers high level, challenging projects to students.*

*The GATE music faculty: For 50 years the music department has provided an exceptional learning environment for the state’s most gifted music students. This is only possible when the whole faculty works as a close knit and supportive team, in close conjunction with the incredible instrumental teachers from IMSS, giving their time freely to inspire and encourage our elite music students who have gone on to leadership positions in arts organisations across Australia.*

*All staff at Churchlands SHS consistently go above and beyond, not a weekend goes by when staff aren't on site or at home working to ensure students are delivered both with high levels of quality teaching, but also high levels of care through our pastoral care programs. Our staff deliver extracurricular programs, camps, excursions, and camps so the education goes beyond the classroom walls."*

*Neil Hunt Principal and Kate Grayson, Deputy Principal*

*Churchlands Senior High School*

I would very much love to cover all my local schools in this speech, but I am afraid time constraints prevent me from doing so. I will briefly acknowledge my remaining schools and principals: Principal Judith Tudball, St Mary's Anglican Girls' School; Principal Jacquie Cooper, Deanmore Primary School; Principal Gabrielle Doyle, Our Lady of Grace School; Principal Velma Erskine, St John's Primary School; Principal Leon Bolding, St Dominic's School; and Acting Principal Jasmin Kenworthy, Our Lady of Good Counsel School. Thank you to all the teachers at all my local schools for your service, dedication and contribution to the children of Western Australia and Scarborough.

I will finish my contribution with this quote by Nelson Mandela —

Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world.

Thank you to all teachers for making our world a better place. I commend this bill to the house.

**MR H.T. JONES (Darling Range)** [1.15 pm]: I rise to speak on the Teacher Registration Amendment Bill 2022. I am particularly interested in the bill accommodating teachers who leave the profession for a period through a choice about their occupation or perhaps a move interstate. That was a particular experience of mine as a member of the Defence Force, as we often moved interstate, sometimes every two years, and usually took our spouse with us. If a spouse is in an occupation like teaching, they have to come under a new regime and gain a new registration. Anything that will make it easier for people returning to WA to join the workforce seamlessly and have their experience recognised, allowing them to be paid and remunerated at the level of seniority they deserve is a good thing.

I am not one of the nine chalkies in the house that the member for Cockburn mentioned, nor one of the six lawyers.

**Mr D.A.E. Scaife:** I think I was wrong, member for Darling Range. I left out the member for Kalamunda.

**Mr H.T. JONES:** Yes. There are 10 chalkies and six lawyers, I think. I am obviously neither of those. My public speaking ability probably portrays that! However, I am married to a teacher. A few members are probably married to teachers or they may have sons or daughters who are teachers, and they probably bear the psychological scars like I do. I am a de facto counsellor for my wife. I am actually qualified as a counsellor. In all seriousness, teachers experience days of pressure—pressure from the workload, pressure from colleagues, just like normal workplace relationships, and also pressure from parents and the students themselves. I often hear about my wife's day at school in great detail and feel that I have some ability to talk about teachers, even though I have not been one. In the Defence Force, I was an alcohol and drug counsellor. I conducted four-day alcohol and drug awareness courses, which were very tiring and taxing. That made me appreciate what it was like to be a classroom teacher for 10 weeks at a time. I do not think I could have coped.

I also want to acknowledge the member for Roe and his wife, Andrea. He mentioned that she received the Australian Teacher of the Year award in 2011, which is an outstanding achievement amongst what would be an exceptional cohort. It is fantastic to be recognised in that way.

Teachers work hard. I was going to say that my wife leaves the house at six thirty every morning to go to school, which is only five minutes away. This morning she left at 10 past six, after making sure that I was awake. At 10 past six, she was off, and probably at school by a quarter past six. She would have been in a race to get to school to beat the cleaners, and maybe the gardeners. To those members who watch my social media, they would know that I have a little dog and I walk the dog in the morning. I often walk past our local schools. I walk past Marri Grove Primary School, Byford Secondary College and sometimes West Byford Primary School, where my wife works. I did a social media post once. I took a photograph of the carpark at about seven thirty in the morning. The car park was just about full of the staff who had arrived at the school. Unlike the perception of some people in the community, teachers do not arrive just when the bell rings and then go home when the bell rings again. They are there early in the morning preparing for school and after the school bell rings. It is a long day. I do not begrudge them the school holidays that they have to decompress and, no doubt, think about the next term ahead.

When I was walking the dog, I was also raising money for Epilepsy WA. I managed to raise almost \$3 600 just from walking the dog in the morning and also through the generous contribution of people in the community and in this house. I like to talk teachers up. I am married to a teacher, as I said, but I also recognise the great work that they do and the pressures they are under. I was not especially happy with former federal acting Minister for Education and Youth Stuart Robert when he decided to say —

... independent schools do not accept "dud teachers" sending the "bottom 10% of teachers dragging the chain" into the government system ...

That raised the hackles of a few teachers in my electorate of Darling Range. It is an atrocious comment. I am very proud of the teachers that we have in Darling Range, be they in government or independent schools. There are no duds in education.

On that theme, teachers, education assistants and principals—anyone involved in education—should be treated with respect. A parent, when interacting with the school, should be respectful—on social media as well. I have seen plenty of incidents of families taking to social media to complain about teachers, often without foundation. It just adds to the stress teachers are under. I request that people desist from that. There are 12 government schools in Darling Range and six non-government schools. They all do amazing things for our children. I did a quick headcount online, not in person, and there are 8 500 school students in Darling Range. Seventy per cent of those students are in state schools and 30 per cent are in the independent sector. All those teachers do fantastic work bringing up the next generation of Australians to be respectful and educated people, and to have every opportunity to succeed in their lives.

I read about the Grattan Institute report. I think it surveyed 2 000 teachers and school leaders. They found that there were unrealistic expectations and they were overworked. This will be no surprise to any teachers, or ex-teachers. I think again about my wife's experience. She completed her teaching degree a little bit later than some people who go straight from school. She was consumed with obtaining resources. After she finished her degree, there was a teacher retiring who had some resources. She wanted to purchase those resources. I thought, "Yes. That should be okay. How many resources could there be?" There were boxes and boxes. It was like I was moving house. Within those boxes were resources collected by that particular teacher over a whole career of teaching. Within them were things like overhead projection sheets and books that were probably redundant. We took the boxes and my wife took out what she could use. It was probably about five per cent. We were left with the stuff. I progressively managed to convince my wife that we should throw it away.

I was pleasantly surprised when Kendall Lange, principal of Serpentine Primary School, was featured in an ABC report. When he arrived at Serpentine Primary School, he identified that teachers were consumed with creating resources and planning lessons. He conducted a program in which he gradually developed some common lesson plans and resources for teachers to share. That meant that teachers could concentrate on delivery in the classroom. He said that he saw a dramatic increase in NAPLAN results from that innovation. According to the ABC, the federal Minister for Education, Jason Clare, will be talking to state education ministers in December about this sort of idea and the example he is setting for other schools. Well done to Kendall and the teachers at Serpentine Primary School.

Yesterday morning, I attended Beenyup Primary School for its loud shirt day. It had raised money for Telethon. It had two new ambassadors this year for Telethon, a young lady called Tully and a young man called Seb. They had collected \$758.75 from the school community for Telethon over the previous few days. Yesterday was their loud shirt day and they were going around again with the tin to collect some more money. I do not know how much they collected, but well done to Tully and Seb, and the school community, for supporting Telethon. I also got the chance to have a sneak preview of the new yarning circle at Beenyup Primary School. It is a beautiful area. There are six pillars denoting the six Aboriginal seasons that were painted by local Aboriginal artist Rosie Paine. It has some beautiful seating arrangements. The kids can go to that area to have lessons or relax and talk to their friends. It is a beautiful little spot away from the classroom environment where kids can have a chat. I will talk about Rosie Paine a bit later.

On the topic of yarning circles, Byford Secondary College has just about finished its yarning circle. That was a \$20 000 election commitment of mine to Byford Secondary College to develop an Aboriginal garden with native food plants and a yarning circle. That is scheduled to open on 14 November. The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs will be there with me to open that Aboriginal garden and yarning circle. Tonight Byford Secondary College will have its year 12 graduation down at the Mandurah Performing Arts Centre. I will take a cut lunch and head down there this evening. I will be presenting two awards, the Aspire to Excellence award and also an inaugural Aboriginal Student of the Year award. This was an agreement I made with the Follow the Dream team at Byford Secondary College. I asked them how I could recognise and support Aboriginal students at Byford Secondary College. The decision was to have an award for the Aboriginal student of the year that recognises their commitment to their studies, how they embrace their culture to support and inspire others and how they show strong personal values. I have invited the Follow the Dream students to lunch at Parliament House on Thursday, 24 November. They will be coming out on the sitting day for a tour, and I hope that the timing is that they will be here during question time.

On the topic of Byford Secondary College, I am also hosting a women in leadership forum on Tuesday, 8 November. The Minister for Women's Interests will be there to talk about the women's health report and a range of factors. I am going to give her about 15 to 20 minutes to talk about the overarching government response to pursuing women's interests. Rosie Paine, the Aboriginal artist I mentioned earlier, will be talking about the power of belief, her own journey growing up in country Western Australia and her progress as a teacher. She is now a deputy principal at a school in the Rockingham electorate. I cannot remember the name of the school, but it is not in my electorate. That will be good. Ellie Birch is 16 years old. I have asked her to talk about role models for young women. It will be interesting to hear what she comes up with and listen to what drives her to succeed. Ellie was the youth

parliamentarian for Darling Range this year. She also does very well academically and is captain of a football team. As a 16-year-old, she is playing seniors football. Ellie is a very impressive young lady, and I look forward to hearing from her.

I would like to thank Paul Jones. Byford Secondary College will be hosting the event with the kind permission of Paul Jones, the principal. One of my staff members, Stacey, suggested that we promote Share the Dignity, so we are asking everyone who is coming along to the free event to prepare a bag for ladies containing items such as sanitary products and toiletries that they can use when fleeing domestic violence or if they are homeless. Half the bags will go to Share the Dignity and the other half to the Uniting Church Byford Crisis Care group, which operates not very far from my office. That group provides crisis care, as the name suggests, to people not only in the local community, but also around Western Australia. The group sends packs all around the place.

[Quorum formed.]

**Mr H.T. JONES:** Before I was interrupted, I was talking about Share the Dignity and how half the bags will go to Share the Dignity and the other half to Uniting Church Byford Crisis Care. I supported that crisis group recently when I purchased 100 towels. The lead coordinator of the group, Helen Rowe, mentioned to me that the group would like 100 towels. Other organisations had provided them previously. Off I went to Kmart and bought 100 towels. However, I failed to realise that the Uniting Church was not open for about five days, so the back of my car was full of towels. I took a photograph of them anyway. That was very well received by the community and the group. Those towels will go to make up the packs that I mentioned before, predominantly for women and children fleeing domestic violence or who have found themselves out of a home. Those packs will go towards sorting them out.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr H.T. JONES:** I do not work well with interruptions or under pressure!

I was inspired by the member for Scarborough's use of quotes. Primary Principals Day was held on 5 August. I have some quotes from some local principals that I thought I would share. They highlight the attitude of principals and teachers to their roles. Mary McKay-Walton, principal of Eton Farm Primary School in Serpentine, said —

As a new Principal at a new school I have enjoyed watching the school grow physically but most importantly see how our amazing staff are enabled our students to become passionate learners. I have experienced families 'soaking up' our beautiful surrounding at Eton Farm in the Serpentine Jarrahdale Shire ...

The principal of Marri Grove Primary School, David Paine, who, incidentally, is the husband of Rosie Paine, said —

"I love working with my school community to support young people to achieve their best. Every day, I come to school and see children playing and learning with big smiles on their face—best job in the world!"

Patricia Joss, the principal of Clifton Hills Primary School, said —

"I love being a principal as I can help to shape the lives of so many people, help them achieve their dreams and work with future of our world—the children!"

Paul Hansen, the principal of Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School in the Kelmscott hills, said —

Being the principal of a Catholic Primary School is a very rewarding role. The opportunity to put programs in place to support the children and enable them to achieve to a level that reflects their potential is very rewarding.

Ashley Mottershead, the principal of Woodland Grove Primary School, said —

Being a Principal is the best job in the world. I get to see smiling children every day. I love to see children learning. I love having an influence over helping children learn.

They are just a couple of quotes from some of the principals in my electorate. Obviously, there are more schools and quotes, but I will leave them for another day. The theme is that teaching is a rewarding role. That is something that I miss when I see my wife in her role. I went to the Kelmscott Show a couple of weeks ago. Sometimes when walking around I get stopped by people who recognise me as the member for Darling Range and want to have a chat about something, but my wife was stopped twice as much as I was! Parents of her students and former students walked up to her and thanked her. I imagine that a rewarding part of the job is seeing how the kids have grown into adults and noticing the differences from when they were children as well as them remembering their teachers and the influence they had on their lives.

Finally, I would like to thank all the teachers in Darling Range for the work they do and the work they will do, particularly during term 4, which will be very busy with graduations and report writing. I thank them all and urge the people in my electorate to also thank a teacher this Friday on World Teachers' Day. I commend this bill to the house.

**MS R.S. STEPHENS (Albany)** [1.38 pm]: I rise to speak on the Teacher Registration Amendment Bill 2022. This bill is close to my heart, like it is for the many other members who have spoken. The teaching profession touches all of us in many ways. I was very fortunate to grow up in Albany, the electorate I represent, and attend Spencer Park

Primary School, which is one of the oldest schools in my community, and Albany Senior High School, where I was gifted many opportunities. Only last week, I attended my daughter's school and taught the year 4 civics class, along with the teacher. I certainly would not want to be a primary school teacher! Prior to being elected to this place, I taught cert IV business to year 12 students. Again, it was pretty eye-opening and challenging but also rewarding.

Research shows that teachers are the single most important factor in a child's learning achievements outside their family. I can really attest to that. My mum and dad separated when I was 10 years of age, so going to school was a really exciting part of my day. I got to see everyone there and those teachers became an important part of my day. I will be forever grateful to some of my teachers.

I thought I would share some of the things that I got to do while living in a regional country town. One of my teachers, Johnno, who is still a principal to this day, would take us surfing. As the recess bell went, we would all jump in our wetsuits, get on a bus and head out to Mutton Bird Beach. We would surf for as many minutes as we could before changing in the bushes and heading back to school to make sure that we were there when lessons recommenced. Those things do not happen now, but one reason I loved going to school was to experience these extra activities. I did not go to school for the academic side. I went for the socialising and the additional activities such as attending leadership camps with people like Maggie Dent and attending Country Week, which many of our country kids got to do this year after a long two years of mishaps. I was also fortunate to participate in a dance performance in the Rock Eisteddfod Challenge. We fundraised for that event and we practised for hours and hours on end before we came up to the big smoke to perform. Some of those memories still live with me and are still very much part of who I am today.

We are building a new performing arts space at Albany Senior High School. It is a \$6.5 million project that is currently under construction and will give the children who attend Albany Senior High School a place to practise and perform in the same type of facilities that other students have across our great state.

A teacher registration scheme has existed in Western Australia for around 20 years. It is paramount that the Teacher Registration Board of Western Australia works in the best interests of our children. That should always remain at the heart of what we do.

I want to speak about some other programs. I come from a vocational education and training background. I am a trainer and assessor and have taught business management and leadership over many years at TAFE. Before coming to this place, I was the regional manager of Worklink WA, a not-for-profit organisation that supports young people through many programs. I was also the manager of the Jobs and Skill Centre in the great southern with my colleague the member for Warren–Blackwood, Jane Kelsbie, who was the chief executive officer. When we were both elected, it left quite a big hole in that organisation, but it is an organisation that is still very close to my heart. We were able to provide a participation program that was funded through the Department of Education in which students who were disengaged in school were able to come to Worklink and do a certificate II in business with full wraparound support. On some days I would jump in the bus and pick up the kids from school. We would go “toot toot”, hop the kids on the bus and bring them back to Worklink where we would give them breakfast and ensure that they were supported through whatever challenges they were facing. To this day, I still see my former students, as the member for Darling Range mentioned, who come up and give me a hug or let me know what they are doing in their life and that they have purchased a house or had a child. It really is so important that we invest in our young people, whether it is through formal education at school or in some of the programs that we are delivering.

In 2022, the new \$19.2 million Year 9 Career Taster program was launched. This probably came out of some of the work that I was doing through the Jobs and Skill Centre. The careers consultants will deliver training to our young people to help them navigate the vast and complex opportunities that they now have, which is exciting. When I went to school, students either went to university or they became a school dropout. The VET sector provides so many exciting opportunities to our young people now that can be started while at school. Around half the year 9 students across the state will get a taste of the world of work and post-school opportunities through the new \$19.2 million Year 9 Career Taster program. The program will support year 9 students to become career curious and extend their thinking through practical activities and meaningful experiences within the work. The program gives schools the flexibility to design and deliver programs for their students.

I have a son in year 7 and I was fortunate last week to have the Prime Minister visit Albany. The Prime Minister asked my son what he would like to be and he said that he wanted to be an engineer. Only last week I was looking at sending him to the WA College of Agriculture in Denmark, but now we are on another trajectory to engineering.

**Mr M.J. Folkard** interjected.

**Ms R.S. STEPHENS:** The Denmark agricultural college was a really good option. The really exciting part of this VET Year 9 Career Taster program is that kids can be excited and invigorated to explore opportunities in different career pathways that they might not have thought of through the normal core subjects of maths and English.

North Albany Senior High School in my electorate is one of the schools delivering the Year 9 Career Taster program. Principal Peter Hurlle says that the school has really appreciated being involved in the program and that the staff are looking forward to building on it next year. He says that the program has provided the year 9 students with an

exciting environment, motivation and better engagement to enable them to see the end goal and other opportunities. One of my good friends has a son in year 9 who is one of those kids who does not fit the mould academically. He would probably have liked to become a builder when he was six years of age, but school is where he needs to be. I know that he has really enjoyed attending this program. The principal has said that the students have learnt about different job pathways, a range of careers and how different jobs are part of the destination to the career that they want.

A fantastic expo was held at centennial stadium in Albany a few weeks ago. It was great to see the different displays. A guy was showing students drones and all sorts of other opportunities. We now have a thriving agricultural sector in Albany with a lot of job opportunities in the pipeline. Those students were exposed to some of the key industries happening in our regions. Hopefully, we can retain some of those young people in our regions instead of having them move to the city to attend more formal education.

I spoke about Country Week. I was a sporty kid. I was fortunate enough to go to Country Week from year 9. I played basketball the first year and following on from that I played volleyball. It was not a sport that I loved, but I soon realised it was under cover and I did not have to get wet and soggy for the whole day! Everyone else wanted to watch us play volleyball, so it was quite the sport to play. When I was in year 12 at ASHS, we won the cup for Country Week, which was exciting. The opening ceremony was always a spectacular event and we would spend a week away from family to experience all the fun things. I am trying to think of some of the things we did. I think we went to one of the restaurants in Northbridge where we put peanuts on the floor. That was a highlight. I cannot think of what it was called. It is probably not there anymore.

**Mr T.J. Healy:** The Lone Star.

**Ms R.S. STEPHENS:** Yes, we went to the Lone Star.

The week was about fostering friendships with students from other schools. When students play different sports and they attend Country Week, whether it is for school or individual sporting associations, it is a really important part of what the country kids get to experience.

This year, ASHS came second to Bunbury Senior High School with 571 points to 547 points. It was a pretty close competition. Country Week was not run in winter, which was very much welcomed by some of the kids playing. Andrew McWhirter is the ASHS Country Week manager. I went to school with him, but he was a few years older than me. He has now returned to work at ASHS. When talking about Country Week, he said, “We galvanised the spirit of ASHS and the Albany community that we represent.” He said that the school is an incredibly inclusive, tolerant and accepting school, filled with passionate, committed students who possess a clear sense of community, sportsmanship and fairness. He could not have been happier with the school’s return to Country Week, and as an ASHS teacher, he could not have been prouder of the students’ conduct. As an ASHS product himself, he could not have been more impressed by the school’s culture that is strong and building. Andrew also mentioned the great work of volunteers Damien Stevens, Tully Joy, Laura Bird and Deb Guest.

I would like to acknowledge the students from North Albany Senior High School who were the Active Achiever Award winners. These students were recognised for their contribution to sport and the community. I think it is really important, when we talk about community sport, to remember that some of the young emerging sportspeople will become umpires. I see this, as a manager of my daughter’s basketball team. Most of the referees and the people giving back are young people, and some choose refereeing or coaching over playing. Those achievers were Oliver Dall, Angus Rennie, Sharni Smith and Chloe Whitfort.

I would like to talk about a few other programs happening in our schools. Outdoors Great Southern is doing an incredible job partnering with some of our schools, as Minister Buti saw when he came to Albany a few weeks ago. Albany Primary School received a small grant through the Your Move program that enabled the construction of a small mountain bike track on the school grounds. The track is tucked into an area that was dirty with debris and trees. The whole school community cleaned it up, using the small grant of \$1 500, and the area is now a thriving pump track. Not only has Outdoors Great Southern taught the community and some of the parents of that school how to build a trail; it is also training year 5 students to be ambassadors for the pump track. Minister Ellery and I visited a few months ago. Neither of us got on bikes, but the kids got on their bikes and whipped around the track. It is incredible what the program has done for the attendance of some of the young people. If they ride to school, they get points. There are breakfast clubs. Albany Primary School is close to the CBD, so, although there are footpaths, the kids have to cross quite a few roads. It has encouraged parents to ride or walk with their kids and leave their bikes at school. The fantastic sports teacher, whose name escapes me, has championed that program. The parents are there in the mornings as track volunteers so the kids can rip around the track in the morning before school starts. It is a great program.

Mountain bike skills sessions for girls have also been run. I have tried to ride on a mountain bike track or trail and I probably need a little more help! Dora from the Albany Mountain Bike Club has been incredible in giving back and enabling young girls to get out there and use those trails. During WA Bike Month, there will be a ride-to-school program and school bike party after school.

Outdoors Great Southern has also been working with some of the year 8 students from Albany Senior High School. I was talking to one of the program coordinators. These kids were on the fringe and not coming to school as much

as they should, so they were trying to find a way to engage them. I know from experience that good things happen when kids are allowed to go outdoors and get their hands in the dirt. Conversations flow. It is a great way to engage with young people. Through an Outdoors Great Southern program run by Brett Pengelly, these year 8 students have been building tracks and trails near Albany Senior High School every Friday afternoon. They are also learning skills to become volunteers and help maintain some of the trails around our region. Again, Outdoors Great Southern is a not-for-profit organisation doing some really incredible things in our community.

I would like to talk about some of the things happening at TAFE in our region. We have a \$17 million new trade workshop, which will get underway shortly. South Regional TAFE is quite an older building, and this will be a new, innovative space for training in automotive metals, engineering, building and construction. It will attract people from as far as Esperance and maybe further afield to come and train at the South Regional TAFE. With the student housing accommodation, people can come and stay while they study and attend TAFE in Albany. We will have some excellent new courses when the facility is built, which will allow us to attract more students to the region.

A few months ago, Minister Ellery and I opened the new autonomous equipment at the Albany TAFE campus. This new, state-of-the-art equipment, something I have not seen before, is part of the \$25 million McGowan government investment into new TAFE equipment. It is cutting edge. These students were doing a certificate II in autonomous workplace operations. The collaboration allows students to remain at school but come onto the TAFE campus to learn a trade. The new equipment includes drone laser cutters, 3D printers and mobile communication. Minister Ellery and I tried to tease a bit out of the students who were in the class on the day, but they were very introverted. It was great to see that some of the students also came from Mount Barker Community College.

I will leave my contribution there, other than to say thank you to all the teachers in the electorate of Albany. I look forward to attending the Albany Senior High School graduation tomorrow night. It is a school that I attended for many years, and 22 years ago I graduated as a citizen of the year. I look forward to attending the graduation tomorrow night. It is such an exciting time for the year 12s as they go on to further education or to other opportunities.

**MR P.C. TINLEY (Willagee)** [1.56 pm]: Just before we break for the normal cadence of life in the chamber, being question time this afternoon, I will start my contribution on the Teacher Registration Amendment Bill 2022 and then pick it up after question time. It is a great privilege to step up and speak about the noble profession of teaching, particularly what the government is doing to ensure that it is made more and more robust and a more and more trusted institution. No doubt all of us in this chamber have been exposed to good teachers and bad teachers. There is a classic saying, “Better than a thousand days of diligent study is one day with a great teacher.” It underscores the idea that teaching as a profession is part art and part science. Teachers need to be psychologists, social workers, caregivers, professionals and experts in many fields. It is a great and difficult profession, and not everyone is suited to it.

The proposed amendments to the Teacher Registration Act are designed to ensure that there is at least a base level of understanding and expectation about how teachers conduct themselves and attend to their profession. As they say, education is not the filling of a pot with things but the lighting of a fire of desire to learn. Creating lifelong inquisitive minds is fundamental to a civil society and such an important aspect of what teachers do. Some would say that to be a teacher is the greatest act of optimism because, with the very best of intentions for the student body, from day to day teachers can become slightly, if not utterly, disappointed and disheartened.

One of the hardest things I have ever seen is leadership from the front of the classroom. Leadership in front of a chalkboard is probably one of the more difficult leadership tasks of any profession, and I come to that view from years of experience of leadership in the military realm and the business realm. To take a bunch of malleable and developing minds and lead them through a curriculum to achieve a uniform outcome of a minimum standard is, of itself, a great trick and a great act of dedication. As I say, it is seriously optimistic.

**Mr H.T. Jones** interjected.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** Yes. In my experience, I have seen good educational outcomes come under a tree. It is not so much about the room, the whiteboard, the devices or the books as the leader at the front of the class, leading people to opportunity.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 5070.]

**EMERGENCY EVACUATION ALARM SYSTEM TESTING  
VISITORS — DOUBLEVIEW PRIMARY SCHOOL, CARRAMAR PRIMARY SCHOOL,  
DR MUDDUKIRAN, DR PRAVEEN AND DR PADMA**

*Statement by Speaker*

**THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts)** [2.00 pm]: Before calling question time, I wish to advise members that tomorrow at 2.00 pm, just before we commence question time, an alarm familiarisation will be broadcast over the public announcement system in both chambers. This will enable members to recognise different alarm sounds. Just be very clear: this will not be an evacuation; it will just be an alarm familiarisation.

I would also like to acknowledge some guests in the Speaker's gallery. On behalf of the member for Scarborough and the member for Churchlands, I welcome student leaders and staff from Doubleview Primary School to the Speaker's gallery. Also, on behalf of the member for Wanneroo, I welcome the staff and year 6 students from Carramar Primary School. On behalf the member for Riverton, I welcome Dr Muddukiran, Dr Praveen, and Dr Padma and family to my Speaker's gallery today for question time. Welcome to you all.

### QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

#### PUBLIC SECTOR — WAGES

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

I refer to the hundreds of child protection workers, school and TAFE support staff, people working in our justice system, along with police and nurses who are all waiting for a fair offer from the McGowan Labor government.

- (1) What will the Premier say to those frontline public servants who are saying that their cost of living has gone up, particularly in the livings, but their pay has gone backwards in real terms?
- (2) When can they expect a fair offer from his government?

**Mr M. McGOWAN replied:**

- (1)–(2) The offer that the Western Australian government put to the workforce is more generous than that which was put by the New South Wales government, the Victorian government, the South Australian government and the Tasmanian government in the circumstances that we face. For lower paid workers, it is \$60 per week plus an increase in superannuation, plus a \$3 000 sign-on bonus. New South Wales is offering a \$2 500 sign-on bonus only for the health workforce. We are offering it to everyone. The percentage increase in WA is higher and the price of a house in New South Wales is double what it is in Western Australia. In Victoria, the wages policy is 1.5 per cent. We are offering three per cent, plus a \$3 000 sign-on bonus, plus half a per cent in superannuation; and for lower paid workers, it will be anywhere up to a six or seven per cent increase. What we are putting to the workforce is very fair and reasonable—so much so that the Leader of the Opposition on 21 September 2022, when asked about our wages policy, said, “The offer was reasonable”.

#### PUBLIC SECTOR — WAGES

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

I have a supplementary question. If the offer that has been made is so good and reasonable, why have frontline workers rejected it and why are they planning industrial action, including coming to Parliament to share their anger and frustration?

**Mr M. McGOWAN replied:**

As I said, the Leader of the Opposition is asking a question even though she described the offer as reasonable a matter of a few weeks ago. That is what the Leader of the Opposition said. Sometimes she needs to know when not to ask about things, particularly when she is on the record as endorsing it.

The situation Western Australia is facing is that we are fortunate to be in such a strong position compared with other states and territories and the commonwealth in a world that is very uncertain. Every major indicator is now saying that there is going to be a worldwide recession. Indeed, the United States is already in recession. It is being said that economies all over the world are going to be significantly hit. We need to keep our financial firepower for when that occurs. The offer we have put is more than generous compared with what other states in Australia have made. It reflects the fact that we want to reward the workforce more, but we want to keep some capacity for what could lie ahead.

I understand that the Nationals WA and Liberal Party do not understand responsibility. They showed that last time they were in government. But we are reasonable, responsible, reliable and cautious because that is the world we are in at this time.

#### McGOWAN GOVERNMENT — ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT

**647. Ms C.M. ROWE to the Premier:**

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to maintaining a strong economy and responsible financial management. Can the Premier update the house on this government's approach to the growing risk of a global recession and outline why it is important that WA maintains a strong economic and budgetary position?

**Mr M. McGOWAN replied:**

I thank the member for Belmont for the question. The risk of a global recession is increasing. The federal budget last night indicated that. To quote the federal Treasurer —

High inflation is sapping momentum and global growth is slowing by more than expected, with some major economies stalling or contracting.

In a report released last month, the Commonwealth Bank slashed its forecast for global economic growth next year to just 1.6 per cent and forecast recessions in the United States, the United Kingdom, the Eurozone and Japan. It also indicated, as I said, that economically the world is in trouble. There are a range of reasons for that. We all know about the situation in Russia and Ukraine, the hangover from the pandemic, and the enormous expenditure that took place in most places around the world. The inflationary impact of all that is impacting on the economy.

Western Australia is a trading state, more so than any other part of Australia. We are exposed to what happens internationally and we need to be very careful about what occurs in the future. Chances are that we will receive less for our exports. Chances are, therefore, royalties will decline. That is why need to keep ourselves in a strong budgetary position. The federal Treasurer said this last night —

... our best defence against uncertainty around the world is responsible economic management ... at home.

This government will continue to deliver that, because that is what will keep us in the best position for next year and in the years ahead as all these things come to bear on our state and on the world.

Having said that, what is occurring interstate is also of great concern. We saw yesterday—it has been reported now for a while but it appears to be coming to pass—that there are massive increases in the cost of living and the cost of electricity and gas in other states of Australia. They are saying that in other states of Australia there will be an increase in electricity of somewhere in the vicinity of 50 per cent, and gas prices are expected to grow by 40 per cent in the next couple of years. For some wholesale markets, it will be by up to 100 per cent. That will have a massive impact on households around the country. The good thing is that Western Australia is in a much better position for two reasons. The first reason is that in 2006 the then Premier Alan Carpenter and his government put in place the domestic gas reservation policy that we implemented to ensure —

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order, please!

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** The good thing is that the former Labor government of Alan Carpenter put in place the domestic gas reservation policy. That policy was attacked. I recall the attacks. The Liberal Party attacked it. Do members remember Ian Macfarlane? He described it as being like a Hugo Chávez policy in Venezuela. Now, it is the envy of Australia. All the other states are asking, “Why didn’t we do that?” The WA Labor government of Alan Carpenter put it in place in 2006, and we have implemented it on projects since then. It is not easy, trust me, but we did it.

The second thing is that we have kept our electricity assets in government hands. New South Wales sold its assets all on the basis that that was the right thing do. That created chaos inside the NSW electricity market and, secondly, it blew out debt. NSW got billions of dollars for it, but its debt has climbed twentyfold since this NSW government has been in office. We did not sell our electricity assets. We managed the finances well. We have a well-managed electricity system and we are avoiding the chaos of the east. Who was it who wanted to sell off our network? It was the Liberal Party here in 2017. We all remember that. That is what it wanted to do. That might explain partly—I say only partly—its current position.

The good thing is that Western Australia is in a good position, but there are difficult days and difficult waters ahead that we will have to navigate. We are going to make sure that we keep ourselves in as good a position as we can in the lead-up to that.

#### PLANNING — MARINE PARADE, COTTESLOE

##### 648. **Dr D.J. HONEY to the Minister for Planning:**

I refer to the recent state development assessment unit approval of the proposed development at 120 Marine Parade and the proposed development announced for 122 Marine Parade in Cottesloe that are two storeys higher than the permitted height for this location and are two of the four applications that do not comply with the government-approved local planning scheme on the beachfront.

(1) Is the minister concerned that local councils —

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order, please!

A government member interjected.

**Dr D.J. HONEY:** It is for Cottesloe.

Is the minister concerned —

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** I would like to hear the question in silence, please.

**Dr D.J. HONEY:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

- (1) Is the minister concerned that local councils and their planning schemes are now being completely bypassed on major planning decisions?
- (2) Does the minister have any intentions of preventing the Cottesloe foreshore from being turned into a concrete wall that overshadows Perth's most iconic beach?

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister for Planning —

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** — and just the Minister for Planning, please.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:**

- (1)–(2) I think this question demonstrates why this Leader of the Liberal is at nine per cent, because it shows how completely out of touch he is with modern Western Australia with the idea that we would be getting involved in these types of decision; that he wants me to interfere in these types of decisions that are made through the special pathway process that was supported by the Liberal Party. I will say this about schemes: it is incumbent on councils to have schemes that are contemporary and reflect modern planning policy. There is a requirement to review every five years and update every 10 years. We continually see councils that do not review and do not update their schemes when required. In relation to this situation, does the member for Cottesloe really think that nothing should be done at Marine Parade? Does he really think that the status quo is good enough? Does he really think that people who live in apartments, which he has said before, are bad people, because that is how he starts this discussion? He starts this discussion with the view that people who live in apartments are bad people. I believe that we need to continue to support density and high-quality developments. We have a new pathway. We have a design review process that ensures good quality. I know the member opposes these types of projects.

**Dr D.J. Honey** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order, please! Member for Cottesloe, you have interjected a number of times. If you would like the opportunity of a supplementary, please let the minister conclude her answer.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** That the member for Cottesloe opposes these types of development demonstrates why he is at nine per cent. If we ask the Western Australian community, “Do you think that people should be able to live closer to the beach in high-quality developments?”, they would probably say yes. The fact that the member for Cottesloe opposes these types of developments—any developments with density in nice areas—shows how out of touch he is with the modern community.

#### PLANNING — MARINE PARADE, COTTESLOE

**649. Dr D.J. HONEY to the Minister for Planning:**

I have a supplementary question. Why is it that this government has passed legislation to protect the member for West Swan's electorate from overdevelopment but is happy to oversee a process that will destroy the amenity of Cottesloe Beach against the wishes of local residents?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:**

I think he was talking about the Swan Valley protection bill.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order, please!

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** The Swan Valley protection bill was an update to a bill that was passed in 1995. Again, that question demonstrates why the member for Cottesloe is not fit to be the Leader of the Liberal Party. The Liberal Party from 30 years ago would not recognise this Liberal Party if it fell over it. The Liberal Party in this state has traditionally been pro-development, pro-business and pro-letting people get on with it, and now we have got this—the member for Cottesloe, the Leader of the Liberal Party, controlled by the powerbrokers in the other place. Both the Leader and the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party are puppets in this house and they wonder why they cannot get more than 10 per cent. I have seen some of today's internal commentary from the Liberal Party. One thing the Liberals said is —

“Those are the worst set of poll results I've ever seen ...

That is saying something for the Liberal Party in WA, is it not? The worst poll results we have ever seen because the member for Cottesloe is not in touch with modern Western Australia and the fact that we need housing diversity and more homes. He comes in here saying “There's a housing shortage; what are you doing?” and now he wants us to go in and interfere in an independent process and try reduce the number of homes being built. That is what he is constantly doing. He says that we need more homes, but not in his area.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order, please!

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** We have a special pathway process and it takes into account a lot of factors. We have a design review process that has never existed before that goes through and makes sure that the design is strong. I think we all understand that that area has seen no development for many years and that it should be one of the best beachfronts in Western Australia. I know that when I talk to people who are residents of the area, they all want to see something happen; they want to see improvement. Like I said, the member for Cottesloe can keep going. I love this type of question, because you know what? I am so gobsmacked that he would ask it. He can keep fighting this fight and opposing new homes in Western Australia—that is his prerogative—but I welcome these types of questions because, again, if nine per cent did not demonstrate how bad the member for Cottesloe is, this question today does.

LIQUOR CONTROL AMENDMENT (PROTECTED ENTERTAINMENT PRECINCTS) BILL 2022 —  
ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

**650. Ms C.M. COLLINS to the Minister for Racing and Gaming:**

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to tackle antisocial behaviour.

- (1) Can the minister advise the house on how the amendments to the Liquor Control Act 1988 that were introduced today will help reduce violence and improve safety within some of Western Australia's most popular nightlife areas, including my electorate of Hillarys?
- (2) Can the minister also outline to the house why these laws should be supported?

**Dr A.D. BUTI replied:**

I thank the member for Hillarys for the question, her interest in this area and her support of the proposed legislation that I read into Parliament today, as she mentioned. I also thank the member for Scarborough, who I am looking at, who has also been a great supporter.

- (1)–(2) I read it into Parliament today and I had in the gallery the Raco family and the widow of Giuseppe Raco. One of the main catalysts for why we have introduced the legislation is to try to ensure our amazing entertainment precincts can be there for the majority of Western Australians who want to go to them and enjoy them. They want to enjoy these vibrant entertainment precincts. They do not want to go to these areas with the fear that they may not come home. They do not want their loved ones to work at a nightclub, as Giuseppe Raco did, and never come home. We should as a government and a Parliament enact laws that will go some way to try to make these places safer and more enjoyable to visit, work in, have a meal in or go to a nightclub in et cetera. This legislation starts off with five precincts; they are Northbridge city, Fremantle, Hillarys, Scarborough and Mandurah. They will be prescribed by regulation so they can be added to and changed as we see fit. This will settle on the precinct areas only after consultation with the Commissioner of Police, the relevant local government authorities and any other relevant stakeholders.

In regard to the precincts, we are trying to exclude people who are doing the wrong thing. Precincts are there to be enjoyed by people doing the right thing—those who want to work there and enjoy those entertainment precincts. We are enacting laws that will have two exclusion orders—a short-term exclusion order of up to six months and an extended exclusion order of up to five years. We are also introducing a mandatory exclusion for certain prescribed offences—very serious offences such as murder, manslaughter, grievous bodily harm, aggravated sexual penetration without consent and others. Once a person has served their custodial sentence, they will be excluded from those precincts for five years. We think that measure should be supported by this Parliament and the public of Western Australia. The precinct areas should be a place where people can go and work safely, recreate and enjoy the entertainment facilities free from thugs, murderers, violent offenders, rapists and drink spikers. That is the legislation that I introduced into Parliament today that I hope the Parliament will support.

NURSES — INDUSTRIAL ACTION

**651. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Health:**

I refer to the escalating industrial action by WA Health workers with the Australian Nursing Federation, which includes plans to ban both overtime and double shifts from today.

- (1) What assurance can the minister give the WA community that the minister's inability to negotiate a fair and timely wage agreement with this sector is not compromising patient safety?
- (2) Is the minister meeting with the ANF today in a bid to stop this further action?

**Ms A. SANDERSON replied:**

- (1)–(2) The premise of the question is fundamentally incorrect when the member says health unions. It is one health union, the Australian Nursing Federation, that is taking industrial action. My position remains as it was last week. This is an unnecessary escalation of industrial action. I can tell the member that the ANF and senior members of the department, including the director general, have been meeting almost every

day since Thursday last week, including on the weekend and yesterday. Absolutely, the community can be assured that the government takes this seriously, that we support nurses and that we want to reach an agreement. We have put an offer on the table that is everything that it has asked for publicly.

I implore the nurses to pause the industrial action. That has been our request at the bargaining table. It is unnecessary and, in fact, poor form to continue industrial action when there is genuine bargaining afoot. That is not the premise of good faith bargaining. It is not appropriate. There may be other reasons why the ANF is continuing industrial action, but I can tell this chamber and the community that we are working day and night and through the weekends to resolve these issues for the nurses.

#### NURSES — INDUSTRIAL ACTION

**652. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Health:**

I have a supplementary question. Why is the Minister for Health playing hardball with the very people who are propping up our hospitals in the middle of a health crisis?

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order, please!

**Ms A. SANDERSON replied:**

Depth is certainly not something that is very common on the bench over there.

The point that I just made is that we have made a good pay offer to the nurses. The thing that the Australian Nursing Federation asked for, its key claim, is and always has been ratios and the Victorian model, so we have put on the table ratios. It said it did not need a fully formed policy; it needed a principle. We put on the table a principle. It said it needed a working party. We put on the table a working party. We are working with the union day and night and over weekends.

The industrial action is unnecessary. It is unnecessary and it is poor form, because industrial action should occur only when absolutely necessary and be used sparingly. I can assure the community that the hospitals are working hard to make sure that shifts are covered and patient safety is not compromised. I know our nurses work with integrity and they work hard; they will ensure that patient care is not compromised. This is not a necessary action for them to take, because we are bargaining in good faith and we have put on the table a historic reform to our health system. I am excited about that reform. The Queensland government took two years to roll out the reform. The Victorian government took two years to roll out the reform.

**Ms L. Mettam** interjected.

**Ms A. SANDERSON:** Does the member want to hear the answer? Listen.

**Ms L. Mettam** interjected.

**Ms A. SANDERSON:** Listen. I dread to think what would happen if she were running this dispute. It would be an absolute dog's breakfast.

The thing that I am focused on —

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order, please!

**Ms S. Winton** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Wanneroo!

**Ms A. SANDERSON:** This government is focused on delivering historic reform in our health system, and that is introducing nurse-to-patient ratios and working with the ANF to do that. I want to get money in nurses' pockets before Christmas. The sooner we get this negotiation done and the deal signed, the sooner nurses get money in their pockets.

#### FROM HOSPITAL TO HOME DISABILITY SUPPORT TRANSITION PILOT PROGRAM

**653. Mr S.N. AUBREY to the Minister for Health:**

My in-depth question is to the Minister for Health. I refer to the McGowan Labor government's record investment in our health system and its commitment to address the challenges facing our hospitals. Can the minister update the house on the From Hospital to Home disability support transition pilot program and outline how this will help alleviate capacity pressures in our hospitals?

**Ms A. SANDERSON replied:**

I thank the member for Scarborough for his question. I am very happy to talk about this fantastic initiative that is fully funded by the state government.

Many times we have discussed some of the programs in place to relieve pressure on our hospitals when aged care and disability are not picking up the slack that they need to. We have explored, and continue to explore, a range of issues that create pressure in our hospitals and to ensure that people can be discharged when they are medically well. Hospitals are not the right place for people who are medically fit for discharge.

One of the initiatives was launched in February. The From Hospital to Home pilot essentially allows patients to be discharged from an acute setting into more appropriate accommodation. I was able to visit, with the federal Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme, Bill Shorten, last week, the first 12-bed facility, which was established by Hall and Prior. It is an entirely separate facility from its aged-care facilities and it is a great facility. We got to talk to the residents there. Some had been in there for a few weeks and some for only a few days. People have the ability to get out of an acute setting, whether it is an acute mental health or an acute general ward in a tertiary hospital, and into a more liveable environment where they are rehabilitated to live their lives and do the cooking, cleaning and all the things that are really, really challenging to do when they have been in a hospital for months and months on end, particularly in a mental health setting.

Just those 12 beds have saved 3 707 bed days since operating—just those 12 beds. Because it is so successful, we have just opened a second From Hospital to Home pilot, which is a six-bed facility in Coolbinia. We are exploring other options—maybe a third and fourth. It was great to invite the federal minister there and, of course, we would welcome the federal government's financial participation in this pilot, because, ultimately, this is a holding pattern for people while they are having their NDIS plan sorted out. To get through the backlog and get a plan can take months and months, so this is a more appropriate setting for those clients. They have already been approved to get a plan and whilst the plan is being established and all the supports are being put in place, they are in the From Hospital to Home setting and they transition with all those supports. All those supports go with them to their new home setting to, hopefully, keep them out of hospital and in more appropriate accommodation. It is fantastic. I spoke to one young guy who had spent seven months in Graylands Hospital and had been out for about two days about the relief that that he felt coming into this transition care, as opposed to just being discharged straight out. He will have three months to be supported to be living independently again after what has been a really significant mental health episode for him. It is a great program. We will continue to save our hospital bed hours by rolling out more of these programs.

#### GOLD CORPORATION — RISK MANAGEMENT

##### **654. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Premier:**

I refer to revelations over recent months surrounding governance failures at Gold Corporation and the Auditor General's report, *Compliance frameworks for anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing obligations*.

- (1) During the time the Premier was the minister responsible, did Gold Corporation have a risk rating against all customers?
- (2) When the GoldPass product launched, is it true that best practice risk management was not possible due to the fact there was no single view of a customer making anti-money laundering and counterterrorism financing obligations difficult?

##### **Mr M. McGOWAN replied:**

I do not have the answer to that to hand. If the member had given me notice, I might have been able to give him an answer to that question.

#### GOLD CORPORATION — RISK MANAGEMENT

##### **655. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Premier:**

I have a supplementary question, which I will ask and I will put it on notice as well. Does the Premier accept that Gold Corporation failed to file a single international funds transfer instruction report in the 2020–21 financial year, despite operating an international gold trading app and selling bullion to customers in 130 countries?

##### **Mr M. McGOWAN replied:**

Although I am the Premier, I am not the minister responsible for the agency. It was some years ago that I was.

**Dr D.J. Honey:** You were.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Thank you.

I do not have the answer to such a technical question to hand. I do not think anyone in this Parliament would think it reasonable that I do. Maybe the member could put it on notice and I might be able to give him an answer.

#### HOUSING — AVAILABILITY

##### **656. Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI to the Minister for Planning:**

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's significant efforts in delivering more housing for Western Australians and providing more housing options and housing diversity across the state.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on how the government is unlocking more land to help drive infill development, including in Subiaco?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house if she is aware of anyone who opposes giving Western Australians more housing choice?

Several members interjected.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:**

Thank you.

**The SPEAKER:** Minister for Planning, I suspect you have a lot of eager helpers here, but I am going to ask them to desist, please.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** It is a nice team. I thank the member for the question.

(1)–(2) Of course, it has been a big few weeks in Subiaco. We saw the removal of the last wall at the old Princess Margaret Hospital for Children site. The demolition works have progressed very well there. We are now moving to the civil works to prepare the land for new developments.

Today we were out at Subiaco Oval, a place of many memories for many people. Of course, it was the home of football for many years. Today we are putting on the market the first two sites around the oval, in the oval precinct. One site is over 3 300 square metres, and the other is over 1 000 square metres. It is anticipated that site 1, lot 1, will be up to 30 storeys and site 2 will be up to 11 storeys. Again, this will create more housing choice and more housing opportunities in what is a very good area. It has its own oval, it has Bob Hawke College and brilliant public transport connections—two stations within walking distance and of course a very good bus network. It is a very good location.

We will be aiming for over 2 700 dwellings and over 4 500 people to be living in that area, of course creating more vibrancy, better usage of our public transport system and supporting small business in the area. One of the key things is that when you bring density and people to areas, they support small business; they support local businesses. That is very much what will be happening in Subiaco.

Members should not be surprised but some people opposed this project. It was the member for Cottesloe.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order, please.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Remember, the member for Cottesloe does not want anyone living near schools. He opposed having any high-density developments near schools because he has this opinion about people who live in apartments. Apparently, everyone who lives in an apartment is a bad person. It was demonstrated again today. Of course, we know it is not the best day for the Leader of the Liberal Party. Not only was the first question he asked deplorable, but today a poll showed that he has only nine per cent support out there.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order, please.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** When we woke up and saw the poll result in the paper, I thought I would see what his stars said for the rest of the day. We know that he woke up to a bad poll result, but the day might change in relation to his star sign. We checked the member's stars for today. It states —

Relationships at ... work could be intense today.

Several members interjected.

#### *Point of Order*

**The SPEAKER:** I just want to remind members that points of order are heard in silence.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** This is not the first time this minister has brought astrology into this chamber. I do not think it has any relevance to the question that has been asked and I ask that she come back to answer the question properly.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order, please. Minister, you can perhaps explain the relevance.

#### *Questions without Notice Resumed*

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** The relevance is of course that there are a couple of members, one member in particular, who oppose the Subi East development, which I am referring to today. I thought I would double-check how his day is going. The next part of the member's star sign prediction states —

Expect ... colleagues to be more defensive than usual, so tread carefully.

The best stars were for the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party, whose stars said —

Strive to be at your diplomatic best. The more you dig your heels in and refuse to budge, the more frustrating the day will be.

Deputy leader, it is yours for the taking! The senior members of the Liberal Party are saying, "Take the leadership", but of course we know that both members of the Liberal Party in this house are puppets of the powerbrokers in the upper house. It does not matter who is Leader of the Liberal Party while the party is still governed by the extremist powerbrokers in the upper house. No-one can recognise this new Liberal Party. It does not look anything like the Liberal Party of the past.

## LEVEL CROSSINGS — REGIONS

**657. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Minister for Transport:**

I refer to the regional Australia level crossing safety program introduced by the former Liberal–National coalition government in its March budget, reconfirmed in yesterday’s Labor federal budget.

- (1) With federal funding secured, will the state government provide its share of funding to ensure this program delivers improved safety for regional Western Australians?
- (2) When can Western Australians expect to see the upgrades to the passive level crossings needed in their regions?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:**

- (1)–(2) I think I went through these figures last week and showed that we pretty much increased the amount we are providing for level crossing safety in regional WA by about 100 per cent from about five years ago. We have basically doubled the amount we are putting into level crossing safety, we are upgrading passive crossings to active crossings and we are improving pedestrian safety. The member for Murray–Wellington may remember that we were out in Harvey and went to the site where we are going to improve the pedestrian crossing near the town centre. We are continuing to roll out this program across the state.

Just on the *Australind*, there are 11 separate projects that are funded, with \$3 million, on top of the other projects that we are delivering in conjunction with Main Roads across regional WA. We will continue to invest more and we have invested more. I take this issue very seriously. I take regional road safety very seriously, as I take road safety seriously. Again, we are investing more than we ever have and we will continue to work with all tiers of government to improve level crossing safety across WA.

## LEVEL CROSSINGS — REGIONS

**658. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Minister for Transport:**

I have a supplementary question. Can I just confirm that as a result of the funding that was confirmed in last night’s budget, there will be no additional state government funding to match those funds to roll out this program across regional WA?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:**

No, the Leader of the Opposition cannot confirm that at all. Let me make a point about last night’s budget. Some of the funding in last night’s budget was announced in May but the previous federal coalition never appropriated any of the funding. One of our key projects as part of this budget round was that even though the previous federal government made some announcements, only this federal Labor government appropriated the funds. Many of us were unaware that of all the announcements made by the previous federal Liberal coalition government, none of it was appropriated. That is why it was important to secure this funding as part of last night’s budget, and I am happy to have secured that funding. We will work with the federal government. As I said, we will go through all the information from the federal budget. We are doing that now and we will continue to make investment decisions. This state Labor government is investing a record amount in regional road spending, in regional road safety and in regional level crossing safety.

## CLIMATE ACTION FUND

**659. Ms M.J. HAMMAT to the Minister for Climate Action:**

I refer to the McGowan Labor government’s commitment to delivering net zero carbon emissions by 2050, including through the \$1.25 billion climate action fund.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house how the carbon innovation grants program will help reduce emissions in heavy industries?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house how this will support WA in meeting its target of net zero emissions?

**Mr R.R. WHITBY replied:**

- (1)–(2) I can do that, and I am grateful for the question from the member for Mirrabooka because the member knows that this government takes the challenge of climate action seriously. The issue of climate change is real; it is accepted by this government and we are acting. As the member pointed out, I have announced the launch of a new \$15 million carbon innovation grants program, and it is part of our election commitment to spend the \$1.25 billion apportioned to our climate action fund. This grant will target emissions reductions in heavy industry, with a focus on supporting innovative carbon abatement. We know that in Western Australia we have big emitters. That is an issue we are well aware of and are confronting. The mining, manufacturing and construction sectors of Western Australia’s economy contribute almost 60 per cent of the state’s total carbon emissions. The program complements our government’s development of the sectoral emissions reduction strategies with which we are supporting businesses, industry and people right around Western Australia to reduce their emissions now to make those important commitments for 2030, as a foundation for net zero in 2050.

The carbon innovation grants program will provide funding for both feasibility studies and pilot projects to support emerging technologies, to scale fast and have a big impact. We know that this government already has a significant commitment to transition the Western Australian economy to net zero by 2050. Grant applications will be assessed against merit criteria to ensure that the projects we fund lead to significant and genuine removal or avoidance of greenhouse gas emissions within our state. We will ensure that we maximise the co-benefits across the wider economy.

We are leading by example. The government's reduction plan for its own emissions has a target of 80 per cent reduction by 2030 on our 2020 levels. This is important work; it is about demonstrating financial support and commitment to our big emitters, and encouraging them to take on new innovations and technology to reduce their emissions. This is something that is needed; it is part of a broad suite of initiatives in this area and we need to act now—in this decade—because 2020 to 2030 is crucial. We need to achieve real reductions leading up to 2030 and then onto 2050.

PUBLIC TRUSTEE — FEES

**660. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Attorney General:**

I refer to my question of 17 March this year about the damning reports on the performance of the Public Trustee, and the minister's response confirming that the appropriate body to consider this matter is the Public Accounts Committee. Given further concerns raised by the Auditor General and Public Trustee clients, has the Attorney General progressed discussions with the chair of the Public Accounts Committee about it initiating a wideranging and transparent inquiry into the Public Trustee?

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY replied:**

No. The Public Accounts Committee said, in view of the Auditor General's announced forensic audit of that office, that it would not be looking at it at this stage.

PUBLIC TRUSTEE — FEES

**661. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Attorney General:**

I have a supplementary question. The Treasury review covers only one aspect of the funding model. What hope do the many vulnerable and dissatisfied Public Trustee clients have that the Attorney General will take this matter seriously rather than pushing them to the side with this limited Department of Treasury review?

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY replied:**

The Auditor General's report did not identify any particular beneficiaries who were suffering in Western Australia by reason of maladministration. It simply did not. The Auditor General reported on the fee structure of the Public Trustee's office, which I have previously explained was a self-funding model introduced by a previous government. The Auditor General did not identify any particular beneficiary that was currently suffering by reason of the administration of that office, but drew attention to the fact that there was some unexplained fee charging that had been set by Treasury. Treasury is looking at the fee structure charged for work by the office of the Public Trustee and the Auditor General is doing the audit work.

**The SPEAKER:** Members, that concludes question time.

**TEACHER REGISTRATION AMENDMENT BILL 2022**

*Second Reading*

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

**MR P.C. TINLEY (Willagee)** [2.47 pm]: I would like to resume my remarks about the Teacher Registration Amendment Bill 2022, which is before the house. In the first few minutes of my contribution, I opened by talking ethereally about the role of a teacher, the difficulty of being a teacher, being in the profession generally, and leadership at the front of the classroom, which, in my estimation, is one of the hardest forms of leadership that a person could ever undertake, outside of political party leadership.

Just before question time, I talked about how, in my personal experience, I have seen that good educational outcomes are possible under a tree. I was fortunate to be posted in Lebanon with the United Nations in the 1990s to oversee the ceasefire arrangements between Israel and Lebanon. The sort of activity that was undertaken to support the enduring education of the people in those villages and towns of southern Lebanon was quite breathtaking. The dedication of the teachers in that environment was very significant; they literally undertook classes under the olive trees and in the olive groves of Lebanon. Many of the students who participated in those ad hoc, makeshift classrooms and lessons made their way to Australia. In fact, I ran into one not so many years ago who recounted her experiences in Qaouzah, which is a town in southern Lebanon that I used to frequent as part of my patrolling duties in the United Nations. It is possible, although, in a modern society like Australia and Western Australia, it would require regard to a range of intersecting issues and the observance of regulations whose primary role is the preservation of children's safety. When we actually examine what teachers have to undertake to meet the standards required of a teacher, it really gives light to or underscores the sort of challenges that they have to face.

I had a look at the “Professional Standards for Teachers in Western Australia” as issued by the Teacher Registration Board, and it is not insignificant. For a teacher to abide by these standards is a very high bar. There are seven standards in three domains across the whole document and no less than 37 focus areas that a teacher must meet. Teachers who undertake their formal training will cover this sort of thing and, in the natural course of delivering the ordinary school curriculum, many of these focus areas would be attended to. The professional standards are quite significant. Standard 1 is knowing students and how they learn. Speaking from experience as a father of three boys and a girl, I have found that the difference between girls and boys in the education system is that girls can achieve a good education outcome in very difficult circumstances. Without oversimplifying the gender differences, they have a better capacity to focus on the outcomes they are trying to achieve. Boys, on the other hand, have a problem. Boys do not care what teachers know; they want to know that the teachers care about them. Boys want to be liked and they need to know that the teachers actually like them. My generalised experience as a parent is that when they feel that the teachers do not like them, their educational outcomes and attention to their education is distorted.

It is interesting to know which teachers resonate with kids. Parents of school-age children who have time to chat to them and find out why their child likes a particular teacher know that invariably it comes down to one common denominator, which is the teacher’s capacity to understand and care for the child as a human. That is not covered in the professional standards alluded to, yet it is a basic human trait and the quality of good leadership. Good leaders know their team. They know what motivates them and what the intrinsic motivation is for each and every member of their team. Class size matters, and that is why it is important for teachers to have enough time, capacity and resources to spend time with the students who need it, not just the students who need the most attention, because those educational outcomes are significantly important. Knowing students and how they learn is an essential component of the foundation of being a good teacher.

The professional standards address six focus areas. They are understanding the physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students; understanding how students learn—that is a story in itself; demonstrating knowledge of students with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socio-economic backgrounds; understanding strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students; understanding how to differentiate teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities; and understanding strategies to support full participation of students with disability. That set of focus areas alone is exhausting when contemplating the breadth of different circumstances for each child.

Members who visit the schools in their electorates will see the variations in the teaching quality and potentially the product they undertake to try to mould—the students. It is hard enough when a teacher is fighting socio-economic challenges as well as the normal challenges of curriculum delivery, with or without the requisite resources. Is it any wonder that we have kids falling through the cracks? Unfortunately, that is why the education system in Western Australia, Australia and most of the developed world has reverted to a mass style of education, which is absolutely needed if we are to have an industrial-weighted effort in getting enough students through to year 10 or 12 or some form of vocational training. However, many kids in many of our electorates are square pegs that do not fit in a round hole. We need a variety of opportunities and institutions for them to undertake their education, and we have to find them where we can. For example, North Lake Senior Campus is in my electorate. That was a former general entry high school for many years but was repurposed many years ago into a year 11 and 12 retreat school, as we call it, whereby kids who do not fit into the system or have fallen out of it can achieve their Western Australian Certificate of Education or other qualification. I went to the North Lake Senior Campus graduation the night before last. It was quite an eye-opener to see the standard of kids. For many of them, English is their second language. They are either children of migrants or migrants themselves. Some of the students had separated from the school system too early and had come back. Generally, they were around 19 years old and above. The teaching style at North Lake is very interesting because it follows an adult teaching model. Everyone is on a first-name basis and the school promotes responsibility and respect. Teaching each and every one of those young adults as individuals is the prime driver of the school’s curriculum and leadership. It is a very well led and very well regarded school for giving kids a second chance at achieving educational outcomes.

At the other end of the spectrum is Port School, which is not in my electorate but is of interest to me. It is in the member for Fremantle’s electorate. That has made an outstanding contribution as a CARE school for kids who are genuinely challenged in the education system. It has achieved outstanding outcomes. The school has slowly grown over the years to now have about 120 students. When it was in my electorate, I was very happy to help it secure a public housing duplex property opposite the driveway at the entry of the school. The government decided that the duplex would be best used not as public housing but as support for the school. The school turned the premises into a creche and day care centre. Young mums who had unplanned pregnancies at a very young age could go to school and get an education. As the then local member, it was a very proud moment to achieve that outcome for the school so that those people were given that opportunity. It also enabled the school’s curriculum to extend to child care, which afforded the opportunity for young mums with unplanned pregnancies in particular to access a range of parenting expertise that they would not otherwise have had. They were given not only the freedom to undertake the education they needed, but also the opportunity to be better informed about the sorts of choices they had as a mother to raise their child.

These are the sorts of variations that a mass education system must allow for to ensure that we provide for as many of our people as possible. As everyone in this place would attest to, without fault, I would say—if I could put words in everyone’s mouth—if we could offer any one thing to any individual in our society, it would be a good education. Through that prism, education becomes a gateway to opportunities people would not otherwise have had. The mass education system did not work for me. I often met the scholars on their way home. That was the nature of my schooling life. I was in and out of the education system. When people ask me which school I went to, I tell them it was John Curtin, and when they ask me which program I did—whether it was drama, soccer or whatever—I tell them that it was not a college of the arts in those days. It was not a specialist school. It was a school you fought your way into and fought your way out of. The good days were when you remembered your mouthguard, because it was a particularly tough school in Fremantle in the 1970s. Generally, Fremantle back then was not the Fremantle we know today—the latte-sipping, chardonnay-drinking crew. There was not as much felt jewellery, let me put it that way.

**Mr M.J. Folkard** interjected.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** Exactly. There were the orange people; I remember them.

We talk about the successive generations being a bit weaker or softer. I do not know what people say about our children and their generation, but the reality is that they are far more robust in many ways. They are intellectually far more independent than I ever was and they are far less susceptible to peer pressure, although it still persists. My three boys have graduated and the oldest two are in their 20s. I asked them not long ago whether they ever saw fights at their school. They said no, apart from a few guys who had beefs with each other. I told them that there were fights every day at the school I went to. People were always squaring off against each other on the hockey field or on the way to the bus stop. That was ordinary. What a horrible, terrifying environment for certain kids. Maybe the robust kids could handle it, but it was a terrifying experience for the majority of children, and the bullying was rife. Bullying is not as rife these days, although it still needs to be attended to.

We should be grateful that the Western Australian education system is a very good system. We have Schools of the Air and the School of Isolated and Distance Education. They provide quality education. Under this legislation, we are making sure that we will attend to the changing nature of education. As we found during the COVID-19 pandemic, the nature of education has transformed to more of an online digital space. It is about providing education over distance. How many parents with the capacity have decided to make a midlife change, if you like, put the kids in the car, hook up the caravan and do a lap of the country? We now have a curriculum that can go with them and support them along the way. We also have people in the Department of Education who can help to supervise the curriculum on a learning-from-home basis. What a great opportunity to be able to take the kids around Australia and to not lose out on their educational experience, but enhance it through the delivery of an online curriculum and what goes past the car window.

The knowledge and practice aspects of the professional standards required under the Teacher Registration Board of WA are quite onerous and detailed. If a teacher who takes their job very seriously undertakes to meet the minimum standards, let alone the maximum standards, required by the TRBWA, they should be lauded. Those sorts of people in our society deserve every effort and every aspect of our respect and support. We do it for police, we talk about it for nurses and we do it for teachers.

Finally, I will give a shout-out to school leadership. I talked about leadership at the front of the classroom being fundamentally important to good education outcomes and one of the toughest assignments a person can undertake. The school leadership is very, very important. If I were to critique the management of human resources within our schools and school leadership, one of the problems is this concept of acting principals, which is a blight on this education system. They prevent and hamstring the acting principal from really imposing themselves on that school. Several schools in my electorate have for over 18 months to two years shuffled one principal across to another school on the other side of the metropolitan area as coverage. The deputy principal who is left behind in an acting principal capacity does not have the full-throated authority to undertake management changes, not because they do not have the ideas or the will to do it, but because they do not want to make organisational leadership decisions when, at any moment, the substantive principal might come back and reverse those decisions. It is very much a challenge for the Western Australian education system to ensure the continuity that is required to support the institutional leadership on a school-by-school basis.

On that note, thank you very much for the opportunity to make a contribution to the debate on the Teacher Registration Amendment Bill 2022.

**MRS R.M.J. CLARKE (Murray–Wellington)** [3.02 pm]: I rise today to speak on the Teacher Registration Amendment Bill 2022. I want to acknowledge the members of Parliament who were teachers in their previous life before being elected. What an amazing role they had prior to becoming members of Parliament. I also acknowledge all the teachers of Western Australia for the amazing job that they do. They are the trainers of our future leaders. As members can see in our chamber, quite a few teachers have become leaders.

I have some amazing schools in my electorate. I engage frequently with most of the schools in my electorate. I also encourage my schools to come up to Parliament, have lunch and do a tour. All my state schools have taken up that

offer. The Catholic and private school students in my electorate also come to Parliament as guests and do tours with the Parliamentary Education Office. Some of them actually have lunch with me. I want to talk about some of my schools.

Pinjarra Primary School is probably one of my biggest schools in the Shire of Murray. It has a fantastic Indigenous program. A whole classroom has been fitted out for Indigenous learning. They do cooking and language lessons. It has been painted inside and out with Indigenous features. It is an amazing school. I had the privilege of being on the school board during my last term in government. The school is engaging with its students and the community. As a member of Parliament, I went to my first graduation event at that school in 2017. I am really looking forward to next year's graduation at Pinjarra Senior High School—I will move onto Pinjarra Senior High School in a minute—because the students who graduated in 2017 from the primary school will be graduating from Pinjarra Senior High School next year in their brand new performing arts centre and gym. From the day I was elected as a member of Parliament, I have been trying to get this facility for this school that turned 100 years old last year. In 2020, during our COVID recovery period, I was able to make that commitment to the school, along with the Premier and the Minister for Education and Training. The work on the centre was meant to finish this year, but its opening has been delayed until February. I remember telling the students at Pinjarra Primary School at the end of 2017 that by the time they graduated from high school, I hoped they would have their own performing arts centre in which to hold their graduation ceremony. Next year, I will feel so proud to be able to stand up in front of that cohort and say, “Guess what? I promised this building to you and here you are.” That is something that I am very proud of.

I will move on to talk about Pinjarra Senior High School. I went to its large graduation event last night for many different types of students, including a set of twins. The twin sister was awarded dux and her twin brother achieved the highest marks for a VET pathway. It was almost like they were in different realms of education, but both had achieved high distinctions within their cohort. The guest speaker at the graduation night was Skipper, who is engaged to the Mayor of Mandurah, who gave such an inspiring speech. After she sat down, I congratulated her on her speech. She then told me that the guest speaker at her graduation was her now fiancé, who will be her husband next week.

A member interjected.

**Mrs R.M.J. CLARKE:** I know. There is a five-year age difference between the two of them. She said that she did not remember anything he said or that it was him giving the speech. It was not until later when she was talking to one of her friends that she discovered he was the guy who gave the speech at their graduation. It just goes to show that people can inspire others to do great things within schools.

North Dandalup Primary School also sits within the Shire of Murray. It is an environmentally friendly school that wins awards almost annually for being a waterwise, environmentally friendly school. It is a relatively small school with only 100 or so students. It works closely with Dwellingup Primary School, which, unfortunately, has fewer than 40 students now. This year, the entire year 6 cohort from North Dandalup Primary School was planning to visit Parliament and have some lunch. Dwellingup Primary School has only two year 6 students, so I suggested that they visit with the other students to be part of a larger cohort. After that visit, both schools got together and decided that the two year 6 Dwellingup kids could go with the North Dandalup year 6 cohort on its year 6 camp to make it a nicer experience for the two year 6 Dwellingup kids. The thing that I love about regional schools is that they do not see boundaries; instead of saying, “That’s our school and that’s your school. You do your own thing”, they work collaboratively together and try to make it inclusive for everyone in the region. North Dandalup and Dwellingup Primary Schools are two beautiful schools that work very closely together.

Fairbridge College is also in my electorate. It is a special school for kids who really do not engage at mainstream schools. It has a massive program that enables kids to get certificates in all sorts of areas. When they graduate, the school tries to get work placements for them. In 2019, I took in one of the young ladies. She was about 18 years old and came into my office twice a week over about three months for work experience. She had had no work experience in the past and was totally disengaged from education. From getting her certificates and doing three months of work experience in my office, she went on to gain employment. I am very proud to say that she really has her life in order now. I think Fairbridge got her back on track.

In the Shire of Waroona, I have a district high school. For the metro members who may not know, district high schools go from kindergarten to year 10, and they have graduations at year 6 and year 10. I will be going to that school's year 10 graduation in a couple of weeks. The students then decide where they want to go. They have the choice of Harvey Senior High School or Pinjarra Senior High School, or maybe a school in Mandurah. Again, it is a really lovely school. I find the year 6 graduation a bit strange because the students are not moving anywhere; they are just moving into another classroom within the school, but they still make the students feel very special about moving into the high school years.

We have some amazing schools within the Shire of Harvey, and I want to talk about Harvey Senior High School. Harvey Senior High School is not an ATAR school; it does not do any ATAR classes. A lot of the students who go there are doing certificates and vocational education and training, or they may go off and do apprenticeships. Harvey Senior High School has produced some amazing members of Parliament, who are in this house right now.

The Deputy Speaker, the member for Dawesville and the amazing member for Collie–Preston all graduated from Harvey Senior High School. I think that is amazing. The member for Collie–Preston also went to Yarloop Primary School, and the member for Dawesville went to Harvey Primary School, another great school in my electorate.

**Mrs L.A. Munday:** And Harvey kindy.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I was actually head boy of Harvey Primary School.

**Mrs R.M.J. CLARKE:** You would have come to lunch with me in my day!

These regional schools are producing some amazing people, including three members of Parliament.

**Mr D.J. Kelly:** Yes, sure—amazing people!

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** That is enough out of you, minister. I will call you for the first time.

**Mrs R.M.J. CLARKE:** I have some other schools. Kingston Primary School and Parkfield Primary School, within the Australind area, are probably the two biggest schools within my electorate. Brunswick Junction Primary School holds a very special place in my heart. It is another very small school. On the day of the Queen's condolence, when we shut Parliament down after 10 minutes of being in here, Brunswick primary was scheduled to come up here for lunch. It is really hard for Brunswick to get up here. The school had to do a whole lot of arranging to get its three year 6 students up here. I decided that I would have lunch with them, and they were able to witness the condolence motion for the Queen. They were sitting up in the Speaker's gallery, and the official photo taken of all of us standing for the minute's silence captured the three year 6 students and the principal. I have printed out those photos and will have them signed by the Premier, and I will present them to the three year 6 students. As I said to them, they have made history. Again, for a school like Brunswick, it is very special to come to Parliament. Most of the kids have not even been to Perth, let alone somewhere like Parliament.

As I said, I engage a lot with my schools. On Primary Principals Day—it actually took me two days because of the size of my electorate; I could not physically get to them all in one day—I went around to every single public school and presented the principals with a gift basket of chocolates, wine, biscuits, lollies and all sorts of things. I remember the administration staff and the deputy principals saying, “They will be shared because we all do the work.” The gift was really well received by the principals.

I have the student leaders from all my schools up here for lunches. Tomorrow I have the Waroona District High School student leaders from year 6 to year 10 coming up. I also do a lot of donations to my schools, including graduation prizes. A lot of families within my schools cannot afford to send their kids on year 6 camps, so I always make donations to help those kids get to the camps. There are sports carnivals, and every year I donate Easter baskets for the schools' Easter raffles, and for Mother's Day and Father's Day.

In 2017, I had only just been elected and I came up with the idea of delivering Easter baskets to all the schools. I had employed only one staff member at that time, and my office was not even set up. We raced out and bought all these baskets, rang the schools and asked whether I could deliver them. When I rang Yarloop Primary School, I asked for the number of students. The 2016 bushfires had struck the year before, and it was uncertain whether there would be enough students for the school to open in 2017. The school told me there were 32 people, including teachers, when I rang prior to Easter. Instead of giving one Easter basket to that school, I bought Easter eggs for every single student and teacher. I figured they had been through a pretty rough time in 2016. I went there, and there was one year 1 student. She was tiny, and I had to kneel right down to see her. She came up to me and said, “This is probably going to be the only Easter egg I get this year.” My heart broke, hearing that.

**Mrs L.A. Munday:** Did you give her all 32?

**Mrs R.M.J. CLARKE:** I wanted to! That connection with the kids makes them feel so special, and our teachers do it on a day-to-day basis.

I attend NAIDOC Week and I go to Anzac Day ceremonies at all these schools. It is the hard work of the teachers that makes these events happen. Most of my schools do not have P&Cs or parent participation. It is the teachers and the principals who do these things.

I have attended many graduations. I have been to the Austin Cove Baptist College year 12 graduation and the Australind Senior High School year 12 graduation. I went to the Pinjarra Senior High School graduation last night.

I look back on my own school years. I only went to year 10, and I will explain why. I was at school back in the 1970s, and we had careers advisers in year 7. My primary school went to year 7. When I have lunch or meet with the student leaders in my electorate, I say to them, “Have you thought about what you want to be when you leave school?” Probably 98 per cent of them have already figured out what they want to be. Then I ask the next question: “If you could be anything else in the world, other than what you think you want to be, what would it be?” Some kids pick the same job, but a lot of kids pick something that is actually very achievable but in their eyes seems like a pipedream.

I was asked the same two questions by my careers counsellor in year 7. I was 12 years old. I had really good grades and great attendance at school. I lived across the road from the school, so I could not really wag; mum and dad

would see. This gentleman was probably in his late 50s, and he said to me, “You’ve got great grades. You’re very attractive. You could probably be a hairdresser or a secretary. You’ll probably get married really young and have a lot of babies, so you’ll be a stay-at-home mum.” Understand that this was the 1970s. This was how women were treated back then.

He then asked me, if I could be anything else in the world, what it would be. Probably a lot of members know that I am a bit of a political junkie and I have followed politics my whole life. My parents were political activists, and I grew up in a house in which politics was a huge thing. I did not know any different. I turned around and said, “I would love to be a member of Parliament.” He laughed so hard that he fell off his chair. Here is this impressionable 12-year-old thinking, “Oh my gosh! He has just said I really cannot be a member of Parliament.” Then he went on to say, “You’re from a low socio-economic area. You’re female. There’s no way you’ll ever be a member of Parliament.” I remember running home in tears and telling my parents.

**Ms M.M. Quirk:** That was tactful of him, wasn’t it!

**Mrs R.M.J. CLARKE:** Yes. My father went up to the school and gave him what for. That counsellor was not a very good role model. He is probably dead now, but I would love to have found him and said, “Hey, guess what! It may have taken me 40-odd years, but I became a member of Parliament.” My take-out from that is to say to students to never give up on their dreams or career aspirations because they could get there one day. I did and I am standing here today before you all.

**Ms S.E. Winton:** Can I say something about the 1970s, because we are talking about teacher registration reform. In the 70s, if you were a female teacher and got married, you had to resign.

**Mrs R.M.J. CLARKE:** There you go.

Several members interjected.

**Mrs R.M.J. CLARKE:** That is right.

I am proud of the education I got. I went to Balga Primary School and Balga Senior High School. I tell my kids that I came from a low socio-economic area and that that should not stop them from fulfilling their life’s dreams.

I believe that it is the teachers of today who will mould our kids. When I ask student leaders who they admire the most, whether it is a sportsperson, actor, musician or someone with a house, 90 per cent of them always name a teacher. That tells me that the teachers in my electorate of Murray–Wellington are the most outstanding teachers who inspire their students to achieve big things and to achieve their dreams. I take my hat off to all teachers, because I believe that they are the trainers who will mould our future leaders. I commend this bill to the house.

**MR M.J. FOLKARD (Burns Beach)** [3.21 pm]: I have heard some magnificent contributions to the debate on the Teacher Registration Amendment Bill 2022. The number of teachers on this side of the house is inspiring.

**Ms S.E. Winton:** More than the total opposition.

**Mr M.J. FOLKARD:** There is that too. They could form a faction. Teachers are closely followed by lawyers, which I sort of—

**Mr T. Healy** interjected.

**Mr M.J. FOLKARD:** I rise not to particularise the changes in this bill, because I think that has been covered. Members have spoken at length and I will not go down the same road. In summary, though, it is good that the bill will modernise the Teacher Registration Board of WA. The provisions of the act are almost 20 years old and the changes are much needed for the board to perform its duties. My wife is registered with the board and my daughter is currently studying early childhood education at Edith Cowan University to become a teacher, and I hope that she graduates sooner rather than later. However, I will not talk anymore about that because everyone else has covered it. I am going to talk about some of the schools in my electorate and try to be brief.

We have in my electorate Burns Beach Primary School, which is absolutely fantastically led by Trudy Burke. It is the newest school in my electorate and was built as a result of a 2017 election commitment. But one thing that the school needs, because it is so new and fresh, is an education support centre. That school will have a new education support centre in the district, which is fantastic.

The next school in my electorate is Clarkson Community High School, ably led by Kristy Watson. It is a high school from year 7 to year 12 and is quite small when compared with the size of other schools in the metropolitan area. It has only about 400 students, but its strength is in its pastoral care and the way in which it looks after its kids. It has a small cohort of children, which is just a really good thing. Something people do not know about Clarkson Community High School is that it is the only school in the northern suburbs that has produced a Beazley medallist. Some other flash schools have not, but Clarkson Community High School has.

Clarkson Primary School is currently without a substantive principal because the last principal moved on to another job, but the school is well led by Sarah Chaloner. I am going there for its colour run on Friday. I will take my service dog with me to get covered in dye, I think. I shudder to think about that!

The next school in my electorate is Currambine Primary School, ably managed by Geoff Smith. At one stage that school had 18 demountable classrooms, but the number of them has significantly fallen away. When we were first elected, a couple of those demountables were so dated that they still had asbestos in them. We have managed to tidy that up and Geoff and his team are doing a fantastic job.

The next school is Francis Jordan Catholic School run by Chris Dunning. I have spoken in this place about this school before and its fantastic frog bog. It took me a while to get my head around what a frog bog is. That school has a little area in which it teaches its kids about our environment. I was very proud, as an election commitment, to make that work and it is brilliant.

The next school in my electorate is Kinross College and it is one of the last high schools that go from year 7 to year 10. It is really well led by Dale Beaton. I was told last night that Rod Buckenara who has been the long-term principal will be retiring at the end of the year. I hope to catch up with him before that happens. But Kinross College's biggest issue is its growing pains. It has about 800-odd kids and over time that number will grow, so we will have to look at that in due course.

The next school is Kinross Primary School, led by Therese Gorton. It is a school that just gets it. Nothing more needs to be said. Therese has a fantastic team there. It is close to Kinross College and there are great synergies between the schools, which is fantastic.

The next school in my electorate is a small school by the name of Mindarie Primary School, run by Principal Barbara Bromley. Barbara is a high-performing principal. I will leave it at that. The school's IT is cutting edge. Every time I go there, the school has all these software packages. When it comes to IT, the school gets it. I cannot say anything more than that.

Last night, I went to Mindarie Senior College's graduation night, where I watched some of the outstanding efforts of the kids. That school is so large that it had the graduation ceremony at the Perth Convention Centre. It has only year 11 and year 12 classes, but there are about 600-odd kids and the convention centre is the only facility where the school can hold its graduations, which I think is tragic. I was glad to learn that Jonathan Bromage, who was the acting principal, is now the substantive principal of that school. It was a great night and I thank him for the invitation.

The next school in my electorate is a private school, Peter Moyes Anglican Community School, ably led by Mr Ben Lomas. Ben is a lovely fella. I knew Peter Moyes. He was one of my principals at Christ Church Grammar School many years ago and I get a kick out of thinking that a school has been named after him.

The next school in my electorate is Quinns Beach Primary School. It is in the northern part of my electorate and run by Taylor Webb. Taylor is passionate about bringing other services into the school. Community coordination is key in that environment and I think that he is actually on the money. We need to be able to get allied health services to identify kids at a younger age with specific issues such as FASD and the like. It is a really trendsetting environment. I will watch the work that he is doing and encourage him as much as possible in the future.

John Nowicki is the principal at Quinns Rocks Primary School, which is one of the oldest schools in my electorate. It has been around for many years and its biggest issue is school maintenance. John would love to get photovoltaic panels at the school, but the problem is that the school roofs are so old that they will have to be replaced for that to happen. We will work with the minister to see how we can get that done.

Somerly Primary School is led by Zoe Hadley-Hawley and is one of the newest schools that I have in my electorate. Zoe came up through the ranks of the school. She was the deputy principal and had to deal with the COVID pandemic because the school did not have a substantive principal and she was acting in that role. I remember when she first took on the role, we had a storm in the northern corridor and three feet of water went through the school. She worked hard and organised staff and got everything cleaned. She is a good new principal and I wish her luck for every endeavour in the future.

Sam Fontaine is the principal at St Andrew's Catholic Primary School, a private school. Sam is just a good fella. I remember when I first had dealings with him, he was trying to find some funding so that he could introduce the dancing robots, a coding STEM activity, for his primary school. He dragged me down to the school one morning and, in front of his year 6 students, he said, "Come on, Mark. Come and have a look at this." He had these robots dancing across the quadrangle. It was more entertaining than seeing some of our colleagues in this place, but I will not say any more about that!

The last school is probably the one that means the most to me. Some people in this place may or may not know that I was illiterate when I left school. I probably would have been a student at Youth Futures Community School at Clarkson. I could tell members some funny stories, but time is against me. Richie Furber runs the school and deals with all the kids who fall through the cracks. He gets the kids, the battlers, the ones who have been thrown out of home and the ones who have fallen through the school education system. The work that he does is awe inspiring. I will not say the name of my young nephew, but he went through that school. He went from having no graduation certificate to having a certificate III. I sit in awe of the work that Youth Futures and other CARE schools do for the kids who are real battlers. I can assure members that had my education journey been done today, there is a fair chance that I would be in that environment. With that, I commend the bill to the house, and I thank members for their time.

**MS M.M. QUIRK (Landsdale)** [3.32 pm]: I do not intend to trespass on the chamber's time for too long with my contribution to debate on the Teacher Registration Amendment Bill 2022, but I did want to make the general observation that I am in awe of teachers. I recall a quote that I heard some time ago. It states —

You can learn many things from children. How much patience you have, for instance.

That is certainly the case. We are placing increasing demands on teachers such as a broadened curriculum, discipline issues and many distractions. Some would say that students these days have a shortened attention span, and I think it may well be that there are more distractions. Whatever it is, I assumed the relatively non-frenetic role of being a lawyer, but my mum was a teacher, and, certainly, over the years, I have had many teachers to whom I am very grateful.

This is graduation season, and we have heard from other members about year 12 students graduating. One of the absolute highlights of this job is to go along and see these young people, full of optimism, who have had great values and leadership skills inculcated in them, going out into the world, and the world is very much their oyster.

Last week, I went to two graduations. The first was at Ashdale Secondary College, and I want to congratulate Jacquie Bogunovich, who has just completed her first year as its principal. On these occasions, I usually thank three groups of people. First, I thank both the teachers and the administrative staff at the schools. They exhibit commitment above and beyond and are highly professional in how they go about their duties. Second, I thank the parents. It is very hard to get a good education unless a child has the enthusiasm, encouragement and full support of their parents, which is not always the case. That is the second group of people whom I especially acknowledge. Third, I thank the volunteers at the schools. They perform a range of roles from being on the P&C or the school board to working in the school canteen. At Ashdale Secondary College, for example, there is a STEM day for primary school students, and a lot of female mentors who work in the science, mining or research fields are enlisted for that. That is another role that volunteers take on. Those volunteers very much value-add to the school experience for those students.

The second graduation that I went to was at Kingsway Christian College, which had a small cohort. I think Ashdale had 260 year 12 students; Kingsway had around 100 year 12 students. One of the highlights of Kingsway's graduation is Principal Peter Burton's keynote address each year, which is well considered and shows a great reflection of the values that he seeks to instil in the students. I never leave one of those graduations without having felt that I have learnt something from the principal.

Those were the observations that I wanted to make about going to a graduation.

Using that very much hackneyed phrase, it takes a village to raise a child, it certainly takes many contributors to ensure that our children are educated so that they become fulfilled, happy, successful individuals. That said, I think there is a culture of blame in that during the eight hours of school time, teachers are supposed to be able to do everything that is required for that student, but some parents think that it is not their role to contribute to the other 16 hours of the day when students are not in school. I am very much saddened when I hear that parents are not participating in the education of their children or, although they might be time-poor, are not at least somehow being involved in the school. That is something that we need to encourage.

The final thing that I want to say relates to the announcement today from Loreto Nedlands Primary School. It is in the member for Nedlands' electorate, and it is the primary school that I went to. Loreto Nedlands Primary School announced today that it is closing, and there was an article in *The West Australian* about it. I drove past the school last year and remarked upon the fact that it is a pretty valuable bit of real estate. Even so, I should acknowledge that Loreto Nedlands Primary School began in 1931 and it will close at the end of 2023. The decision to close the school was made by the Province Council of Loreto Australia and South East Asia. It is the only Loreto institution in Western Australia, and the Loreto Ministries Board is very much looking to where it can assist to address disadvantage. I was fortunate when I was in Vietnam to visit a school in the south that Loreto nuns run, and I can understand that the board might feel that the work is more needed in those kinds of environments. At any rate, can I just say thank you very much, Loreto Nedlands Primary School. I only realised that this school was closing earlier today, so I am not able to cite any famous alumni. I lived across the road, so it was unfortunate that I was the kid who always had to stay behind to clean up or do other chores because the nuns knew that I did not have to catch a bus!

**MS C.M. ROWE (Belmont)** [3.39 pm]: I rise to make a contribution to the second reading debate on the Teacher Registration Amendment Bill 2022. I will start by acknowledging the work of the Minister for Education and Training in the other place. She has brought this really important bill to fruition and brought it to this house. This is a very serious and important bill, but, on a lighter note, I would like to take the opportunity, as other members have, to acknowledge the real privilege we have as members of Parliament, particularly at this time of year, in attending all the grade 6 graduation ceremonies. Last week, I attended the Belmont City College year 12 graduation. It is always such a special occasion for not only the students, but also the families. I was sitting next to the principal, and one of the teachers who had been there for, I think, 20 years, leant in and said to me, "This is a really special occasion for so many of our students because oftentimes they are the first person in their family to actually graduate from high school." It takes a village to get some of these kids through high school, so I just want to acknowledge that.

The schools in my electorate are not dissimilar to so many other schools across our great state in that they have the most tremendous and dedicated teaching staff that I have ever had the privilege of seeing in action. That is truly commendable. Teaching is absolutely a vocation; teachers dedicate their lives to the welfare of the students before them, and that is evident every time I set foot in any of my local schools. I was at Cloverdale Primary School just last week for an assembly, and then I was at Carlisle Primary School for a fun run. The teachers are thoroughly dedicated, and that is just so clear when you see the responses from the kids. They feel safe in that environment, and they are absolutely getting the best education possible.

With regard to my own education experience, I am originally from Victoria and went to a school called Braemar College. I probably was not always the easiest kid to teach, but the subjects I particularly liked were English and English literature. I had a really great English teacher who was very indulgent. She actually was not meant to be my year 12 teacher; I took it upon myself to walk into her class and sit down in the front row. She said, “Cassie, you’ve made a mistake. I’m not your year 12 English teacher.” I said, “I know, but I want you to be, so I’m not leaving.” She said, “Look, if this is your way of brown-nosing, it’s not going to work. I’m going to be even harder on you.” I said, “That’s fine. I welcome that, because you’re clearly the best English teacher in the school.” She was truly transformational, but I am absolutely devastated because, clearly, my memory is failing—I am 42!—and I cannot remember her name. But she really instilled a love of literature that persists to this day, and that was transformational.

I also had a wonderful teacher who came over to Western Australia for my wedding in 2010. We always called her “Bu”. She was my Indonesian teacher, and Rhonda Davies is her name. We called her Bu because that is the Indonesian word for mother. Although I was dreadful at Indonesian, she definitely took me under her wing and behaved how one would expect a mum to behave. She was a fantastic mentor and it was remarkable in the environment of a pretty strict school to have an adult and senior teacher talk to me like I was an adult. That was very empowering for a young woman in the 90s. She had a lasting, indelible impact.

I note also as the parent of two young school-age daughters that I have seen how transformational teachers can be in terms of their direct impact on children. I think I am very, very lucky that we have wonderful teachers at all the schools in my electorate. The teachers at Notre Dame Catholic Primary School, where my two girls go, are incredible. When my eldest daughter, Bobbie, started kindergarten, she was so shy that the teachers remarked at the end of the school year, “Bobbie has said a few words this term.” I laugh with the kindy teachers when I see them, because Bobbie now can talk under water; I do not know where she gets that from! But I think that is largely attributable to the fact that she has had wonderful teachers who have really invested in bringing her out of her shell, finding her strengths and helping her to find her way, and that is fantastic.

Before I get into the more serious elements of the bill before us, I would like to take the opportunity, in light of the fact that Friday is World Teachers’ Day, to thank all the teachers, not just in Belmont, but right across WA. They work very hard, and I would also like to acknowledge, from a parent’s point of view, that I get messages on my phone through the school system app, Seesaw. The teachers are sending messages at 7.00 am, or late in the evening, or, indeed, even on weekends. The member for Landsdale touched on the fact that there are a lot of expectations and pressures placed on teachers these days to always be available. I feel for them, because it is a very demanding job. They have to stand in front of classes often of 25 to 30 kids, all day, keep their attention, educate them and keep them engaged. That would be thoroughly exhausting. They work very hard to provide such comprehensive and engaging material for all kids across WA, so I give a huge shout-out to all the teachers in Belmont. I would like to acknowledge that we are very lucky that all our schools across WA have wonderful teachers.

I would like to highlight why we see education as being so important. It can have the potential to change the trajectory of a person’s life. That was very eloquently expressed by John F. Kennedy when he said —

Let us think of education as the means of developing our greatest abilities, because in each of us there is a private hope and dream which, fulfilled, can be translated into benefit for everyone and greater strength for our Nation. One person can make a difference, and everyone should try.

Our teachers are the embodiment of that. They try to elicit the best from our kids. I know that some members have had pretty traumatic experiences in which teachers, unfortunately, tried to squash their dreams—inadvertently, I am sure. I think these days teachers are 100 per cent there to be the champions for our kids, and, hopefully, the parents are as well. I know that in our school system, the teachers are the biggest supporters of the kids in front of them, every single day.

I turn now to the Teacher Registration Amendment Bill 2022. It is a really important piece of legislation that the Minister for Education and Training has brought to this place. There are many consequential changes being made to the Teacher Registration Act 2012, but the one I would like to highlight in my remaining 10 minutes is the strengthening of the powers of the board to respond to matters of child safety involving teachers. Before I continue, at this juncture I would like to acknowledge that the vast and overwhelming majority of teachers are truly fantastic, and that only a minuscule minority of teachers has been responsible for inappropriate behaviour when dealing with children.

The changes proposed in this bill are consistent with the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Many harrowing, traumatic and disgraceful stories were brought to light during the royal commission process and the voices of victims were finally listened to in a really meaningful way. It is really crucial for the safety of our children that we adopt the recommendations of the royal commission. It is also an important aspect of the healing process for victims of child sexual abuse. It demonstrates in no uncertain terms that we hear them, we believe them and we are committed to protecting future generations from the indecent acts victims were subjected to and the trauma that they have had to suffer as a result. Survivors of abuse are often the loudest advocates for change. They do not want anyone to go through the pain and trauma that abusers inflicted upon them.

In May this year, abuse survivor Kerri Collins gave evidence to the Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings. Her story is one that will shock any reader. It demonstrates the need for systemic change in all jurisdictions right across Australia. In the late 1980s, Kerri was abused by a teacher at her primary school when she was only seven years old. A few years later, Ms Collins disclosed the abuse to a new school counsellor, along with three other girls who were abused by the same teacher. Thankfully, the counsellor, the class teacher, family and Ms Collins's parents all believed the girls. Despite the support that the girls received, these complaints went nowhere. The principal and other teachers made it clear that they did not believe Ms Collins and the other three complainants. In addition, Ms Collins never received any indication of what happened to the complaint that she made to the police at the time. Years later, whilst she was attending university in the early 2000s, Ms Collins discovered that her abuser was still teaching. Understandably, it turned her life upside down and caused her to become depressed and suicidal as she relived the trauma she went through as a child. She made a statement to the police about the abuse, along with the other three victims, and her abuser was finally charged. A committal hearing was held and she received a summons to give evidence at the trial. Just when she thought she was going to see her abuser face justice, the rug was completely pulled out from underneath her again. Someone from the prosecutor's office called her to tell her that the trial was not going ahead. She was given absolutely no explanation of why the trial would not go ahead. She said —

“I was furious, I was upset, I was angry. I just couldn't fathom how it could go through that process and get to that point for one person to be judge, jury and decide that that's not going to go ahead. I just didn't understand that.”

I can understand that this would have completely derailed her whole life when it happened, and then to think that it was finally going to be dealt with and it was not would be absolutely re-traumatising.

Kerri made a complaint about her abuser to the Teachers Registration Board Tasmania. Her mother wrote a letter to the board and they sought legal advice from a private lawyer. Ms Collins was advised that there was nothing else she could do. After more time had passed, Ms Collins wrote to the minister, prompting a review of the registration board's complaints process. In 2018, Ms Collins was contacted by the police about her abuser. Another person had made a disclosure about the same perpetrator as part of the federal royal commission. Unfortunately, again, this case went nowhere, although Ms Collins later heard that the abuser was on suspension. Ms Collins's decision to give evidence to the commission is brave for many reasons. I cannot imagine how difficult it must have been for her to speak openly about the abuse that she suffered and the trauma that she endured as a result.

After already being let down on multiple occasions over a really extended period of time, I truly admire the determination of Ms Collins to seek justice and then advocate for changes to the system that had not supported her because she did not want to see what had happened to her happen to children. It clearly should not take 30 years and a multitude of survivors coming forward before an abusive teacher is suspended. It is quite appalling to think that complaints were made by several students but that teacher was allowed to continue interacting with children for three decades. It is also hard to process the likelihood that there were so many more victims of this one abusive teacher, and it had been allowed to occur due to the inaction of institutions after the initial complaints that were made back in the 1980s. I am just using this one example but it is not simply anecdotal. Sadly, it is one of many cases. It is not an isolated case. The royal commission shone a light on many instances of abuse. Thankfully, victims were able to come forward, share their stories and feel heard. I think that was part of them feeling like justice was done, potentially. This is why the adoption of the recommendations made by the royal commission is really vital. It will protect children and save lives. Hopefully, it will change the trajectory for other children, so they do not go through the trauma that Ms Collins went through.

Several key changes will be made to the act through this bill to assist the board deal with these disciplinary matters involving teachers. The bill provides that interim orders can be made if the board believes, on reasonable grounds, that a teacher poses a risk to students and that the suspension is necessary in order to protect students. The current requirement for interim orders is that the board must believe that the teacher poses an imminent risk. This is a very narrow requirement. That is part of the issue that has impeded the capacity of the board to suspend teachers in the past. The change means that the board will be able to suspend a teacher's registration. If they are not employed as a teacher at the time, the matter will go before the board. This will remove the possibility of the teacher avoiding suspension and subsequently attaining employment in which they could pose a risk to further students.

The purpose of this legislation is to protect abuse victims and prevent abusive teachers from having access to students. The board's capacity to suspend or cancel a teacher's registration is a powerful mechanism that can be employed to prevent an abuser from having access to potential victims.

[Member's time extended.]

**Ms C.M. ROWE:** Kerri Collins's moving testimony to the commission of inquiry into the Tasmanian government's response to the federal royal commission, as I mentioned, should be of real concern to all jurisdictions because of the time that took to see the light of day. It demonstrates how inadequate reporting and investigative processes can allow abusive teachers to maintain employment and access vulnerable children. That is quite terrifying. The teacher who abused Ms Collins continued in employment for decades. It is difficult to know how many vulnerable students they had access to over that time and potentially how many children were abused.

Governments across Australia have a very clear responsibility to act in response to the volume and severity of abuse that has been uncovered in recent times. As many victims seek justice through the courts, we must act to ensure that perpetrators are not able to continue their abuse due to inaction, neglect or gaps in legislation, which I think is one that we are able to address in our role as members of Parliament. Those levers available to us. The Teacher Registration Amendment Bill forms part of our commitment to the implementation of the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. I am proud to be speaking on this legislation as a member of a government that works really hard to protect some of our state's most vulnerable people. Instances of serious misconduct and their mishandling by relevant authorities are hugely damaging to victims. These instances also undermine the confidence of parents in their child's school, teachers and the education system more broadly. It is incumbent on government to ensure that the process of reporting and investigating serious misconduct is effective and protects the victims. Many cases came to light during the royal commission that demonstrated clearly that not enough protection mechanisms were in place. I really hope that this legislation will be an important mechanism to ensure that future abuse does not occur or go the way of Ms Collins's case, which took decades for justice to be obtained. This bill is wonderful.

**Mr T.J. Healy:** How many schools do you have?

**Ms C.M. ROWE:** I have many schools in my electorate, and I am very much looking forward to continuing to work really closely with all the schools in my electorate. The graduation season is upon us, which is an exciting time for all my schools. I cannot wait to get to all the graduations.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

## COST OF LIVING

### *Motion*

**MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party)** [4.00 pm]: I move —

That this house calls for the McGowan Labor government to address the impact of increased demand and rising costs of delivery for community organisations supporting WA families through the ongoing cost-of-living emergency.

It is extraordinary that with a government sitting on a \$6 billion surplus we have to bring a motion such as this to this house. The opposition has to raise serious concerns from our electorates and beyond about how Western Australians are struggling with the cost of living, with increased costs of water, car registrations and, importantly, the increased costs for our community service organisations that are tasked with supporting our most vulnerable. Across the electorate and the state, we are seeing an effective cut in services for community organisations that support some of the most vulnerable people in our communities. While the Premier sits on his ever-growing surplus, thanks to record iron ore royalties and the federal government GST fix, it is quite extraordinary that we have to bring a motion to this place imploring the Premier to do the right thing—to take off his rose-coloured glasses, get his head out of his budget papers and look at what is happening on the ground in the community. While he is sipping Grange with property developers in the western suburbs of Perth, many in his own electorate are struggling with basic cost-of-living expenses. While many are struggling to buy food, pay for basic utilities and services and find housing, this government is treating them with indifference. While some are forced to live in their cars or tents with their kids, this Premier stands here day after day talking about the credit rating and a budget surplus, which he has had very little control over, given the royalty windfalls and GST return, thanks to the federal GST fix. This government is so out of touch with reality that it believes a handful of free rapid antigen tests equates to cost-of-living relief. How short that falls when we hear the feedback on the ground amongst community service organisations and those who are doing it tough. We are seeing a new cohort of people who are living in very challenging circumstances, a cohort Anglicare describe as the working poor.

The situation in WA is dire and it is clear that no amount of bureaucratic sugar-coating can hide the acute pressure that many Western Australians and community organisations are facing. We have heard this government use weasel words to explain away the chronic underfunding of services that is pushing many critical support agencies, quite frankly, to the brink.

As one carer succinctly put it, according to my notes —

*When are the people who make decisions and the politicians going to realise this is a crisis? Not a 'shortfall' or 'lack of suitable options'—all those bureaucratic words—but a crisis ...*

The latest statistics from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, which were released today, highlight that WA apparently had the lowest consumer price index growth of all jurisdictions, with a 0.5 per cent fall in the last quarter; however, this is being masked by the government's household electricity credit, which saw the electricity subindex fall by 84.3 per cent. There is no doubt that we will see a very different story next quarter.

WA has had the slowest wage growth of all of the states at 2.7 per cent, and a year on year inflation rate of six per cent. We know that there is a housing crisis as much as there is a health crisis in this state. Rents have experienced the second highest annual change in the country with an 8.3 per cent increase in 12 months, compared with 2.8 per cent nationally. Average weekly rent is now \$495, which is an increase of 10 per cent from 2021 and up 39 per cent from 2017. That is for those lucky people who are able to obtain a house. WA's current vacancy rate is 1.1 per cent but in Perth it is even tighter at 0.7 per cent. There has also been a 65 per cent decline in rent listings. They are at a nearly ten-year low, with no signs of easing.

Regional WA is under extraordinary pressure. Rents have grown by 12.8 per cent over the past year to an average of \$440 in June. There will be no relief in the near future. For many this is untenable, and is resulting in a wave of people who have never had to access social services before, and a range of people who I am sure are contacting other electorate officers as well, seeking support for the very first time, particularly for housing.

Figures from the end of July show that the number of people on the public housing waitlist has increased to over 33 570 people. This is an increase of about 2 800 since September last year and 9 600 since June 2020. Of the people on the waitlist, over 8 600 are priority. That is an extraordinary figure and 2 100 applicants have been waiting for over five years to access public housing. There are no significant signs of improvement. This is an issue for not just those individuals, but also, quite clearly, the community services that provide support for these individuals. They are feeling extraordinary pressure. It raises the question again: in a state as prosperous as ours, how is it possible that 33 000 people are on the public housing waitlist? While the government talks about investment and securing tenders for housing sometime in the future, these 33 000 people are waiting, and we know that many of them are very desperate. They are more than numbers on a list. They are mothers, like one mother from my electorate, Oceania Harris. She has been a client of Accordwest dating back three years, from April 2019. She periodically reaches out to Accordwest. She has five children. She is on the Department of Communities' housing priority waitlist and she is facing an ongoing battle against the strain on her mental health, with depression and low self-esteem from her struggles. She has applied for over 40 rentals and continues to be declined, including but not limited to Tuart House's women's refuge, caravan parks and budget motels. This mother has advised that she cannot accommodate five children and, when she can, she is charged per child at some of the accommodation, which amounts to about \$900 a week. The accommodation she is seeking is often available only from Monday to Thursday, which is certainly a very desperate situation. I quote from Oceania, according to my notes —

I sleep on a double bed with five children and already suffer from chronic back complications. This is not right. Living in an overcrowded place just to have a roof over our heads.

Unfortunately, Accordwest is unable to assist because it has no transitional housing accommodation in Busselton. It has encouraged her to relocate. Quite obviously, that means she would not have the same community supports, local schooling and options available to support her children. Now Oceania has to choose between a house in another town and keeping her current job and her children at their school.

Accordwest is certainly challenged in the current circumstances in supporting these individuals. It has provided another example. A 29-year-old single mother and her two children had been renting the same property for the last five years in Busselton until the owners made the choice to sell the property. We are hearing this scenario more and more. The mother was unable to secure a new rental property. With the only viable option to move, she had to take up accommodation in another town—in Bunbury. As a result, the mother has lost her employment as an evening cleaner as it was unsafe to leave her children at home. The mother presented to Accordwest, explaining that she had a history of experiencing family and domestic violence and that one of her children had significant behavioural issues requiring specialist support. Accordwest offered the family transitional accommodation in Bunbury. Even though it resulted in the family being displaced from their local community and school, the mother accepted the accommodation, given that it was the only option. Accordwest notes the increase in the number of people having to move outside an area, outside familiar community supports and schooling options, just because of this significant pressure that we are seeing in electorates across the state, but, clearly, I am pointing to my electorate in Vasse, which is under extraordinary pressure. These were examples of just two families. It was not challenging to get this information.

It would be reasonable to expect that, given this crisis, the government expenditure on public housing maintenance and builds to try to address some of these issues would be a priority, but that is not the case. We now have the highest number of vacant social houses since 2019.

I will quote from an ABC article —

As thousands of West Australians linger on the social housing waitlist, almost 2 000 social houses across the state are empty and in need of repairs, maintenance or demolition—more than 25 per cent than last year.

State government data shows there were 1 927 social houses empty in June 2022, compared to 1 514 properties at the same time last year.

It is the highest number of vacant social houses since 2019.

That is according to an ABC article. This government's lack of urgency to address these critical social issues is matched only by the lack of housing stock. As an example in my electorate, the department of housing is managing aged stock with ongoing maintenance issues. Two properties were delivered in the last financial year and there is a site for only five dwellings planned to be delivered in the 2023–24 financial year. Meanwhile, as I have stated, 33 000 people are on the public housing waitlist and there is very little other cost-of-living relief for many people who we have heard about across the state. As stated in my opening remarks, driver's licence fees have gone up by 6.4 per cent. Car registration has gone up by 3.8 per cent under this government. Motor vehicle insurance is up by 2.4 per cent. Water charges are up by 2.5 per cent. The emergency services levy has gone up by five per cent. It has to be done, the government says, but, in return, it offers a \$400 electricity bill credit, capped public transport fares and some free rapid antigen tests. The power rebate is of little value if someone does not have a home or is living in a car or refuge. It is of little value if someone is languishing on the public housing waitlist, like 33 000 Western Australians are. As I said, the power bill rebate is also of little value when someone does not have a home. Cheap or free public transport does not help if someone is living in their car or is living in regional Western Australia.

The cost-of-living crisis is certainly spreading. It is a significant challenge and not only for those who are unemployed or receiving disability, aged-care or Centrelink payments. One of the state's largest community support agencies, Anglicare WA, has reported an alarming increase in the number of people with a job who found their pay was no longer sufficient to keep up. Many are seeking help with the basics, such as food. Anglicare referred to the working poor. CEO Mark Glasson told ABC that in June alone, there was a 30 per cent increase in the number of people who were in work but could not afford the essentials in life. I quote —

“Basically, people on the edge of our community are going to be doing without the things that are really essential to a good life,” he said.

...

“Frighteningly, we're also starting to see now a rapid increase in aged pensioners, people who have worked their whole lives, now not being able to get by because of the increased costs they're facing.”

The cost-of-living crisis comes on the back of two years of COVID-related closed borders and it is having a flow-on effect, leading to other societal issues. With the escalating pressure that many families are facing, we have also seen a significant increase in the number of cases of family and domestic violence. The *Western Australia Police Force 2021 annual report* points to a 19.3 per cent increase above the five-year average. People in regional areas are three times more likely to be exposed to family and domestic violence—a staggering increase.

What does that mean for the services provided by those vital agencies that are geared to support those people with these hardships? Simply, we are seeing that those agencies are being forced to do more with less. We are also hearing feedback from such agencies on the ground that they are effectively having to cut services or, regrettably, turn people away simply because they cannot keep up. Although demand has undoubtedly ramped up, we are consistently hearing in the feedback that these agencies are not able to keep up with that demand for services. The impact on these agencies is twofold. They are not only dealing with the same escalation in prices for the utilities, food, fuel and wages associated with the clients that they support, but also attempting to deliver services on a funding model that has not kept pace with demand. This has resulted, effectively, in a cut to services at a time when people are feeling most vulnerable. As I said, there is even the working poor. We are talking about community services agencies that are resorting to fundraising and calling for donations from the community because they cannot keep up with demand. They are looking at other options and opportunities to seek support from volunteers as well.

In its brief summary of the issue on 30 August, the Western Australian Council of Social Service stated that the rising cost of living impacts on WA's community sector in a variety of ways, including increases in the cost of delivering services, fuel, goods from suppliers and rent et cetera. Rising costs compound the challenges faced by tens of thousands of Western Australians who are already struggling to pay for the basics. WACOSS states —

... a significant gap between funding indexation and direct labour cost increases has been a consistent trend for community organisations for years in WA, as service contracts have continued to be rolled over rather than recommissioned.

Its analysis estimates that this has resulted in a gap of 12.75 per cent in the real cost of service delivery. The government will decry this figure and no doubt try to spin the numbers and the fact that there was a one-off sugar hit

in the 2019–20 funding year with the supplementation of contracts for that year. When I asked a question on this issue in this place last week, the minister accused me of hysteria and misinformation, which must be a key talking point of this government. The minister stated, “It is ridiculous”, before acknowledging that the labour price index was having an impact on the services. I quote from *Hansard* —

... we gave more emphasis to the consumer price index, as had been requested. Of course, that now presents a challenge for the sector, because in fact there were two components to the indexation—one is the CPI and one is the labour price index—and although when we came into office we were initially asked by the sector to give more emphasis to the CPI, now they want us to have more emphasis on the labour price index, because wages are going up. I understand that circumstances change ...

In her response, the minister also refers to the commissioning work that is being done with those individual and community-based family and domestic violence services that are all part of those negotiations. We certainly welcome that that work is being done, but what we are saying is that there is absolute urgency in trying to ensure that that is a priority because, as I have previously stated in this house, while the commissioning work is being done, the most vulnerable people are being turned away and living in their cars.

WACOSS CEO Louise Giolitto stated —

“Like every industry in WA, the cost of providing these services is going up. And the increase in modern awards by 4.6% is a legal requirement of community service organisations. WACOSS welcomed the increase, as real wages would have slid backwards. However, without appropriate indexation to cover those cost there is a very real risk of services being cut during a time when we are already struggling to meet increased demand.

WACOSS predicts that unless urgent funding is attained, some of those services will be forced to cut hours, if they have not already done so, which will impact both staff and clients. That prediction is already playing out in many agencies across the state.

Accordwest CEO Evan Nunn stated —

**We are contemplating reduced service centre hours and worst-case scenario, reducing hours of our incredible support workers.**

“This increase will not cover the funding shortfall and will mean we will struggle to provide a baseline level of service to meet the historically high demand that we have sustained over 2 years of the Pandemic.

The overall cost of living, with fuel, food, trades and property maintenance costs increasing, means that community housing providers are struggling. They are struggling to maintain their properties because they are locked into charging rent at 25 per cent of their tenants’ incomes while all other costs go up. Rental income does not cover maintenance, staffing or insurance, which are what Accordwest require to get by. It is absolutely essential for an agency such as that to keep rents affordable, but there is a significant gap and not-for-profits are having to foot the bill.

I have spoken in this place before about the South West Refuge. According to the refuge, it has turned away 340 women and children in the last 12 months because it does not have capacity. This agency relies on fundraising, grants and donations from community organisations to get by and to top up the government funding, just because it cannot keep up. Some of its fantastic programs run at a loss, such as the Safe at Home program, which helps women and children who experience FDV to stay in their home when it is safe to do so. It consistently looks at its services just to keep them operating.

South West Counselling had 462 new clients in the past 12 months, 49 people on the waitlist and a triage for urgent cases. The average number of days on the waitlist is 31. It says that it cannot refer anyone because most other local services or private practitioners are experiencing a three-month waitlist. It is challenged by the fact that the population has increased by about 36 per cent since 2011 and growth is expected to continue in one of the fastest growing areas of the state. Funding cannot accommodate service provision and it is not keeping pace. There has been no significant increase in funding for that organisation in the past 10 years. The only way it is able to cope is to reduce the onsite counselling that it was providing in Donnybrook, Bridgetown and Manjimup. There is no doubt that the increase in population across the region has had and will continue to have an impact on services in the coming years. Unfortunately, the Department of Communities has not increased at the required level of demand, resulting in a range of challenges. I have talked about the significant spike in family and domestic violence cases over the five-year period.

The most troubling aspect of these waitlists is when children and young people cannot be accommodated in counselling as quickly as we would like. According to South West Counselling, the request for counselling for children and young people has increased by 63 per cent in the comparable period in the previous year. That is significant.

The link between housing and mental health is well established. Poor mental health is widely recognised as both a cause and consequence of homelessness. The national Housing and Homelessness Agreement delivered by agencies

across the state enables people with mental health issues to be released from hospital into safe accommodation and not be readmitted. Agencies accepting referrals from acute psychiatric units means that beds are available for the next person to be admitted; therefore, readmissions are prevented. One such agency in my electorate that has been providing an invaluable service is Lamp, a program that receives funding from the Department of Communities and employs one person on a 0.5 FTE-basis to support the south west region. The Mental Health Commission provided funding to enable another 0.5 FTE position; therefore, funding the position as one FTE. In 2018, the Mental Health Commission removed the 0.5 FTE from Lamp's funding and the agency has consistently tried to secure the return of that funding. That is certainly something I have raised in this place. The most recent letter to the minister in September received a response from the chief of staff, not the minister, advising that my request was being considered against other priorities. That service generates savings of between \$500 000 and \$800 000 a year in preventable hospital readmissions and costs only one-tenth of that amount and, of course, supports and assists the overall mental health and wellbeing of the patient who has been released from hospital and has a home to live in.

I turn to transitional accommodation from homelessness to discharge from clinical settings. From 2020 to 2022, Lamp has seen an influx of new homeless or private rental movement escalate continuously. As a result, most clients are waiting in transitional housing for housing opportunities to become available. The minister has spoken in this place about the work she has undertaken with the Centre for Women's Safety and Wellbeing. Its director, Dr Alison Evans, spoke to ABC news some months ago. Its report states —

“The sector suffers from chronic underfunding and is always trying to catch up whenever there is increased funding ...

“Additional funding for new initiatives like the hubs doesn't ameliorate that historic and ongoing underfunding of this sector.

...

Dr Evans said she would have liked to see the government invest some of its multi-billion-dollar surplus to help services address the unmet needs around longer-term recovery for victims.

...

“It's very difficult when they have to be spending a lot of time trying to get additional grants and things to ensure they can be as responsive as possible.”

It has become increasingly difficult to retain experienced and skilled staff in the current labour market with the increased costs associated with living and that impact is deeply concerning. To quote WACOSS again —

“There is already a real shortage of skilled care staff in social services within our State, and many have left to take up better paying work in other sectors.

“Up to 80% of our industry are women. A consequence of our sector absorbing the deficit in our State Government contracts could result in a cut in hours, therefore reducing wages of essential frontline workers.

It defies belief that at a time when it is acknowledged that cost-of-living demands are having such an enormous impact across the state on our most vulnerable that we are seeing community support agencies affected in this way. It defies belief that the Premier would rather crow about his \$6 billion surplus and free RATs at a time when Western Australians are in most need. While he is sipping Grange, rubbing shoulders with property developers in the western suburbs, out in the community Western Australians are struggling with the housing crisis and with being able to put bread and milk on the table. The opposition brought this motion to the house to implore the Treasurer to consider the people he purports to represent and, importantly, the vital agencies that support them. That is why we encourage the Premier to give an ear to those agencies that are supporting our most vulnerable. To use the words that he most commonly uses himself, it would be the decent thing to do.

**MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt — Leader of the Opposition)** [4.38 pm]: I rise to support the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party's motion —

That this house calls for the McGowan Labor government to address the impact of increased demand and rising costs of delivery for community organisations supporting WA families through the ongoing cost-of-living emergency.

I note the work done by the member for Vasse and wholeheartedly agree that this government is failing to address the cost-of-living emergency that Western Australia is experiencing. There are no two ways about it. Every member in this place would have seen an increased number of people coming into their office seeking support. Certainly all the community service organisations that we have been liaising with, including the peak bodies, have said that they have seen a significant uptick in the number of people turning up on their doorstep. We will keep raising this issue in Parliament until the government admits that it is not doing enough to support individuals and households or the community organisations that support those who are experiencing financial distress, family and domestic violence, mental health distress and food insecurity.

We have just seen the *Foodbank hunger report 2022*, which was released in the last two weeks. One significant driver of food insecurity is that cost-of-living pressure that is forcing families and households to decide whether they can put food on the table, pay their bills or put petrol in their car. There is also housing insecurity. We certainly know that a significant number of people are suffering from this across the entire state.

This is an important motion. We have been raising the cost-of-living issues in the Parliament since the state budget was handed down, when we saw the remarkable surplus that has been delivered that this Treasurer; Premier is sitting on. We have \$6 billion sitting in surplus. I note that the Premier has taken to quite regularly pointing out the fact that we may well be on the cusp of a serious global financial crisis, but that does not stop the government of the day from addressing what is a real challenge right now for the many people who are unable to put a safe roof over their heads or food on the table, pay their bills and live with some dignity.

The workers in those community service organisations that we rely on to provide support and wraparound support to individuals who are suffering from distress are suffering themselves. They are suffering from all the challenges that businesses and individuals are facing. They have seen an uptick in the number of people walking through their doors, they have fewer people working for them, and they have less money to do more with. That puts people who choose to work in this sector under enormous pressure. Talking to them not only in my electorate, but also across the state, which I have done over the course of the last 12 months as I travel around, I can see that some of them are at the end of their tether. Clearly, COVID was a really challenging time for parts of that sector. A flow-on effect has come about and workers in those organisations are now under further pressure to try to provide the services that people deserve.

We simply should not have this many people falling through the cracks in a state as wealthy as Western Australia. It is not just us saying that. I raised a question with the Premier last week—in fact, I asked two—in the context of Foodbank and the hunger report, and also comments by the Western Australian Council of Social Service. Rather than acknowledge this, the Premier moved through a number of issues that said to me that the government had ticked the box on addressing cost of living and the stresses that we are seeing, and that there was really nothing more it could do. When the Premier stands and reels off a list of commitments, and compares us with New South Wales and Victoria when it comes to housing costs, which is really quite irrelevant to people living here in Western Australia trying to keep a roof over their heads, it is cold comfort for those who are trying to provide that support. Instead of deflecting, playing politics and denigrating the opposition, which we have become accustomed to, the government should spend time in question time responding to some of these real challenges in a meaningful way. I imagine that would actually give some comfort to those workers who are consistently advocating to government for better service provision and better funding so that they can do the job that they would like to do.

I do not think that the opposition has been unreasonable with the questions we have posed on support for community service organisations or the calls we have made to reduce the pressure on households by freezing fees and charges. There are a number of levers that governments can pull when we find ourselves in these situations, but it is quite clear that this government will not be doing that. Again and again, we have said that the government has the capacity—at the very least, just for 12 months—to freeze fees and charges, to reduce that pressure, and to let people get ahead of the game just a little bit, and that has been rejected by the Premier; Treasurer.

I remind the house of a quote by Louise Giolitto, who is the CEO of the Western Australian Council of Social Service. It is not a historic quote; it is from September this year. I used this quote in question time last week. She said —

“At a time when the cost of non-discretionary items like food, transport and housing are rising at an alarming rate, the state government should be using any surplus money to ease the pain for struggling households,” ...

WACOSS clearly does not think that the government is doing enough. It thinks that more can be done. In addition to this, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia does not think that the government is doing enough. I will come to this in a moment. Those two organisations are calling on the government to address the indexation and financial support to the community service organisation sector. There is more to be done. Regardless of how well the state government thinks it has responded, the feedback from the sector from those on the front line is that there is more to be done.

I hope that the government will not spend the majority of its time responding to this by harking back to the previous government. At some point, a line needs to be drawn in the sand. We are six years into this Labor government, and it is its responsibility, with the finances and set of books it has, to make sure that it is looking after the people of Western Australia now and into the future. It is time to be accountable for the decisions that have been made by this government. I think that the dynamic of threading back to our former government and the blame game with the federal government needs to change and there needs to be some accountability. We now have a Labor federal government, so I would imagine that it will be far harder for those arguments to be made or the buck to be passed across to the federal government. I ask the minister to focus on the situation at hand and at least acknowledge that the issue we are raising is legitimate and relevant, because we are raising exactly the same issue that we know WACOSS, the CCIWA and many other organisations have written to the government about and raised with the minister directly.

If we cannot see that acknowledgement, we are left with belligerence, arrogance and hubris. That is unfortunate, because many people are in pain in WA at the moment. As members can attest when they stand to speak to this motion, many of those people have been through electorate office doors.

I want to read a special bulletin from WACOSS to make sure that this is on the record. This relates to the state sustainable funding survey that it is conducting. This was circulated to members on 17 October 2022. I quote the CEO; she stated —

The current indexation is not fit for purpose and it's left service providers falling behind. A significant gap between funding indexation and direct labour cost increases has been a consistent trend for community organisations for years in WA, as service contracts have continued to be rolled over rather than recommissioned. Our analysis estimates that this has resulted in a gap of 12.75% to the real cost of service delivery.

We are seeing a rapid increase in demand for services and it is becoming harder and harder to maintain good quality services at the same level with increasing demand and in real terms, declining funding. It is also becoming increasingly difficult to retain experienced and skilled staff in the current labour market and with the increasing cost of living. Other industries can offer better salaries.

WACOSS and CEWA, along with supporting peaks, have established a survey to find evidence to support the sector's ongoing advocacy for an increase in indexation. The State Government increased indexation from 2.55% to 3.53% for 2022/23 (noting it was a one off), and while an increase is an increase, we know it's not going far enough.

WACOSS has written to its members and asked them to provide feedback through this survey, quite clearly establishing that there is a concern across the sector, and clearly asking for feedback to help it continue to mount its case to the government that more needs to be done in indexing and supporting the organisations that fall within that sector. Likewise, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia may well have entered the fray in previous years—I am not sure—but it struck me as interesting that Chris Rodwell, CEO of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia, wrote to Minister Buti, as the Minister for Finance, about indexation policy for the non-government human resources sector. The letter dated 14 September 2022 states —

On 31 August 2022, it was announced that the state government had revised the indexation rate for community service contracts from the 2022/23 financial year from 2.55% to 3.53%. While the increase is an improvement from the initial rate, it still does not go far enough to sufficiently reflect the true increase in costs for organisations in the community services sector.

We note that the formula used to determine the indexation rate was changed in 2019, reverting back to a blended rate of the Wage Price Index (WPI) and Consumer Price Index (CPI) to better reflect the cost increases in the sector.

Last week, the minister spoke about the fact that that had been in response to industry asking for that to be changed. The industry is indicating now that the formula may need to be tweaked. The letter continues —

The most recent national annual wage review saw the national minimum award wages increased by 4.6 per cent, which was significantly greater than the annual percentage increase of 2.7 per cent in Perth's WPI (as at 1 July 2022).

...

We are calling on the Government to:

- Urgently review the inputs used to determine the indexation rate to ensure that they accurately reflect the rising costs faced by community service providers.
- Increase the indexation rate for this financial year and backdate it to 1 July 2022—while the increase to 3.53% was a step in the right direction, it still does not represent the true cost of delivering services to the most vulnerable members of our community.

The ACT, New South Wales and Victoria have recognised the escalating costs faced by organisations in the community services sector and have responded accordingly by implementing indexation rates of 4.43%, 5.5% and 4.6% respectively for the current financial year. The Commonwealth Government has also recognised the importance of proper indexation of grant funding given the recent national minimum wage increase, superannuation guarantee increases and inflationary pressures.

The CCI has also written to the government, recognising that this is an important issue for the government to address, and it has clearly articulated its concerns. The industry and the sector are being asked to do more with less, and the demand for services is increasing rapidly.

Once again, I ask how this can be possible in a state as wealthy as Western Australia. How do we have a \$6 billion surplus but more and more households are unable to pay their bills, fill their cars with petrol, put food on the table

or keep a roof over their heads? At that point, you become somebody who walks across the threshold of one of these organisations that is being asked to do more with fewer staff and fewer resources. It is indeed a crisis, members, and it is not restricted to the Perth metropolitan area. We see these impacts of cost-of-living increases and pressures on regional Western Australia as well.

I would like to share with the Parliament some feedback that I have received from service providers around the state. I will start with Desert Blue Connect in Geraldton. This organisation provides men's community intervention programs, women's health programs, domestic violence programs, sexual assault support, children's services, crisis accommodation and rural in-reach to the Midlands, which is in the member for Moore's electorate.

We discussed the situation that Desert Blue Connect was facing. It said that the indexation rate was welcome—after there had been sector-wide advocacy—and its wages had gone up by 5.1 per cent, but it was now experiencing a funding shortfall. I will let the member for Moore speak more to this example, given that it is in his electorate, but Desert Blue Connect is really struggling. It is a good organisation that has worked hard to try to address some of the challenges that it sees in the region.

The second organisation I will talk about is one that the member for Vasse noted—that is, Accordwest in Bunbury. It provides similar services to Desert Blue Connect. It had a particularly difficult time during COVID. It lost a number of staff members during that time, and those who were left have suffered significant burnout. It has had limited ability to support, recruit or retain new staff at a time when it is trying to deliver more services. Accordwest has explored recruiting people from overseas, but that is an expensive business. Anyone who has been down that pathway will know that it can cost a significant amount.

[Member's time extended.]

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** Accordwest is relying on temp agencies and workers to drive in and out to service Bunbury and the surrounds, which is hardly an efficient way to do it. It is inevitable that Accordwest will cut services, and it has foreshadowed that as part of its preparations for its annual report, which will be out shortly. Cutting services will be to the detriment of the community and the state government because I suspect more people will present to government departments, our health system and the housing department. It should not get to that point.

The other organisation I want to speak about is Share and Care Community Services Group in Northam, which I have previously spoken about in this house. Again, Share and Care provides a suite of services that is very similar to Accordwest and Desert Blue Connect. It is a not-for-profit community organisation and has serviced the wheatbelt for a number of decades. Carol Jones-Lummiss has been there for nearly 22 years, so she speaks with a great deal of authority and experience. In her words: "I have never seen that this bad." In relation to the indexation of funding, Share and Care is doing its very best to stretch the funding, but it is never adequate and it is inevitable that services will have to be reduced. Carol's reflection on the demand side of the equation, as Share and Care tries to do more with funding that does not cover what it needs to deliver, is that there has been a rise in seniors coming in for food, which she said has been heartbreaking for her staff. Also, an increasing number of people are coming through the door needing financial counselling for mortgage stress. Carol said that within the area they service, which is a large part of the wheatbelt, a growing number of people are living in cars, under bridges and even on school verandas. The lack of housing, particularly in this area, is at crisis levels. I have to say they were regular visitors out to Merredin. I am not sure that they do that as regularly as they used to any longer and that is a challenge because they have had to concentrate their services where they can deliver them in Northam and surrounds.

Carol also reflected on a program that had been run some years ago. As I said, she has been in the sector for 22 years, so she has a memory of the things that have worked. She said that there was a homemaker program that Share and Care started that was taken on by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. It was about making every dollar count. When people are in financial distress, how do they make that food go a little bit further? How do they manage their household budget? How can we put supports around people so they become self-sufficient? How do we prevent people from getting to a crisis point? Carol has consistently maintained that this program should be funded and supported through organisations like Share and Care or Desert Blue Connect. Essentially, she is saying that we should be trying to stop clients falling off the cliff instead of providing emergency crisis support or an ambulance at the bottom. I do not think that that is an unreasonable request.

In Albany, my office spoke to somebody at the Albany Community Foundation. There are a number of these foundations around the state. It is an independent not-for-profit organisation that draws together different community organisations and collaborates with local service providers to try to find gaps and make sure that funding is available. Just last week, the Albany Community Foundation hosted a joint meeting with four of the leading service providers in Albany: Anglicare, Pivot Support Services, Albany Youth Support Association and Palmerston Association. It posed the question: how can they address the current cost-of-living crisis? This is an independent organisation saying, "How do we do this because we know that you are all under pressure?" Anecdotally, from that meeting, all four organisations agreed that there had been a significant uptick in stress, leading to an increased demand for their services. Essentially, we now have the Albany Community Foundation looking to fill a gap to provide support to these organisations to deliver more with less, and it is going to create its own crisis response fund. That is commendable and exceptional, but this is a volunteer organisation that is run on donations and managing investments.

I contrast that with a government that has a \$6 billion surplus. I think there is a failing here, when we see so many of these organisations saying exactly the same thing but not getting a response from government to try to ease the pressure.

With the remaining time I have left, I want to go through some of the case studies that have been provided to me by Share and Care. These case studies demonstrate just how complex the issues have become for these organisations to deal with. That complexity inevitably requires more staff time and more resources. It is very challenging when these types of cases are walking through the door and there is not the ability to provide them with the support they need.

I turn to the first case study, and of course there are no names. It states —

**Client Profile:** The client is a single woman living alone and receiving Jobseeker Payment from Services Australia, this is her sole income.

**Presenting Financial Situation:** The client is living in a private rental leased through the owner not a real estate agent she is paying \$250 per week rent, she was receiving rent assistance towards this, her landlord now needs to sell the property to pay his own mortgage due to losing his employment. The landlord has given the client 3 months to vacate.

**Financial Counsellor Assistance:** A comprehensive budget was completed, she was referred to our Housing Support program for assistance to apply for a Department of Housing property, the waiting list is approximately 7 years with nothing available in the Wheatbelt. If she does find a property through a real estate agent they can only take 25% of their income which would mean she would need to find a rental for \$100 per week. The client is actively looking for a property privately but to no avail.

**Client Outcome:** The client and her dog will be homeless as of February 2023.

I refer now to the wheatbelt Safe at Home program, and a further case study. It states —

This 60-year-old female client was referred to the Wheatbelt Safe at Home (SAH) program by WAPOL due to family violence inflicted upon her by her adult grandson. SAH staff supported this female with a family violence restraining order (FVRO) application followed by court support where she was granted an Interim FVRO.

...

SAH staff developed a safety plan, increase her home security, and linked her into to psychological and financial counselling.

The client disclosed how she was struggling to purchase basic food items, and that before the increased living costs she was able to manage because of her meticulous budgeting.

The client wept as she explained that after she has paid her utility bills, she has insufficient money to purchase food and regularly goes without meals to ensure her household bills and medical costs are covered.

SAH staff arranged for S&C emergency relief and arranged transport from her friend to access the weekly 'Soup Kitchen' at Joseph's church, in addition access free breakfast at the local park.

The Wheatbelt Safe at Home program continues to assist this client to remain free from family violence and to access weekly food parcels from charities and social services.

Foodbank tells us regularly that these are people who would not ordinarily find themselves walking across the threshold of a community service organisation, but they have found, because they simply cannot make ends meet, that they are now reliant on these organisations to help them navigate and provide support. This goes back to the complexity of this issue, and the fact that there just is not enough money going to these organisations to enable them to support women like this. I have been provided with about seven other case studies, just to demonstrate how complex some of these issues are and what some of the issues are that they are dealing with. I read the summary report that was put together by a group of organisations that operate in this sector, including Mercy Care, Jacaranda Community Centre, Anglicare, Centrecare, WACOSS, Ruah and Wanslea. I think Lotterywest was also involved in the creation of the report. This report essentially goes through interviews with 100 families to talk about the cycle that they find themselves in and how it becomes almost impossible to get out of it if they do not have a number of key factors.

There are multiple and compounding adverse life events that generally mean that it is impossible and they cannot do it without the support of an organisation. The recommendations from this report go back to how important it is to make it as easy as possible for people to access support when they need it and to invest in prevention and early support so that entrenched disadvantage does not become unrecoverable for these individuals. I encourage members who have not read it to read it. It is a significant piece of work, but it goes back to the case that we are bringing to Parliament today. If we do not resource these organisations to provide that support, more and more families will find themselves in situations that are unrecoverable. That cannot be a good outcome for our society, our state government,

our community at large and, especially, the individuals affected. I hope the minister is looking at the budget and the surplus and is having conversations with the Treasurer about how we can better support a sector that is so very important to looking after the most vulnerable in our community. Without them, I fear there will be many, many more people getting to the point at which they are in an irrecoverable situation, and we should not face that situation in a state like Western Australia, with the immense wealth we have at our fingertips.

**DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe — Leader of the Liberal Party)** [5.06 pm]: I rise to support this important motion moved by the member for Vasse. I want to contribute to the justifiable criticism of this Labor government's failure to respond in a meaningful way to the significant surge in cost-of-living pressures faced by Western Australians, and, I might say, given the themes of the previous two speakers, the impact on local services.

History shows that there has always been modest inflation and that people can manage it. That has certainly been true over the last few years, during which inflation has been extremely low. We also know that there are always households that simply struggle and battle to get from pay packet to pay packet. As was pointed out by both previous speakers, there are all too many people in the community who, in fact, do not have a household, either owned or rented.

This year has been quite exceptional in comparison with the past number of years. We are experiencing a surge of inflation that has been brought on by a number of factors, but there have certainly been some economic shocks. It is the biggest surge in inflation in more than 30 years. The initial rise of inflation stemmed from the impact of COVID in terms of impact on the cost of production of goods and the restriction of the supply of goods and farm produce around the world. The supply chain has continued to see rapidly rising price impacts. Then, of course, we have had the global shock around energy prices, and fuel prices in Western Australia, which I will go into in some detail. There have been some significant rises in household costs. The intrinsic price rises are there because of government, not the impact of any sort of global supply issues. The war in Ukraine has also had an impact.

The combination of those economic factors has really sent economic shockwaves into our community and it has sent inflation rising to the highest rate in more than 30 years. We would probably have to go back to the energy crisis in the 1970s to see a period when prices were rising more sharply. Those pressures from the increasing cost of food, manufactured goods, business imports and transport have been exacerbated by the price rises applied by this government. They are also compounded by price rises in rents and mortgages. I will go on to talk a bit about that because in this state, they come back to the feet of this government as well.

The result of all those factors has been a stellar rise in inflation. I have a chart here going back to 2019. It is stellar; members can see it on this graph. We were sitting at around a one per cent inflation rate, or even below, for a significant time. The latest figures have us sitting at an inflation rate of around seven and a half per cent, or a little bit more. That means that in this state the cost for households is rising at seven times what it has over the past few years. That has caused major difficulties for households. I want to go into a little bit of detail about some of those impacts because I think that sometimes in this place there is a tendency to hear figures and say, "Yes, so what? These are just things that happen." I suspect that although most members of Parliament see those price rises, they are not in the category of people who are in desperate straits.

If we look at housing rates, we see that they were sitting at around four per cent. Of course, those rates went down dramatically the next year. Then what did we see? A massive uptick in mortgage rates in Australia and, as a consequence, in Western Australia. Those mortgage rates have veritably leapt up. According to the Reserve Bank, the mortgage rate averaged 3.1 per cent in March; now it is almost four and a half per cent. That is the minimum rate we face for most houses. That is roughly a 50 per cent increase in mortgage payments for homebuyers. A 1.4 per cent rate, or higher in some cases, means an extra \$7 000 per annum, or some \$140 a week in interest payments on a \$500 000 loan. For any organisation that has a property, a mortgage and loans associated with it, those costs are considerable—\$7 000. Just for an ordinary family, with what is, in fact, below the average mortgage for households in Western Australia, that means \$140 a week. That comes out of someone's budget.

Members in this place will know that mortgage stress is a measure used by banks. Mortgage stress is when a household is spending more than 30 per cent of its income on servicing the mortgage for a house. A household that is sitting on a high level of income has had a 15 per cent increase, on top of the other household inflation figures, so, as we can imagine, that is quite considerable. I will talk a little bit about mortgage stress in terms of the Premier's comparisons with other states. A reasonably contemporaneous article by Miriam Fisher on PerthNow on 4 August referred to mortgage stress in Western Australia. This article went through the RBA figures and referred to the Otivo mortgage stress report. It pointed out that at present, over a quarter of Western Australian homes are facing mortgage stress. That is 250 000 households in Western Australia; given the normal multiplier, that is 500 000 people are being affected by mortgage stress. That is an enormous impact on those households.

I find it fascinating that the Premier talks about this issue in the context of other states. This was outlined by the Leader of the Opposition. To be frank, it does not matter what is happening in New South Wales or Victoria. That has no relevance whatsoever to the 500 000 Western Australians who are worried about whether they can keep their house. They are prioritising what bills they do not pay; they are prioritising the things that they do not buy.

As I have said in this place before, they are not idle choices. Parents are deciding whether they will eat or the kids will eat, whether they will buy their children shoes, whether their children can participate in school events, and the like. These are everyday distressing decisions facing those families. For the Premier to come in here and say, “Don’t worry. Everything in Western Australia is okay because things might be worse in New South Wales or Victoria”, is gobsmacking, which is a poor choice of words. Nevertheless, it is something that beggars belief because we have a substantial number of people in Western Australia who are affected. This is not just people who cannot get jobs; in many cases, these are people who have jobs.

I will go through a little bit of detail about renting. People who are renting are, essentially, in the same distressing position. The median house rent now sits at \$523 a week. According to Rentwest Solutions, in 2020, it was \$420. That is a 24 and a half per cent increase, or over \$100 a week, just in the past two years. That adds to the other cost-of-living pressures. We have looked at the other impacts. As I have pointed out in this place before, rising fuel prices inevitably hurt the people who are least able to afford them. That is not only due to the fact that fuel prices use up a larger percentage of their income because, as we know, when we move further away from the CBD, at the fringes of Perth there are typically lower socio-economic areas. That means that the people who live furthest away and rely more on vehicles for transport to get to their jobs, in fact, suffer a disproportionately greater impact on the household budget. Looking at average fuel prices from June 2020 to the current day, it was around \$1.20 and maybe ranging up to \$1.30 a litre. Now we have fuel prices that really are approaching \$2 a litre. Again, that is a phenomenal increase; it is effectively a 50 per cent or more increase. For many families, that is another \$60 a week just in fuel costs. The households that are being impacted just by rent and fuel lose \$200 a week. Of course, when we look at surging food prices and the like, that impact increases again.

I know a young couple. They have just gone out and rented their first property. They tried to find a rental property. Again, the Leader of the Opposition has been through the availability of properties in a little bit of detail. One person was studying and the other was working in a typical low-paid job of around \$27 an hour. The lowest rent they could possibly get was \$420 a week. Half of that young couple’s income is going on rent. That is the only choice they have. They either do that, or find a way of bunking in with parents or other relatives or friends. They have no other choice. That is causing enormous distress for the young couple who I know. Of course, there are many other couples who are in an even more invidious position.

As I said, we are experiencing an enormous level of inflationary shock. The Premier has said that he has done everything he possibly can about that. We saw what I have described previously as a sleight of hand by the Premier in offering a \$400 rebate leading into the last federal election. We all know what it was timed for. It was timed to enhance the Labor vote in the state of Western Australia leading into the federal election. The Premier has said that the government has not put up fees and charges because it has given people a \$400 rebate, but, of course, anyone who has read the budget knows that all the underlying fees and charges are increasing; they increased this year and they will effectively increase by the same amount next year. What will that mean? It means that from July next year, households will get a double whammy. In fact, they will see five per cent-plus jumps in one year. That is why I say that the rebate was a sleight of hand. The government has an opportunity to do something about that. The \$400 rebate was in fact worth only \$300, because the underlying fees and charges have gone up, on average, by \$100.

I want to contextualise that \$300 million package with the last time the government sought to entice people to support the Labor Party by offering a rebate. As I have said, the Premier had the audacity to say that his government had done, and I quote —

... “everything we can to make life as easy as possible for West Australians in this difficult environment”.

I ask any person in this place to say that they truly believe that the Premier and his government have done everything they can to make life as easy as possible for Western Australians, because the reality is that the government could do much more.

As I said, we are facing the greatest inflationary shock in our history, but what this state does have is a \$6 billion budget surplus, which is five times greater than the \$1.2 billion budget surplus in 2020–21. Just before the election at that time, when we had a budget surplus of only \$1.2 billion, the government gave households a \$600 electricity credit and froze government charges for that period. The government put forward an \$800 million package when the surplus was estimated to be only \$1.2 billion. Now that we have a surplus of more than \$6 billion, the government has put up a \$300 million package. It appears that prior to an election, the government could contribute a large part of its surplus to try to provide some cost-of-living relief for households, but in the current period, its ability to do that has been suddenly reduced. I hark back to the Premier’s comments about what other states are doing. The other states do not enjoy the revenue stream that we enjoy in this state. That budget surplus has nothing whatsoever to do with any decision made by this government. The budget surplus is the result of two things: one is the GST fix that was put in place by the federal Liberal–National government under the excellent guidance of Hon Mathias Cormann, who, as Minister for Finance, worked on that with the Treasurer of the day, and the other, of course, is iron ore and other mineral royalties, which the government has no control over whatsoever.

[Member’s time extended.]

**Dr D.J. HONEY:** The government puffs out its chest and says that it did a great job in obtaining that surplus, but it had nothing to do with getting that surplus for the state. Western Australia is in a unique position when compared with the other states on things such as house prices. This state benefits, and will continue to benefit for some time, from not only the GST fix—it will do so for the foreseeable future if we can trust this federal Labor government—but also mineral royalties. We know that mineral prices will come down in the foreseeable future, but we will certainly enjoy royalties for key minerals in the renewables sector for some time. The government could give households one-off relief right now by freezing the massive jump in fees and charges that they will see next year. We have said that it should do that now. It is a one-off step. The government has forecast increases in the forward estimates. Households, who will be on their knees by the middle of next year, will be belted with double the increase that they otherwise would have had because underlying fees and charges have gone up. It is very clear that the government could afford to freeze those increases, and that it should do that. The government has the opportunity to do that.

Going back a little, I said that there is a problem with housing. The government likes to say that it is not its fault and that other factors have caused the problem with the unavailability of properties to buy and rent in this state. One thing that members on this side of the house said to the government once we had got through the initial stage of uncertainty about the COVID-19 pandemic was that it should not stop labour from coming into this state. We said that if the government did that, there would be ongoing economic consequences for the state once the COVID pandemic started to wane. What did the government do? For political purposes—its strong-on-COVID approach—it stopped not only what might be called frivolous travel to the state, which we completely supported because we did not want people coming here for idle reasons, but also workers from coming into the state. We are seeing the consequences of that now. Every sector, but particularly the building sector, simply could not get workers to build homes and do all that work.

I see the Minister for Homelessness on the other side of the chamber, who is intimately involved in housing. A very large percentage of the housing and construction workforce is not the highly skilled trades, but what we would call the semiskilled, or some might say unskilled, workforce. They are the people who do all the important jobs that do not actually require a formal trade certificate or a high degree of training. The government stopped those people from coming here. As an aside, it also stopped doctors and nurses from coming to this state. That was dumbfounding. We wonder why we have a shortage of doctors and nurses in our hospitals when the government stopped them from coming into the state! Everyone in the medical sector whom I spoke to at the time was apoplectic with concern about what that would mean for hospitals following the pandemic, and that has played out; we cannot get the medical professionals we need in our hospitals or to deal with all the state's health issues because this government stopped people from coming here. It took a very long time to remove that restriction. As I said, it was political posturing. We knew we could safely bring a reasonable number of people into the state, but that was not done.

The government could do a lot more than it has done. It could freeze fees and charges, including for power, water and car registration. That would be a fantastic win for Western Australians. It would mean that in the middle of next year, when none of the cost pressures will have gone away and when households will have exhausted their savings, households would not be belted with double the increase in fees and charges that they have seen this year. The government can afford to do that and we are saying that the government should do that. What will the consequences be when that happens? The consequences of people being unable to afford their rent or losing their home because they cannot afford to service their home loan—there is a high probability that house prices will experience deflation—is that they will likely end up without a home and have a significant debt hanging over their head. That means that all those people will put even more pressure on the services that the member for Vasse and the Leader of the Opposition spoke about. Those people desperately need help. They are working but cannot afford anywhere to live; some are living out of their car. We have heard a couple of worrying stories this afternoon about just how dire the situation is for a good number of people. Typically, people with serious mental health conditions or addictions and so on could not afford housing because they found it hard to maintain employment and manage their expenses. However, now we have people who are very capable of doing that and are employed who cannot afford to even provide shelter over their head. We will see more of that, and a contributor to that will be the state government increasing fees and charges next year. That will add to the pressure. As we have already heard, the service organisations themselves are struggling. Many of them are trying to provide for an increased demand but they have less capacity to do that because of the inflationary pressures eating away at their discretionary expenditure.

This government can do more about it. It is not acceptable for the Premier to say that he has done everything he can. It is not acceptable that we see the Premier intercede and come forward with something only when a state or federal election is imminent. That is precisely when the two relief packages were timed. It is readily apparent that we have a Premier who is very focused on the political circumstances, ensuring that his popularity remains high and helping his party get re-elected. He is very focused on that, but he is not as genuinely focused on the welfare of Western Australians and the struggle that many Western Australians are facing.

The Labor government has a history of massive fees and charges. In 2017 and 2018, at the start of this Labor government, electricity charges increased by 10.9 per cent and water charges by six per cent. The government thought it would do the old trick of coming in and whacking up the charges and then, as we got closer to the election, it

offered a freeze on rebates and said that it had not done so badly, even though all those underlying charges had increased. The supply charges for electricity went up by 95 per cent. The cumulative inflation over the past five years has been 9.8 per cent while at the same time the electricity supply charge went up by 95 per cent. Does an increase in fees to connect sewerage or for the electricity supply charge affect a billionaire living in a house in my electorate? No. They do not even notice it. I doubt they even have to worry themselves about paying those bills because they would employ someone to do it. It is a blip on the landscape for them. However, those fees hurt the people on a low fixed income or in uncertain part-time work the most. Increases to those fixed fees and charges, which no-one in a household can avoid, hurt the poorest people and those most in need. They are the people that the government says it represents, yet it has belted them with these massive increases, and there is literally nothing they can do about it.

We saw the really cruel exercise of the government hitting larger families by increasing a fee to supposedly discourage people from using over 500 kilolitres of water. We have gone through this in some detail. It was a massive increase. All that did was belt large families living in the eastern and northern electorates on the fringes of the city. It was clear from the data that they were hit again. Members in this place now represent the people who paid the most. Many members would know that typically they are the families who can least afford those increases. That was an attack on large families.

As I said, we saw significant increases in wastewater charges. Perhaps the member for Moore might talk about the toilet tax. Again, that was a massive hike on people trying to run small businesses but who are being taxed on every single toilet they have, whether or not a room or a building is occupied. As I have said, we have heard lame excuses from government members who have referred to the Gallop or Court eras and have said that such and such happened. That might make for good politics, a grab or excite some backbenchers who like to hear the government sticking it up—sticking it to, I should correct myself—the opposition, and say various pejorative things about us. However, it offers no solace whatsoever for the people in Western Australia who are suffering from these preventable increases in fees and charges. More particularly, it provides no solace when they hear the Premier say that he has done everything he can when it is quite clear that there is the capacity to provide relief during this period of high inflation. We have heard that inflation might come down in 12 months, but right now households in Western Australia need help. We need help to prevent more people from having to rely on services, and those services themselves are under considerable stress because of inflationary pressures and the increases in fees under this government.

**MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Deputy Leader of the Opposition)** [5.36 pm]: I would like to speak to this very important motion brought to the house by the member for Vasse —

That this house calls for the McGowan Labor government to address the impact of increased demand and rising costs of delivery from community organisations supporting WA families through the ongoing cost-of-living emergency.

I want to speak a little bit about some of the organisations that provide those services in my area and in the state more generally. I have a little bit of a different twist on some of them. The first group I will talk about is Toodyay Locals Care. I have spoken of that organisation before in this house when giving a member's statement about the work done by the locals who volunteer in their town. The group is not seeking government assistance or looking for any regular support from the Department of Communities. They are good-hearted people who are doing their best for their community. They get support from organisations like Bendigo Bank, local businesses and even their local politician, who, from time to time, helps out at its Christmas functions.

I will give members an understanding of the effects on this little organisation that has been caring for people in the community throughout the impact of COVID and now the very steep cost-of-living increases that are affecting families. Many families in Toodyay are not on very high incomes at all. One reason they go there is that, historically, the cost of housing in some of the older parts of town and the outlying areas has been relatively cheap. Sometimes they have been led there by some of the agencies because the cost of living is seen to be cheaper there. Another group is the older group of people who are on a fixed income such as a pension of some sort. They may be age pensioners and there are quite a few veterans out there as well. Over the years, many of them have been helped out by Toodyay Locals Care. Four years ago, when the group that Roz Davidson runs first started cooking to help out local people who may be infirm or unable to afford food, they provided about 10 free frozen meals a week. Now, she is providing in excess of 100 meals a week, with a steep increase in the last six months. Some people in town cannot afford the basics, such as bread and milk. They cannot afford to feed themselves. They cannot afford to put fuel in the car to get to job interviews et cetera. Roz knows of 10 or 15 people in town who are living without power and water because they simply cannot afford it. Those people take a frozen meal from Roz's freezer and they use the microwave there to heat it up. If it is a warmer day, sometimes they may take a meal and leave it on the footpath to thaw out in the sun. Some of these people do their washing at the local park and some have been seen taking a wash in the Avon River. That is the scene in a town where people are in real distress. Roz is not calling for assistance from the McGowan government—I do not think she has ever received any assistance from the McGowan government—but that is a sign of the stress that community organisations are feeling throughout the state.

The other community organisations that do a tremendous amount of work in their smaller regional communities and which we on this side of the house value greatly are the community resource centres. Toodyay Community

Resource Centre is a case in point. It was on the brink of closure about four to six weeks ago. It was only because the local shire took on its debts and made sure that it had a governance structure in place that it was able to reopen its doors, this time in a building provided by the shire. That organisation assists the many people who come in especially to use the Centrelink facility and access the internet because they do not have access at home. Members should try to conduct their life nowadays without access to the internet; it is not an easy thing to achieve. I am pleased to see that with the help of the shire, which stepped in to fund this centre, that organisation can continue.

Other community resource centres in the electorate are also feeling the stress, such as the Mullewa Community Resource Centre. It has also had to take on the task of providing information to visitors when they flock into town during the wildflower season and, if you like, take up a lot of the resource centre's spare capacity. The centre has to provide for these visitors, which in turn makes it difficult for it to provide for people in the town who need assistance. Again, that is another community under stress caused by a combination of rising costs, which are forcing people in the community to look for help more often, and the Western Australians who have taken to travelling around the countryside, especially during the wildflower season when they are out in their droves. While I am talking about Mullewa, I also visited the Foodbank in Geraldton. At that stage, it was having to make emergency food packages to send to people in Mullewa because they simply did not have enough food to eat and could not access the food they needed locally because the local shops do not have the capacity to provide a full range of groceries. If a person has not got a car to make the trip of more than an hour to Geraldton, it is difficult to get the food staples of life. We have seen that sort of stress playing out.

Again, in that north midlands area of the midwest, the community of Morawa is still recovering from the effects of tropical cyclone Seroja, as are other communities, including Mingenew et cetera. The member for Central Wheatbelt spoke earlier about Desert Blue Connect. That organisation does a tremendous job in providing services in the Morawa area. As the member pointed out, the funding for Desert Blue Connect, which is based roughly in the area of Geraldton, was indexed at 2.55 per cent, but then increased to 3.53 per cent. However, wages have shot up by 5.1 per cent, leading that organisation into funding peril. It is difficult for that organisation to get housing for staff and it cannot find local staff with appropriate qualifications. All these things are happening at a time when there has been a spike in mental health issues caused by the COVID pandemic, combined with people in the area still struggling to recover from cyclone Seroja. This has led to increased demand on that organisation. It has ambitions to set up and create further outreach into the member for North West Central's electorate. No doubt, she will speak about some of the issues facing people in her electorate. I will not be talking about the toilet tax on this occasion, but that has been a topic of great concern in the electorate of the member for North West Central because of the many resorts from Kalbarri to Exmouth and in between and that particular impost on the people living in that area.

At the time the state budget was announced, there was a call from the opposition—I made the call during question time in the chamber—for the Premier to consider an increase in the balance on the Country Age Pension Fuel Card, which provides vital help to people who do not have access to regular public transport. We know that the government has acted. We heard the minister talking in here about how the change to the two-zone cap for public transport has helped in the city, but that is of no assistance if a person lives in Toodyay, Mullewa, Carnarvon or some other place where it is very difficult to —

**Dr A.D. Buti** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms A.E. Kent):** Minister!

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** — take advantage of the two-zone cap.

**Dr A.D. Buti:** What about the airline fees?

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** What about the airlines? Last time I looked, they were not flying to Mullewa. I am speaking about people who do not have access air travel, besides which, going for a holiday in Perth once a year will not provide the essentials that they need to access medical care or food —

**Dr A.D. Buti:** What did you do?

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** We introduced the Country Age Pension Fuel Card and we increased its balance when it needed to be increased. What has this government done? It has left it where it was. We are lucky the government did not take it away. There was genuine concern that it would be lost, but the Premier refused in this place to—well he did not refuse. As Treasurer, he said he would consider it, but he did not increase the balance on the Country Age Pension Fuel Card. Two years ago, the price of fuel was \$1.17 per litre; now, it is \$1.81 per litre—these are FuelWatch figures. That is a 55 per cent increase in the cost of fuel during that time. What have we seen in terms of an increase in the Country Age Pension Fuel Card? Zilch; nothing! There has been no increase whatsoever. Again, in some instances, if it were not for volunteers and organisations like Foodbank sending out those food packages, I do not know what would happen.

Going back to Toodyay, I know that the local ambulance centre provides a very cost-effective transport alternative for people who need medical treatment in Northam, Midland or Perth. It can access a volunteer-supported car for a reasonable cost. The local ambulance service is a great organisation that provides that vital service in the

community. Again, it is people from the community helping themselves without a great deal of government support. When Nationals WA members speak about country people in this place, we are told we are causing a divide. In many of the communities that I represent, even some of the bigger regional centres, there is not the level of government services that members have spoken about. I listened to the member for Vasse, and I have sympathy for some of the concerns that she expressed, but the types of services she spoke about are simply absent in much of my electorate, which is characterised by many small communities, 20-plus local governments and goodness knows how many towns. When the population of a single seat is spread across that many communities, understanding that the communities are quite small, people have to help themselves as much as they can.

People who find it difficult to travel because they do not have access to public transport can use —

**Dr A.D. Buti:** You don't believe in public transport.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** I use public transport. In fact, I travelled back from Geraldton on the Transwa coach a few weeks ago. It was largely due to the fact that Qantas had once again failed to provide a service to the people of Geraldton. Although the government has stumped up some money for people to get flights from Geraldton, it is virtually impossible to take one because the airline has become completely unreliable.

I will talk a little bit about the situation for another group that provides access to transport outside the metropolitan area and in the metropolitan area for people who are not near a Transperth bus route et cetera—that is, taxis. The taxi industry has been crying out for help. It is heavily regulated. Its prices are regulated. I spoke to a group of taxidivers in September who came to a rally at Parliament House to ask for a further increase in the price that they can charge. They were allowed a pay increase of two per cent on 1 August 2022, and a further 4.5 per cent will be allowed from 1 December, but, as I have just outlined to the house, the price of fuel is raging ahead of them. If we look at some of the competing service providers such as Uber, we see that they do not have that level of regulation. I took an Uber not very long ago. When I opened my emails the next day, I saw that Uber had actually charged me more money than it said it was going to charge me because the fuel cost was greater.

**Dr A.D. Buti:** Don't use it if you don't want to.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** I have to use something. I do not have the privilege of a driver being provided to me.

**Dr A.D. Buti** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Minister! Government members will get their chance. Please continue.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Members on this side of the house do not have the same privileged access to drivers and cars as members of the frontbench. Occasionally I take public transport because it suits and it is the best way to get somewhere, and occasionally I take a taxi or an Uber, or I walk. That is not unusual, so I do not quite know why the minister is shouting across the benches about it.

Getting back to taxidivers, they have been trying to talk to the minister about their issues. For some reason, the Minister for Transport does not seem keen to talk to them directly. I know discussions have taken place with the booking services, but the group of drivers who were outside Parliament House in September have been unable to have a discussion with the minister about their concerns. I think that is disappointing because I am sure they would understand their cost structures and the pressures they are under more than the booking agents. Again, this group of people provides services to people in need. Yes, I know it might sound counterintuitive to ask for an increase in their prices, but if they cannot make a living, they will not continue doing their job. Members might have noticed that nowadays it takes a bit longer to get a taxi or an Uber, and that will only get worse if taxidivers are forced out of the industry because of the cost structures being put in place. Bear in mind, as I say, they are competing against organisations like Uber and to some extent very, very heavily subsidised public transport services. That is a group of people in an industry who really need some consideration into the future.

I understand that there are examples of community organisations under stress as they seek to provide services that often do not get assistance from the McGowan government commensurate with their need so that they can continue to provide vital services to people in need—people who do not have drivers at their beckoning or a salary no matter what their work circumstances are this week. Outside the rarefied air of this chamber and the environment we live in, people in the real world are doing it tough. We are telling government members that they should recognise that and take some measures, have a heart, and actually help the organisations that help people in our communities.

**MS S.F. McGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Community Services)** [5.56 pm]: I have so much material that it will be difficult to constrain my response to this motion this afternoon. Members opposite have raised a broad range of issues but only some of them relate to the motion before us. The best example of that is the member for Moore's digression to talk about taxis. In any case, I have enough to counter the opposition's claim that the McGowan government has failed to address the impact of increased demand and rising costs for community services organisations.

Since coming to government, we have worked very hard to work in partnership with community service organisations—I will talk about how we have done that—because there was a lot of work to do. We needed to

undertake a lot of repair work. In fact, when the member for Vasse and the Leader of the Opposition were speaking, I was reminded of when they were in government. I had to smile when the Leader of the Opposition urged us not to think about when they were in government: “Don’t think about that; it’s been a long time. It’s been five and a half years, so please don’t remember it.” It is the elephant in the room that I immediately thought of. I remember a couple of things. One is what happened to utility prices when the Leader of the Opposition was Minister for Water. They went up significantly. We heard frustration, I guess, from opposition members when they talked about what has happened to utility prices under our government. We have been responsible. There is no word other than “responsible” to describe the government’s approach to increased utility prices. The Leader of the Opposition was water minister from December 2013 to March 2017. Over those four years, water prices went up 21.7 per cent. If we compare that with our five years of government, water prices went up 7.1 per cent. Think about that, members. Water prices went up 21.7 per cent over four years when the Leader of the Opposition was water minister. Over the five years we have been in government, they have gone up 7.1 per cent. That is remarkable. When the Leader of the Opposition was water minister, the average annual increase in water charges was 5.4 per cent. Compared with that, on average, the annual increase has been 1.4 per cent under this government. It is night and day. Do not lecture us about what should happen to utility prices now that we are in government because members opposite had an opportunity to demonstrate heart and constraint.

**Mr R.S. Love:** You put them up.

**Ms S.F. McGURK:** It was nowhere near the amount the former government did. I am not going to listen to the member for Moore’s interjections.

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

**Ms S.F. McGURK:** The member for Moore had an opportunity to make a contribution to this debate, and it was embarrassing.

The other thing that is worth talking about when the Leader of the Opposition was the Minister for Water is the former Liberal–National government’s record in responding to members of the public who were experiencing hardship, because what we saw was remarkable. In fact, it is best captured by a headline in *The West Australian* of May 2016, which uses large font and reads “Water Torture”. The article, which was written by Daniel Mercer, states —

More than 10,000 WA households a month were threatened with having their water supplies cut to a trickle last year because they had not paid their bills on time.

Ahead of an inflation-busting 4.5 per cent rise in water prices from July, figures obtained by State Labor show supply restriction notices issued by the Water Corporation have doubled in two years.

Again, the opposition expects us to be lectured about compassion for the community and constraint in utility charges, but when it was in government, its record was cutting off water to an average of 50 households a week. Now, as a result of a compassionate, interventionist and thoughtful policy to understand what hardship was being experienced by households and having conversations with customers to understand what was going on, the number of households that have their water cut off has gone from 2 500 a year to about 800 a year—night and day. This government has not just exercised restraint in increasing utility prices; it has also understood hardship. That is the Leader of the Opposition’s record in government. When she talks to community sector organisations in the regions and her electorate, which she likes to talk about, perhaps she can remind them of that.

It is true that Hon Liza Harvey is no longer in Parliament, but I could not help but smile when someone reminded me of what she said in 2015 when she was the Minister for Police and she was asked whether further support should be given to homelessness services. She said —

... there is sufficient funding and services available to address the issue of homelessness and there was no need for people to be sleeping on the streets.

An online article states —

The WA Police Minister has come under fire for saying that Government-funded charitable organisations are not doing their job properly if people are homeless.

...

Her comments were in response to the Department of Culture and the Arts’ use of a sprinkler system to deter homeless people from sleeping outside the King Street Arts Centre in Perth.

Members might remember that when there were homeless people in the city of Perth and the then member for Scarborough, the Minister for Police, was asked whether there were enough services, she said, “Maybe those services need to do their job properly.” The article continues —

“The accommodation is there, the support services are there, the not-for-profit groups are there, the money’s flowing into the system ...

“Clearly if there’s homeless people sleeping on King Street, those people aren’t doing their jobs properly.”

That is the opposition's record when it was in government. That is its record of working with the community sector and not properly understanding what was happening. I am very proud of the work that we have done since being in office, in partnership with the community sector, to understand what is happening, repair what was done when the opposition was in government and look at changes so that we are not just doing more of the same. We are looking to reform the system to better support those in need and we are also looking at evidence-based approaches and early intervention. That is what we are doing in government.

I want to make a point about the underpinning theme of us as a government. I was reminded of this during question time today when the Premier talked about our record as a responsible manager of the state's finances and said that we are a competent government. The best thing that we can do for everyone in Western Australia—most of all, for vulnerable Western Australians—is to make sure that we have low unemployment, targeted support, low TAFE fees and dedicated programs, such as the one that the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, who is in the chamber today, announced recently, which is a record spend on Aboriginal businesses in this state of \$254 million in one year to 119 Aboriginal-controlled businesses. In four years, we have spent \$821 million on Aboriginal business. This sort of change in policy and direction will deliver meaningful change to families and whole communities. Similarly, the announcement by the Minister for Transport that the first tranche of in-house road maintenance will deliver 41 workers to the wheatbelt and 660 permanent jobs, of which 490 will be in regional WA, resulting in a saving of \$25 million for the Department of Transport. The member for Roe is looking at me with his mouth open; I do not know whether he heard that announcement, but it is significant. It is significant for regional communities and those workers because it will deliver permanent, secure, stable jobs for regional communities, and that is a good thing. We are being good economic managers when headwinds and rough seas have been predicted, as we keep hearing. We are making sure that our finances are in a good state and we are putting good economic policies in place. I will talk about those areas within my portfolio of which I am very proud.

As I said, we had a lot of repair to undertake when we came to government. I want to repeat what we have been able to do with indexation because I remember being in the office of the then chief executive officer of the Western Australian Council of Social Service, Irina Cattalini, when we were in opposition and the former Liberal–National government under Colin Barnett unilaterally changed the indexation measure. At the time, WACOSS thought that it had a good relationship with the Liberal–National government. It thought that things were going well, but when things got tough, guess what? Colin Barnett, the then Premier, stopped talking to WACOSS. I remember that it was surprised about the unilateral change in the indexation method because finances were getting tight and community sector organisations were worse off. We listened to the community sector and changed the indexation measure when we came to government, along the lines that had been requested by the sector.

As we answered in question time recently, we understand that there has been a change in weighting between the consumer price index and wage price index and, therefore, the impact of that change in indexation has been frustrating for the sector. But we have tried to work with it and listen to it, so much so that we have delivered significant boosts. For instance, in 2019 we changed the indexation calculation, delivering an extra \$30 million into the sector. Earlier this year, the sector asked us to change the formula again and the Treasurer agreed to an uplift from 2.55 per cent to 3.53 per cent, which is an injection of just under \$42 million over the next four years. We are listening to the sector; we understand that there are pressures. There were pressures when the opposition was in government and there are pressures now—we understand that. But we are working to respond to those calls. Similarly, there has been an uplift in the base contract funding for contracts established prior to the equal remuneration order in 2012, which has delivered an uplift of \$82 million over five years. I have been intimately involved in those discussions. They have been difficult, but we have delivered an increase. Similarly, there has been an additional boost for contracts that did not receive previous supplementation with an uplift of 10 per cent in 2021–22 at a cost of \$14.5 million.

Members opposite, do not tell us that we are not listening and that the government is arrogant and tin eared. We are listening and we are engaged with the sector, which is in stark contrast to their period in government. The Leader of the Opposition was the Minister for Water for a long time. She had an opportunity to better understand households in need and she failed to engage with her agency and deliver better outcomes for struggling families.

**Ms E.J. Kelsbie:** Thank you, Madam Acting Speaker—oh, sorry!

**Ms S.F. McGURK:** I have plenty of material, member! I will not take too long.

There are plenty of examples of this. I stood beside the Minister for Finance when we were at the Centre for Women's Safety and Wellbeing to deliver the new state commissioning strategy for community services with the Department of Finance. The state commissioning strategy and framework sounds a little dry, but it is what the sector had been asking for. It had been asking for a fresh look at the way that the state government engaged in commissioning for a range of non-government organisations in the community sector, whether it was in my portfolio, mental health, parts of health, disability services and the like. A complete rewrite of that whole strategy was undertaken with the engagement of the not-for-profit sector, and it is very happy with the outcome.

One of the key areas that I think will demonstrate this good work is our commitment to engage more fulsomely and deliver better outcomes with Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, which I am very focused on in

my portfolio of child protection. I think the best way we will get engagement from Aboriginal families is with Aboriginal workers in the government or with Aboriginal community-controlled organisations. We have not just said to those organisations, “Here are some of our most complex social problems. Here you go; you do that.” We have given some capacity grants. We have wanted to partner with them and work through those issues, particularly in child protection in early intervention contracts and the out-of-home care services. I think we will see some really good outcomes there. We are working through a range of difficult commissioning processes, again in my portfolio alone, whereby successive contracts have been rolled over each year because all the contracts needed such a root-and-branch examination and it has been difficult to get the clear air to do that. We now have an overriding strategy and we will work with the sector, for instance, in out-of-home care, whether it is on homelessness, family and domestic violence or the like. I think we will see contracts that are more fit for the twenty-first century. Yes, there might be budget implications, but this is not only about the budget. This is also about the way that contracts are managed and the sorts of supports that are needed with the sector.

I could talk about a whole lot of work and our commitment to reform in child protection. We are really working in a very determined, thorough and evidence-based way to make sure we are supporting families to keep children out of child protection and to ensure that Aboriginal children who are in the system stay connected to culture, country and their kin.

[Member’s time extended.]

**Ms S.F. McGURK:** We also support the workforce that is doing that important work. In the previous budget alone, we committed an additional \$114 million to the child protection system and, of that, \$75 million more to fund frontline services to support children in care.

Early intervention will be a hallmark of this government’s change in policy in child protection. Just in the metropolitan–Peel area alone, \$13 million of new money will go to Aboriginal in-home support. The Leader of the Opposition referred to the homemaker program. That program has many mothers; people talk about it being very successful and lay claim to its origins. There is no argument that I hear positive reports of that program. The Aboriginal in-home support service, as I understand it, is quite similar to that and we are getting some good outcomes with between 80 and 90 per cent of the families interacting with that service not having more children come into care. That is really good.

We are looking at reform in relation to Aboriginal family-led decision-making, the therapeutic court and the Children’s Court and Aboriginal representative organisations. We have changed the legislation for that work. With regard to child protection, I could talk at length about the reforms that we are embarking on in domestic violence; we are not just doing more of the same. Members have no idea how triggering it is for me to hear members on the other side say that we should be supporting programs such as Keeping Women Safe in their Homes when the previous federal coalition government stopped that program. In our previous term of government, the federal government stopped its funding to that program altogether. There was not a peep from the other side when the Morrison government stopped federal funding to Keeping Women Safe in their Homes, only to reinstate it a year later with less funding, so the state had to step in, as members opposite always expect us to do. They expected the state to step in and clean up when the former Liberal–National federal government decided to pull the funding.

We understand that some of those programs are important. Clear reform is happening in homelessness, with an evidence-based approach to tackle some of these complex social issues that, frankly, I think many opposition members have very, very little understanding of. It is easy to talk about headlines. It is easy to describe the problem. We understand that. The solutions, however, are a lot more complex. I urge members to take the time to understand the complexity and the challenges that all jurisdictions have, whether they relate to domestic violence, youth offending and antisocial behaviour or homelessness. I am confident that, as a government, we not only are investing more money, but also are more committed to reform, and that reform is based on collaboration with the sector. It is based on evidence-based approaches and working in partnership with the families and those vulnerable people in the community who deserve our best efforts.

**MS M. BEARD (North West Central)** [6.17 pm]: A common theme we have heard today that no-one would argue with is that Western Australians across the whole state will definitely suffer from the rising cost of living, and we will have to contend with that going forward. There is no doubt the increasing costs of doing business and living in communities will continue to impact each and every one of us and the organisations that support many, many people. But the communities and businesses that also support and underpin the economic growth of the state, towns and communities in regional areas, particularly in the north west, are severely impacted by any cost increases.

I understand that we have capped airfares and there are flights to Perth, but sometimes people who live in the city do not understand that there is no connectivity. Someone who needs to travel to Perth or to Geraldton to get treatment has to fly to Perth or drive to Geraldton. There is no alternative. There is no connection to Geraldton. Lots of these people are pensioners, so one of the things that comes up regularly is the impact of increasing costs, which is going to heighten the stress levels of particularly seniors in regional areas and the groups of people who are already struggling. In lots of cases with these cost increases, mental health also will be an issue.

A lot of the people who use the patient assisted travel scheme and fuel to travel say to me that things have changed and the landscape has changed. The increases are significant. I love coming to Perth because fuel is so cheap. I think today in Carnarvon, diesel fuel is \$2.50, in Exmouth it is around \$2.70 a litre, and it is higher in Tom Price. People in the regions earn the same incomes as people in Perth but incur greater costs. A lot of pensioners and seniors are really struggling, despite the fuel subsidies and the patient assisted travel scheme. The other day I spoke to a man who has to travel to Perth. I think his subsidy is around \$100 a day—\$102. He was unable to find any accommodation that was anywhere near his budget. That seems to be more common, and a lot more people are raising that issue.

The other thing that is hugely important that needs to be noted is that sport is a large part of the fabric of regional towns, as it is in Perth, but it is more prevalent in the regional areas, along with local events and the arts and culture. A lot of these groups are run by volunteers. They rely on any funding that they can get. As a result of the increases in the cost of living, it would be very sad for people if these organisations ceased or regressed. It is crucial that they stay in place as the cost of living gets out of hand. I know that some families struggle to pay the fees for their kids to participate in sport.

It is not only the cost of living that impacts seniors and businesses, but the cost of crime is also having a huge impact on the town. It damages the town's reputation. For example, the seniors' independent living units need security doors, which cost \$1 000 each. Even with the grants, a lot of people cannot afford that. People throughout the town have to replace glass, but we are seeing more and more homes with boards on their windows because people cannot afford the cost of replacing a lot of what needs to be replaced. In addition, insurance premiums are going through the roof and people cannot afford to take out insurance. Last Friday, one man told me that his business no longer insures glass in Carnarvon. These are some of the things that will impact people in the future. It will be tough for people to meet these rising costs. The costs will also rise in the metropolitan area but the problem is exacerbated the further north we go. It also costs people a lot more the further north they drive. The impact on businesses will also be enormous. People's income will potentially be reduced if they cannot afford to travel. If people cannot afford to visit these towns and places in the north, and to a degree the south, it really will have an impact on those businesses that employ people in these towns. The cost of operations, coupled with the challenges of recruiting staff in the regions, with little available housing and increasing crime rates, is clearly an issue that we need to face.

The cost of living is pushing people to lean on support organisations. A lot of these groups are fighting a battle of sustainability. Brenden Law-Davies and his wife Gail, from the Carnarvon Church of Christ, go around town every week sourcing donations of food. I know that they are struggling to keep up with the food parcels that their group of volunteers deliver. It is admirable that they are doing that. Whether it is a small business, a not-for-profit or members of the community, it is important that the government pays attention to the businesses and organisations crying out for the government to acknowledge the cost-of-living emergency, particularly the costs in the regions that are exacerbated due to their geographical location and distance from the metropolitan area.

**MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe)** [6.23 pm]: I, too, rise to respond to the motion moved by the member for Vasse, which recognises the critical state of household budgets across the state. It has been disappointing to listen to the Premier during question time. As pointed out by the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Cottesloe, every time the Leader of the Opposition asks the Premier about Foodbank or Anglicare and what he is doing to help out those less fortunate than ourselves—those living in poverty; those who cannot put a meal on the table—all he seems to want to talk about is the worldwide recession that is coming up. We get criticised by the government for talking down the economy, and when we ask what the Premier will do to help those people who are struggling, we get this information about the worldwide recession and that he has to keep \$6 billion up his sleeve just in case we have a worldwide recession.

The job of the Premier; Treasurer is to look after those less fortunate, especially in times like these when poverty is rising to the surface. We have seen interest rates going up. A lot of people were geared up on those lower interest rates and all of a sudden that slight mortgage fluctuation and the rise in rental rates has changed the whole scenario. People who were not expecting it and who have never been in that situation have been thrown into a totally different scenario and they are struggling.

The October 2022 report *Poverty in Australia 2022: a snapshot* gave an overview of the situation after COVID, saying it had a big impact. I will quote some of the statistics from the report —

- More than one in eight people in Australia (13.4%) lived below the poverty line in 2019–20, the first year of the pandemic. That amounts to 3,319,000 people.
- One in six children (16.6%) live in poverty. That amounts to 761,000 children.
- ...
- Average weekly incomes of people in poverty (from different-sized families) are \$304 below the poverty line. This is known as the poverty gap.

We know that available public and private housing in the regional areas is almost non-existent. I say to the member for Cottesloe that if we have spoken about it once, we have spoken about it 10 times. It does not seem to be getting through. I can assure members that in my electorate, people are living in cars and garden sheds. They are even

paying rent to live in garden sheds. That is quite disturbing. When we look at some of these applications for rentals, Dutch auctions are almost taking place. People are being forced out of rentals, with increases of \$200 and \$300 a week, sometimes twice a year.

I turn to some local examples. Financial counsellors are reporting an increase in assistance to purchase gas bottles. People cannot afford to replace gas bottles, so they go without hot water for a month or more while they seek assistance. As I said, the money that people need to pay for the increases in their mortgage or rent comes from the bucket of money they use for their food. People are not paying sports fees for their children because they need that money to buy food. I stood in this place a couple of times last year asking the former Minister for Sport and Recreation and the current minister why they would not increase funding for KidSport, a program that was introduced by “Tuck” Waldron. As the Leader of the Opposition knows, it was one of the signature programs introduced by the previous Liberal–National government. “Tuck” Waldron was the instigator of KidSport. I could not seem to get the former Minister for Sport and Recreation or the current minister to understand how important that program is and how important it is to increase funding so that our kids have the opportunity to play sport. Last night we had a function for the Parliamentary Friends of the Olympic and Paralympic Movements in Western Australia. The overriding message that came out is how important sport is to children in our society and how it is great that they can look at our elite athletes in an aspirational way and see how their hard work has taken them to that level. That came through from several of the speakers last night. I reiterate that at times like this, an increase in funding to KidSport is very important.

One thing we are seeing more and more is animals being given up to pet havens and regional vet clinics because their owners cannot afford to feed them.

**Dr A.D. Buti:** You don't believe in looking after pets. You had a go when we put up a nice park for pets. You had a go at that, even though you did one yourself up north.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** I am still not happy with the Armadale dog park, but that is another story. The Armadale dog park was one of the first things that this government brought in. I think it has learnt, as it has gone along, that there are probably more important things, such as this very serious subject of food shortages and the like. The Premier; Treasurer needs to take this on board. When the Leader of the Opposition asks a serious question about Foodbank and Anglicare, the Premier needs to stop talking about New South Wales and Victoria and about how much better off we are than them and how there is going to be a worldwide recession that he needs to keep that \$6 billion in his pocket for, and actually start looking after our vulnerable people.

I have spoken to the wonderful volunteers at the Katanning Neighbourhood Centre, Community Harvest, which offers cheap food and household items to people in need. They told me that the number of families coming through their door has really increased this year. More and more families are coming in with food vouchers from Anglicare and no money at all. They do not turn anyone away. They rely solely on donations to provide for the community. All fruit and vegetables at Community Harvest are donated by Woolworths, and the centre charges only \$1.50 a kilo for them. Families know that they can come in and buy food for the week for around \$70. Without this service, those families and their children would be going without food. Katanning is very lucky to have this organisation, and I congratulate anyone and everyone who is involved in it because they are doing a great job.

Esperance is another town in my electorate. Chris and Sue Meyer have done a fantastic job with Esperance Care Services over the years. Chris reported that their service had seen increased demand over the last few weeks. When it was closed for one day, there was a queue at the door the next morning. That is an indication of what is happening. There is a higher-than-usual demand for advocacy provided by Esperance Care Services, which helps people to deal with Centrelink and the like. Esperance Care Services is now seeking funding to help meet that high demand. Esperance Care Services does a great job. Esperance does not have a food bank, so those in desperate need have few avenues for crisis support and cheap food options.

All of our speakers have spoken about the high cost of fuel and the rising cost of living in our regional areas. If someone who lives in Esperance has to go to a specialist appointment in Perth, they face not only a nine-hour drive but also a \$200 or \$300 cost for fuel, both on the way there and on the way back. As the member for Moore pointed out earlier, the McGowan government has not kept up with the times with the Country Age Pension Fuel Card or the patient assisted travel scheme. I spoke with someone from Gnowangerup about the fuel card when I was at the Katanning Show on the weekend. It is pretty frustrating, as they cannot get their card accepted anywhere in Gnowangerup because there is not a live fuel station there. They now have to spend money driving to another town to get their fuel card accepted. That is another element.

I spoke to a primary school teacher from my electorate yesterday about the breakfast club at their school. More and more children are coming to school having had no breakfast and with no lunch packed. Breakfast programs have become almost an essential part of the daily school program. I am sure the Leader of the Opposition faces the same things right throughout her electorate. Things like swimming lessons are being let go, because families cannot afford \$31 for each child or \$83 for the family to go to VacSwim. Over the next few weeks, I will be looking at the breakdown in where VacSwim services are being offered. It unfortunately appears that some of the people who are administering the program do not actually understand that when the program in one town is full, they cannot

just recommend that people go to Hyden, 200-and-something kilometres away. They need to get out a map and see what is going on. VacSwim is important for families and children right throughout Western Australia as it is important that people learn how to swim.

Fuel prices, especially for diesel, have gone up substantially; it is up to around \$2.43 a litre for diesel at the moment. I was very concerned about this and I asked the Minister for Commerce a question about FuelWatch, or “Fuel Do Nothing” as I prefer to call it, because watch is all it does. It does not do anything. I asked the Minister for Commerce to use some of his powers to do something about price gouging and the like, but, as usual, he skirted around the subject. It is very hard to pinpoint what FuelWatch has actually done, except to watch the price.

The fact that people are under pressure has again been highlighted this week, with people abandoning their cars at repairers. When someone has to abandon their car because they cannot pay the repair costs, that tells us something about what is happening in our community at the moment and the impact of cost-of-living pressures. As I said, I would like the Premier to recognise how tough families are doing it out there, instead of just blowing it off and talking about the worldwide recession that is coming up. It is not good enough.

**MS E.J. KELSBIE (Warren–Blackwood)** [6.37 pm]: Supporting families is at the heart of what the McGowan government does. Community is a core Labor value; we value our communities and our families. Our families are the bedrock of our communities, and we need to nurture, protect and support them. Our government supports Western Australian families and communities in so many ways, unlike the Liberals and Nationals, who are out of touch and desperately trying to remain relevant to Western Australians today. Look around you, members; look at the void. They are out of touch. Nine per cent says a lot.

I stand here today proud to be a strong voice for regional WA, and especially for my electorate of Warren–Blackwood. I am proud to be part of the McGowan Labor government. Our government continues to empower and support communities and families to improve child development and early learning outcomes across Western Australia. The early childhood education and care sector has been critical in supporting WA families during the COVID pandemic and beyond. Early childhood education and care services are important not only for children’s socialisation and education, but also because they support parents, especially women, to return to work. We know that regional towns can face greater challenges in finding workers, and that the choice of early education services on offer can be limited. The McGowan government is delivering a \$5.1 million commitment for a range of initiatives aimed at improving access to child care in regional WA because it knows how vital it is that children have access to early learning. The commitment includes \$4.1 million to support the viability of regional child care by working with regional providers to make child care more accessible and affordable to local families, and a \$1 million capped grant fund to support regional local government authorities attract and retain childcare workers in regional Western Australia.

As a working mum, I understand how important quality child care is to families. Just this week, I visited and hung out with the Mt Barker Playgroup, which is a community organisation. I met a dedicated groups of mums. I am sure dads also use the facility, but on the Monday it was the mums. We talked about how important facilities and community groups like that are to them and their communities. Overwhelmingly, their response was positive. I am really proud to support that community organisation with an election commitment to help it purchase new toys, equipment and storage. That is on-the-ground support from their local member to help the group carry on the important business of connecting and supporting the mums, dads, carers and kids in Mt Barker.

I also understand the need for affordable and accessible child care. I am incredibly proud to support another community organisation, Augusta and Districts Community Childcare, situated just over three hours away from Mt Barker on the other side of my electorate. I am proud to support and advocate for the Augusta community and for Augusta and Districts Community Childcare. I am proud of my election commitment to assist that organisation. Yes, we are supporting and assisting community organisations on the ground. I am from the sector as well. As a former CEO of a community organisation, I fully understand how important community organisations are. As someone who has managed and run community organisations, I value our government’s commitment to supporting the sector. Again, that is experience I have had firsthand.

I will talk about TAFE. Let us talk about the McGowan Labor government making TAFE accessible, affordable and better targeted to assist people engage, get support and secure jobs. Let us talk about the McGowan Labor government investing in our community, especially regional communities, and creating pathways for people of all ages to gain work-ready skills. I am proud that in addition to making TAFE more accessible across the board, the McGowan government has reduced course fees for TAFE childcare courses with the aim of increasing the supply of early childhood educators across Western Australia. The McGowan government recognises that the care sector is a fundamental part of our state’s continuing economic recovery, which is why the Lower Fees, Local Skills program continues to be an integral part of the government’s work to make child care more accessible and affordable for families across the state. Last year, we announced that child care was the centrepiece of the joint state and commonwealth governments’ \$103.5 million training expansion, which will see child care, age and disability care, and civil construction workers able to save thousands of dollars for upskilling.

Access to twenty-first century telecommunications is also critical to support rural women fully participate in the economy and have the same opportunities as women in the city. It allows for workplace flexibility, which is also

important for women in rural and remote areas so they can participate in the workforce and be involved in their local communities, including local community organisations. The McGowan government has committed more than \$50 million over the past five years to reduce the digital divide in regional WA and help roll out better digital infrastructure on farms and towns across the state. We are also making an unprecedented \$49.3 million investment in the Early Years Initiative—the first project of its kind in WA—with the Early Years Partnership. This government knows how critical the early years are, which is why the McGowan government announced its commitment to the Early Years Partnership. The program focuses on place-based solutions and grassroots community work to improve local outcomes. I vehemently reject the motion. I feel it is nonsense.

**DR K. STRATTON (Nedlands)** [6.43 pm]: I, too, stand in opposition to this motion. I want to very briefly highlight two recent McGowan government initiatives in two areas that I am very passionate about for two very vulnerable groups in our community. I will start by talking about grandparents who are raising their grandchildren. That is the fastest growing form of out-of-home care for vulnerable children in our community. Grandparents step up to provide safe and secure care for their grandchildren in a house and with a family in which the children are already known and loved. It is a significant responsibility that helps children maintain critical family connections and keeps them safe in culture, maintaining their family history and identity. When grandparents step up to care for their grandchildren, they not only create a better life for their grandchildren, but also make a very significant contribution to our community. When it comes to supporting the community and the community services sector, I know how important it is that we support diverse and unique groups in our community, such as those who raise their grandchildren. Last week, in my role as co-convenor of the Parliamentary Friends of Grandparent Carers, we welcomed Western Australian Senior of the Year, Jan Standen, and other grandcarers here to Parliament House to acknowledge their extraordinary work. Jan's achievements in the role were publicly celebrated by the Premier and Minister for Community Services; Child Protection. Prior to entering Parliament, when I was the manager for research and evaluation at Wanslea, we undertook significant research that looked at the impact of the caring role on grandparent carers. Although they reported on the joy and satisfaction they derive from their caring role, they also talked about the challenges they experience in their own social, physical, mental and financial health. We launched the final report of that research, *A fairer future for grandchildren*, last year. The Minister for Community Services; Child Protection, Simone McGurk, helped to launch this report, having previously received a number of delegations from Wanslea and grandparent carers.

I share the story of last week's celebration of Jan and the minister's engagement with that research to tell members that as somebody who comes from the community services sector, this is a government that listens. It listens to evidence. It hears the struggles of people who are doing so much for our community, and it is a government that responds to those needs. Our government made an election commitment in 2021 to increase payments to eligible grandparent carers registered with the grandcarers support scheme, administered by Wanslea. It increased it to being an annual payment of \$1 000 for each child in a grandparent's care. It is an annual payment designed to help with the demands and financial pressures that full-time caring brings. This increase more than tripled the amount of funding provided to the average grandparent carer looking after two children. These payments commenced in November last year, with the annual rate backdated to 1 July so that no grandparent carer who had already received a payment within that financial year would miss out on the increased amount.

Having been involved in the evaluation of the pilot of the grandcarer support scheme, I know that it was used to meet the costs of daily living—food, bills and school supplies. For most grandparent carers, it was also an important recognition of their role. This payment goes directly to alleviating the cost-of-living pressures for grandparent carers, usually older women in their 60s. The McGowan Labor government, as I said, has now tripled that support, that relief, to the cost of living for this amazing group of carers who do so much for our community.

The second initiative of the McGowan Labor government to address the cost of living and support our education providers that I want to refer to is the very recent announcement that period products will be provided in every Western Australian public high school. Again, this was an initiative from a government that listens to the evidence, listens to the community and responds. Like many of my colleagues in this place and the other house, schools in my electorate spoke to me about the need for period products to be provided to reduce both the cost and stigma for menstruating students in accessing these necessary health items. Period products are a fundamental health necessity, but the cost and the stigma associated means that many students do not have access to them while they are at school. The 2021 Bloody Big Survey found that almost half of the 125 000 people who participated missed a class due to their period. Three-quarters of respondents said that when they did attend school during their period, they found it difficult to pay attention. Other evidence tells us that improving access to tampons, pads and other menstruation products keeps students engaged in education, improves public health outcomes and helps them reach their full potential. It also ensures that students have the support they need, with dignity and without financial barriers.

By openly discussing periods and other reproductive health issues, we are also reducing the taboo and stigma around women's health issues. In August this year, the McGowan government committed to provide access to free period products for secondary students. Again, I thank the Minister for Women's Interests and the Minister for Education and Training for responding to the evidence, for listening to the needs of menstruating students and their families, and making a real difference to the day-to-day lives of people. More than 220 public schools will be provided with

free period products from next year, with the McGowan government initiative to be rolled out from term 1 in the 2023 school year. A procurement process will soon get underway for this kind of policy change that delivers fast, meaningful relief to young people and their families.

I strongly oppose this motion and instead give thanks for a government that listens to evidence, listens to the needs in our community and actively and quickly responds.

**MR D.A.E. SCAIFE (Cockburn)** [6.49 pm]: We did not learn much today from the contributions of opposition members to this debate, but one thing we did learn was their strategy for the next election. Their strategy is clearly to bore us all to death in this chamber, because they have realised they cannot beat us in an electoral contest. That was an absolutely terrible, lacklustre, boring, lifeless performance from the opposition. If these are the people who the battlers of Western Australia are supposed to be hoping will save them, God help us all!

Several members interjected.

**Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE:** They have to dig deeper. I know they have a tough job, but they have to dig deeper if they are going to stand up for the working people of Western Australia. Clearly, opposition members do not have it in them. Their contributions were totally lifeless. They have to show some energy on these issues. They are also all over the place on these issues.

**Ms M.J. Davies** interjected.

**Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE:** I did not interject on any members of the opposition while they waffled on for hours on end, wasting not only our time but also —

**Ms M.J. Davies:** No, but if you're going to serve it up, you can take it back.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Leader of the Opposition!

**Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE:** The Leader of the Opposition should have better manners than to interject after I sat in silence during the opposition's absolute garbage contributions. The opposition is all over the place. The member for Cottesloe came in here and said, "We're facing an inflation crisis. It's the highest rate of inflation in 30 years." That is entirely true, but do members know what is the single biggest inflationary measure that a government can take? It is to go into budget deficit. Budget surpluses are deflationary. They mean that there is less money circulating through the economy and driving up demand. They have a deflationary effect. Opposition members engage in this sort of voodoo economics in which their response to an inflation crisis is to increase spending and make the inflation crisis worse for working people. It is so ridiculous. The opposition also criticised us for giving out a \$400 electricity credit, which was an attempt by this government to provide relief to people who are struggling. Opposition members want to walk both sides of the street and they cannot do it. They cannot have their cake and eat it too. It is not true that this government has not acted on the cost-of-living situation. We have limited fee increases for electricity, water and public transport to less than inflation for consecutive years. We have also driven down government fees and charges by 3.8 per cent in this budget. We have taken measures that are responsible and directly within the government's control to provide cost-of-living relief to residents of this state.

Members opposite do not have an alternative proposition. All they do is speak about a surplus as though it is money locked away in a bank account somewhere. I heard the Leader of the Opposition talk about "sitting" on a surplus, as though there is a hoard of treasure somewhere. That is not even how a budget surplus works. I think it is clear that the opposition generally does not understand budgets. It is a good thing for the government to have a surplus during good, prosperous economic times to put downward pressure on inflation and prepare us for difficult economic times when the government might have to spend in order to support demand. Until opposition members learn a little bit about economics and about the state of Western Australia's finances, they will continue to be a lacklustre opposition and the people of Western Australia will not look to them to be the alternative government.

**DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale — Minister for Finance)** [6.53 pm]: I echo and agree with all the remarks made by the previous speakers—the member for Cockburn, the member for Nedlands and the member for Warren-Blackwood. The Leader of the Opposition has done well to be here today. I am sure she is very tired; she looks very tired, so it is great she made it here today. I will not criticise her for the contributions made by opposition members to this debate, but they were quite appalling. I think the member for Cockburn's description of the opposition's expertise was rather accurate. I think even former Prime Minister Liz Truss, the shortest-serving Prime Minister in UK history, would say the opposition's economics leave a little to be desired. When members of the Nationals WA are on their feet speaking, we are reminded that they are the most secular agrarian socialist party in Australia. They believe that governments should just spend, spend, spend, but it is always on their pet projects. It is a bit confusing, because the Deputy Leader of the Opposition said that he took public transport—he got on a bus from Geraldton. That is great! Is that the only time he has used public transport—that one time—or has he done it at other times?

**Mr R.S. Love:** Do you want me to answer that or will I be accused of interjecting?

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** No; go on.

**Mr R.S. Love:** I am a frequent user of public transport.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** That is good. Therefore, the member would be a champion of the state government's Metronet program. He would not, of course, be a supporter of the Liberal Party's anti-public transport stance. It is the party that closed the Fremantle-Perth railway line. It was so close to selling that land. Can members imagine if we did not have the Fremantle-Perth railway line today? Thank goodness the Liberal Party did not sell it off, and it was a Labor government that brought it back online.

The member for Cockburn mentioned some of the things we have done, as did the member for Warren-Blackwood and the member for Nedlands. Members opposite did not talk about the \$600 household electricity credit or the \$400 household electricity credit in the 2022-23 budget. They did not talk about the energy assistance payment of \$305. They did not talk about the housing grant schemes and payments that have been put in place. The Minister for Community Services talked about the state commissioning strategy for community services. The community services sector has been crying out for this commissioning strategy. I am sure that members opposite have studied the strategy in some detail. If they have, they will understand why it is good for the community services sector to have this commissioning strategy. But they did not talk about that. They did not talk about the funding of Aboriginal community-controlled organisations. We are investing in ACCOs. We are investing money to allow Aboriginal people to have greater say on, and control over, the services that are provided to Aboriginal people. They did not mention that. They did not mention the fact that we have also put in funding for the Youth Affairs Council of Western Australia; \$275 000 in grants have been given to the Youth Affairs Council. They did not mention those things. They did not mention what the Minister for Community Services mentioned about the Aboriginal procurement policy. That has been significant in improving the economic outcomes for Aboriginal people—to close the gap.

It is very easy for members to stand and talk about a few dollars here and there without looking at the economic cost of what they want to put in place. As the member for Cockburn said, we are in a high inflationary situation. The world is in a high inflationary situation. Members do not agree with what we want to do, but if we put in place what they want, which is to spend, spend, spend without any fiscal restraint or discipline, the inflationary stimulus that that would place on the economy would ensure that inflation would rise to over 10 per cent. The member for Roe talked about interest rate hikes. He would see nothing if inflation rose to over 10 per cent. That is what would happen under the opposition's policy. All it does is spend, spend, spend. I can tell the member for Cottesloe that the inflation rate under his policy would be higher than his approval rate! No increase in interest rates is going to increase his approval rate of nine per cent.

**Dr D.J. Honey:** You're very unkind!

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** That was not bad. You have to admit that was pretty good!

When opposition members get up and talk about cost-of-living relief, they have to be honest and they have to talk about what this government has done. One of the best things to do to enable people to deal with cost-of-living pressures is to ensure that they have jobs. Even the member cannot deny that the state's economy has been well run in the last two to three years. We have the lowest unemployment rate and Perth is the cheapest capital city to buy a house. People can get a job anywhere they want, and that obviously has economic benefits for people. Members opposite should not use the agrarian socialist party agenda—the Liz Truss agenda—which is to ruin the economy and increase debt, as it would only cause inflation and interest rates to increase.

Many of the member for Roe's constituents in the country are farmers who have great borrowings with high interest rates. Their interest rates would go through the roof under the opposition's policies. His hypocrisy when he had a go at the Armadale dog park was amazing, when he did one up near Newman that has National Party paraphernalia at the front. There is nothing wrong with dog parks; they are really good. There is nothing wrong with looking after animals. I assume that, as a farmer, the member would have a great love of animals and that he would care about animals. I do not see a problem with having a dog park.

Members also talked about helping people.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

*House adjourned at 7.00 pm*

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