



Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

FORTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION
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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Wednesday, 12 June 2024

Legislative Council

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

PAPER TABLED

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

ESTIMATES OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE

Consideration of Tabled Papers

Resumed from 11 June on the following motion moved by Hon Stephen Dawson (Minister for Emergency Services) —

That pursuant to standing order 69(1), the Legislative Council take note of tabled papers 3131A–E (2024–25 budget papers) laid upon the table of the house on Thursday, 9 May 2024.

HON STEVE MARTIN (Agricultural) [1.03 pm]: I rise to make a contribution to the noting of the 2024–25 budget papers. I have looked forward to this opportunity in the couple of years that I have been in this place. I have enjoyed the contribution by members on this side of the house. It would be nice to actually hear from members on the other side on this important task, but we have an opportunity to set out some of the things in the budget that will impact and affect us and our regions and, in my circumstances, my shadow portfolio responsibilities. I agree with Hon Dr Brian Walker who spoke yesterday in his budget reply about the size of the task. They are significant documents. I am not sure they have been entirely designed to let us get to the information as quickly as we might, but in the time available, I have certainly spent a lot of time going through the documents that contain a wealth of information. I will start by outlining some general themes on the budget and then discuss some portfolio issues and issues that impact people in the Agricultural Region.

This is first budget from the Cook–Saffioti team. I do not think I am being too harsh when I say that it fell a little flat. The media response was interesting. I think the combination of jobs, as Treasurer; Minister for Transport, finally caught up with Minister Saffioti when the blowouts for Metronet could be sheeted home to the Treasurer and vice versa. The overspend on Metronet was one of the themes discussed in the days after the budget. It is not an easy task to hand down yet another surplus when Western Australians are doing it tough and the cost-of-living crunch is really biting in this state. It is difficult to trumpet the fact that we have billions in surplus again—an estimated \$3.2 billion for 2023–24 and a projected \$2.6 billion for 2024–25—especially when we see a series of Metronet blowouts in cost and time, but particularly in cost. The Metronet overspend was seen slightly differently this time because Western Australians are facing difficult circumstances. A budget blowout in their personal lives is very, very serious, yet this state government can apparently continue to get it wrong over and over again when budgeting for the cost of major infrastructure projects. The budget in our lives and the budgets of state and federal governments are about choices. A choice is made to spend and those choices are important. I will come back shortly to what those choices mean.

I find the budget process really interesting these days. In the two weeks prior to the budget, almost all the big news was out there. I think that contributes to why budget day falls a little flat; there is not much new news on budget day. We hear over and over again from various ministers about record spends—sorry; not a record spend but a record investment. That is the terminology used by ministers when they refer to what the rest of us see as spending in their portfolios. It is taxpayers' money after all. The reason for that spend is that there are record revenues to match. The amount of tax collected by the state government continues to grow at quite a staggering rate. We are well aware of the iron ore and mineral royalties coming to this state. We are aware of the GST rebound, and that is all good news, but there are other issues that do not get the publicity that I think they should. One issue in particular, which I raised in my inaugural speech in this place, is payroll tax. The budget papers do not boast but quite proudly suggest that —

The forecast taxation levels in 2024–25 are underpinned by robust growth in payroll tax ...

It refers to robust growth, as if that is a good thing. It goes into more detail —

Payroll tax is expected to grow by 9.1% in 2023–24, —

That is a huge number —

moderating from 13.6% growth in 2022–23 and 17.8% in 2021–22.

They are the numbers just in that one particular area. I have made this point a number of times, but it is worth making again. Payroll tax is clearly a drain on particularly small business in this state, and we wonder about taxation reforms—if not now, when?

We are blessed with good economic circumstance in this state. Surely the state government has room to move more than it has done; it has tinkered around the edges with payroll tax. There has to be an opportunity to do more with those levels of growth and those hundreds of millions of dollars that are coming into the budget from that tax.

I come next to taxes on property—stamp duty and other taxes. Total transfer duty is estimated to grow by 15.3 per cent, or \$376 million, to reach \$2.8 billion in 2023–24. This reflects a sharp rise in residential property prices. Those rivers of gold are flowing from payroll tax and stamp duty into the government’s coffers. There is no serious effort for reform in that regard. We hear from governments everywhere, including this state government, about the need to diversify our economy. That sounds good. It is a noble aim, but the reliance on iron ore by this state government in the budget is as strong as ever. We are well aware of the fall in the lithium price and the royalties. I think that last year, lithium passed gold in royalty income. It certainly dipped back below gold, but iron ore is the big game in the budget papers. It has made up an enormous percentage of the state’s royalty income and that remains the case.

That brings me to state debt. The budget papers contain some fascinating numbers about current debt and projected debt. Despite the four or five budget surpluses—I am sure government members will remind me how many the state has had in a row—and the significant tax flows coming into the economy, net debt is predicted in the budget papers to grow to \$40.9 billion by 30 June 2028. As I said, the state’s revenue has grown significantly since the Barnett era. However, the language around what a catastrophe those numbers were compared with a projected debt of \$40.9 billion by 2028 is an interesting contradiction. We will see debt in this state continue to grow in the out years of the government’s budget. That brings me to an interesting point in the budgeting process. I am not one of those who make the case that a state government budgeting process is similar to a household budget; it is a very different thing. However, I am always intrigued by the iron ore forecasts by Treasury in the out years.

The actual iron ore price in 2022–23 was \$US109.60 a tonne. The estimated actual is \$US116 a tonne for 2023–24 and \$US75 a tonne for 2024–25. It remains at \$US71 a tonne in the out years of 2025–26, 2026–27 and 2027–28. I am well aware of the need to be cautious when budgeting, but I am intrigued by this particular budgeting forecast. It is not replicated, that I can find, in any other significant number in the budget. The crude oil price is relatively consistent. The US dollar exchange rate hedges around a little either side of where we are now. Governments refer to the long-term average price of iron ore. I do not have a calculator handy, but looking at the graph in recent years, it cannot be \$US71 a tonne. As I said, I understand the need for caution in budgeting—that is appropriate—but I do wonder. Let us assume that this time next year iron ore is \$US75 a tonne, as predicted, and it is budget time. Would the out years be cautious and have a \$US40 a tonne price built in? I do not think it would be.

Hon Darren West: Member, are you suggesting that we put a higher figure?

Hon STEVE MARTIN: No, I am just intrigued by the huge gap between what it has been for many years and what happens in the out years. I would like to see what the out years look like when it comes back to a \$US80 a tonne price. I guess there will not be that huge caution from Treasury then. Our state is still largely reliant on iron ore. The iron ore royalties that flow in this state are enormously important to us, as is our mining sector. The goal of diversification still has plenty of time to go.

I want to touch more broadly on an economic issue that has been gathering strength recently. I think it is from the post-COVID era when the toilet paper did not make it across the Nullarbor. That is just one very small example of what was happening around the globe. Global leaders reacted to that and said that we had to bring back in-house everything we needed. I would certainly question that, but it has gathered some pace. For example, the federal government has the *Future made in Australia: National interest framework*. We see that not just in Australia. The United States has the US Inflation Reduction Act of 2022. It is Orwellian terminology! An ABC article on 10 April described Joe Biden’s massive spending plans under the US Inflation Reduction Act. It is a trend sweeping significant economies around the world. Western Australia and Australia will be swept up in that when the trading elephants start stamping their feet and in-housing the things they do. I will refer to the Prime Minister’s views on his version of this, which is, as I said, the *Future made in Australia* plan. They contain some lovely acronyms; a team of people have worked on them! I quote —

Mr Albanese said it would consolidate existing efforts under one banner, including Hydrogen Headstart, Solar Sunshot and the government’s \$15 billion National Reconstruction Fund.

“We know during the pandemic, we learnt the risks of what happens if we’re cut off from trade. We can’t afford to not be able to stand on our own two feet,” Mr Albanese told Channel Seven.

“And we saw manufacturing leave this country in the 70s and 80s. We want to bring it back.”

They are all noble sentiments. This article was written before a speech the Prime Minister made on the “future made in Australia act”. It continues —

He will warn Australia’s economy will suffer without greater government intervention, as other nations draw “an explicit link between economic security and national security”.

...

“Obviously, Australia cannot go dollar for dollar with the United States’ Inflation Reduction Act ...

“But this is not an auction—it’s a competition.

We see that in this country.

I would look back to Australia’s decades and decades of good work trying to extol the virtues of freer trade. There is no such thing as a free trade; it is a continuum between not much at all which, sadly, I think is where we are starting to look to, or freer markets. As an exporting country, freer markets are vitally important to this country. These are noble sentiments. We should have access to manufacturing in this country that should make it a securer economy. However, government likes to throw a lot of darts at the dartboard when picking winners. Some of them will stick and some of them will not, but as the winds of economic change occur, the government will be desperate to hang on to those that do stick.

I will use the example of the car manufacturing industry. My electric vehicle lease was up recently and on the invoice was the luxury car tax that was brought in to protect the Australian car manufacturing sector, which has been gone for some time. We are still paying the tax, of course, because governments have a hard time getting rid of these things. There are always unforeseen consequences, and they are usually paid by primary producing export industries, which Western Australia has relied on for decades. There are some interesting things to come there.

Time is flying past; I will move on to housing issues and give members some data on where we are with housing. Again, it will not be a surprise to many. I am sure members constantly receive the same inquiries that I do about the difficulty of finding, purchasing, renting et cetera housing in Western Australia. Perth house prices went up 20 per cent over the past year. The rental vacancy rate has just ticked up slightly, which is good news for people trying to find a rental. But it has been as low as 0.4 or 0.5 per cent. The normal vacancy rate is 2.5 to 3.5 per cent. Point four per cent means that there is almost nothing to rent.

Then we come to the social housing situation. There was an interesting turn of events. Over the last three years, Hon Dr Brad Pettitt and I have made inquiries with the Minister for Housing on how the social housing waitlist is going. The minister is now apparently not telling us how many people are on the social housing waitlist. He is telling us how many applications there are, which is a lower number. That could be entirely a coincidence. I do not think it is. In the last three or four attempts by both of us to get that number, he has not been forthcoming. I can report to members quite confidently that there are approximately 36 000 people in Western Australia on the waitlist and approximately 10 000 people on the government’s own priority waitlist. I cannot be clearer than that because the information has not been forthcoming. I am looking for an update and I am sure there will be one soon from the housing minister.

As of the end of March, during the seven and a bit years—a number I have used often—of Labor government, there were 114 more social homes in Western Australia than at the start of the McGowan and Cook governments. That is because for the first four years, they quite simply sat on their hands and did not invest. The penny dropped that we had a problem and the money has started to flow, but it has been very difficult to get those homes on the ground as quickly as needed.

One of the reasons for that is what has happened to the residential building sector in Western Australia over the last three or four years. Sadly, capacity has plummeted as small and medium-sized builders have gone out of existence—gone broke. There are a number of reasons for that. There was the COVID storm of supply chain issues, labour shortages and two untargeted stimuluses. I get it—hindsight is easy—but I think that would have been done differently if hindsight had been available to the politicians at the time. It was one state and one federal, to be fair. Now we have a building sector in Western Australia that has enormous demand but simply cannot provide the houses that we need. We need approximately 25 000 homes to get anywhere near the targets the Prime Minister has set for the country. With the building sector, we are talking about perhaps 15 500 homes being completed. Anyone who has talked to the sector in the past month, would know that even that might be optimistic. It could be as low as 13 500 to 14 000 homes. Productivity has dropped in workers in the sector. That is understandable. The sector has been absolutely flat out for three or four years, so it is not getting out the productivity that is needed. It simply does not have access to people. That brings me to some recent work that has happened federally. Members would be well aware at the lack of skilled tradies in Western Australia. A media article of Monday, 10 June stated —

Skills Minister Simone McGurk is “hopeful” the Federal Government will boost skilled migration to WA, after the State’s intake was drastically slashed this financial year.

In August, Premier Roger Cook and Ms McGurk lashed the Commonwealth’s decision to cut WA’s share of the State Nominated Migration Program from 8140 to 2350 in 2023–2024—a drop of about 70 per cent.

... WA instead saw its skilled nominated visa allocation drop from 5350 to 1500, and its skilled work regional visas go from 2790 to just 850.

Is it any wonder that people cannot get the construction tradies that they need? There has been a change in labelling the skills in demand visa that replaced the temporary skill shortage visa in late 2024. That is designed to fast-track workers with skills the country greatly needs. That is great stuff, but where are we actually heading with that? The

Prime Minister has recently received a draft list of the skills that should be on that list. I had a bit of fun with this over the weekend, but it is actually not funny. It is deadly serious. Among the occupations to be included on the core skills list will be “Other Sports Coach or Instructor (Wushu Martial Arts and Yoga Instructor Only)”, “Dog Handler or Trainer” and “Jewellery Designer”.

Hon Sue Ellery: Who put them on the list?

Hon STEVE MARTIN: This is the draft list before the Prime Minister at the moment, and he has a chance to either say yes to this list or add the tradies.

Several members interjected.

Hon STEVE MARTIN: Let us see how we go.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon STEVE MARTIN: We will see how the Prime Minister reacts to this list.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon STEVE MARTIN: He has the opportunity. This is the draft list from Jobs and Skills Australia that the Prime Minister can react to. We will see how that goes. We definitely need more people to build the homes that we need. The Prime Minister set a target of 1.2 million homes across Australia. That is completely unachievable. Western Australia’s target is 130 000 homes. The building sector tell us that we cannot get anywhere near that at the moment, so, sadly, the housing situation will not be budging for a while.

The state government has been doing some things. It has tried a number of things. The housing minister has been frantic in his efforts, laser-focused and pulling every lever to achieve a result on housing. I just want to go through a few of the particular efforts and projects that have caught my attention. The housing supply unit was set up last October. I assume that has been set up to access funding from federal Labor. It has been relatively quiet so far. It took three or four months to hire some people and for the unit to meet. I believe those positions are now filled. We will see how the housing supply unit works. The housing diversity pipeline is a favourite of mine. It was announced with enormous fanfare in February 2022, nearly two and half years ago. I will quote the media release from the government —

The pipeline has been established to encourage new developments adjacent to METRONET stations and transport corridors.

We are spending \$10 billion or \$12 billion on Metronet so we better put some homes next to it. The media release continues —

The program is targeted at delivering greater housing diversity and increasing the availability of social housing.

There was a list of 12 sites in February 2022—10 in metropolitan Perth and two located in regional WA. I have not checked this week, but to the best of my knowledge I do not think any of those sites have actually progressed despite the glowing recommendation of the Minister for Lands, John Carey. The media release continues —

“These sites are in fantastic locations and close to public amenities like future train stations. We want to hear from developers, community housing groups and builders about what they can bring to the table.

“We are looking at all opportunities across Government and thinking outside the box to deliver better housing outcomes in our State.

At least when it comes to the housing diversity pipeline, I note that Pier Street was added after the event and there has been some activity there—almost. Of the original 12, unless the Minister for Housing has some recent news for me, I do not think any of them have been progressed. That is the housing diversity pipeline.

The government is undertaking a number of other initiatives. There has been some movement on the \$80 million infrastructure development fund, which is a good program. I do not think it is large enough. We have seen granny flat planning exemptions on very small blocks. There was a flurry of activity, at least from granny flat providers, talking about how big a demand there is. We will see how that plays out. I think that is a fairly niche response, particularly on smaller blocks where it is very difficult to find enough room to put a granny flat and have enough open space.

The \$10 million builders’ support facility is interesting. I received an email today from the Home Builders Action Group. The scheme was announced on 4 January. The Leader of the House might have an update as well but, according to the Home Builders Action Group, not a dollar has been delivered—not a single loan has been made to anyone at the moment. In that six-month delay, more builders have sadly gone under. I do not know whether that

facility would have helped. There are some fairly stringent guidelines about who can access it, which is appropriate. One of them is that they have to be solvent, of course, so it might have been too late for some of the builders who have gone under. However, the money was promised and, six months down the track, it still has not been delivered.

Another favourite of mine is the Urban Connect Home Loan program. It was quickly followed up by Urban Connect Plus earlier this year. Again, it was to take advantage of some of the medium to high-density areas around train stations. There has not been much success with Urban Connect or Urban Connect Plus. We also had the \$6 million local government partnership fund, announced in 2021. That sank without trace; it disappeared entirely. I think there were, maybe, a couple of local governments. I said at the time that particularly smaller local governments did the right thing and said, "If there's a homelessness problem, minister, it's a state responsibility. We're happy to help out in the small ways that we can but giving us money to build stuff that we then have to fund and run, and provide the services is not going to work." The numbers tell that story.

I now come to some building projects. Common Ground in Perth has had some movement. There is nothing anyone can move into yet. In Mandurah, that is further away. Those two projects were touted now four years ago as key planks of this government's homelessness strategy. Four years on, we do not have any movement. The Geraldton short-stay accommodation has had some movement but it has not been built. The south west trial into homelessness services again seems to have been backed away. We do not know what is happening there.

There is some good money in the budget—a \$90 million uptick for homelessness services, which is absolutely welcomed. There is an enormous need, which we discovered when we did our good work on the estimates inquiry into the funding of homelessness services in this state. I absolutely welcome the \$90 million. The report told us that the homelessness service providers were so far behind the game with their lack of uptick in contracts over a decade or more that the \$90 million would probably catch them up so they do not have to dip into their own funds as much as they have been. It gets them back to some sort of status quo and possibly some small increase in services. However, it is the status quo. If there were a genuine attempt to reduce homelessness in the state, the government would need to do things differently and that would need to be funded as well as the status quo. Although the \$90 million is a generous number, it does not do what our homelessness inquiry suggests needs to be done. There needs to be a game changer in the funding of homelessness services so those organisations that are keeping this state afloat in the provision of services can adapt and do things differently. We know that every facility in Western Australia is full, with a waitlist. That is not changing.

That brings me to why the minister and Western Australians have found it so difficult to build homes, or build Common Ground and the Geraldton short-stay et cetera. It is about priorities. Members can have a view about Metronet being good, bad or indifferent, but Metronet has sucked so many resources out of the construction sector in Western Australia for so long and there is only so much we can build in this state. There are only so many people. I argue that the government's determination to push ahead with Metronet regardless has impacted the housing sector. It has certainly impacted the residential building sector and the housing minister will tell members he has not been able to find people to build enough homes over the last three and a half years. In fact, one of the main reasons the government has made up any ground in the provision of social housing in this state is because of spot purchasing. The government is not actually building as many homes as it would like; it is going out in the private market and buying homes, which is of course not adding to the rental stock in Western Australia. It is just shifting from the private market to the social market.

That brings me to my other shadow portfolio responsibility—forestry. My local community and the Western Australian farming sector are in the middle of a debate at the moment about the live sheep trade. We hear over and over again from federal Labor that it had a mandate, which it took to two elections. The importance of the mandate is fundamental to the decision it made to attempt to shut down the trade. That brings me to forestry. In September 2021, there was absolutely no mandate. There was not a discussion, not a quiet conversation, not a heads-up. There was absolutely not a word to the sector and the communities from state Labor of what it had planned for the state's native hardwood logging sector or those communities. Perhaps the size of the majority gained in March 2021 prompted the Premier to damn the torpedoes and shut it down to bolster his green credentials. That is what happened. There was no mandate; overnight, it was bang—done. It had a date at the end of 2023, and then there would somehow be certainty about what was to come because there would be a new forest management plan. Importantly, where are we now? It is now the middle of June 2024. The previous forest management plan came to an end at the end of last year. The sector tells me that it has no clarity. It does not know quite what is left. A large number of businesses has either gone broke or left the industry. The workers have moved on. In this job market, they are probably re-employed or, if at the end of their careers, they have probably retired. They might have left those small south west towns. There is still a huge level of uncertainty and a lack of clarity about what is facing the remnants of the timber sector.

Those forests will still need to be managed. Clearly, the government acknowledges that, and it will need the private forestry sector to help in that task. There has been one winner out of this; I think there are 65 more jobs in the Forest Products Commission. To add insult to injury to the hundreds of jobs that have been lost in the private sector, there are 65 new jobs in the Forest Products Commission. One of the tasks that those people have been set is ecological thinning to manage the forests that have been logged for over 100 years. We have been told by the government

that ecological thinning will happen—it has actually started—and some timber will flow to some mills or firewood operators. However, it has been so difficult for the sector, and Hon Louise Kingston and I asked the Minister for Forestry in this place about what that looks like. Given that we are now six months into the start of the new forest management plan, I think that it is entirely unacceptable that we still do not know what those businesses face.

That brings me to the budget. We will get an opportunity during the estimates committee to delve into this more deeply, but there are some fascinating numbers in the Forest Products Commission's budget—it is extraordinary—about the level of revenue that the FPC anticipates coming in over the out years of this budget. It anticipates selling an awful lot of wood to someone, but it is difficult for the millers to get a contract. They still have an enormous level of uncertainty about what lies ahead for those particular businesses. The government announced at the time a plan to transition those jobs and businesses out of timber. It was an \$80 million native forestry transition plan, and some money has flowed into those various communities. I was approached recently by some metropolitan-based joinery businesses that have been in that sector for decades, usually family businesses and small operators with 10 to 12 staff or thereabouts. They have applied for, and so far been unsuccessful in, getting anything from the government because they have been impacted quite seriously by the decision to stop native logging. I checked who had been getting the grants and, as one would expect, there were a number of mills, logging contractors and trucking contractors in those particular shires in the south west, as well as a number of timber businesses. An interesting list was released in September 2023, and the list was more community based. It included the expansion and diversification of the existing music store Karma Llama Records in Bridgetown, which received funds of \$35 000. I love a second-hand LP—I still have a record player and occasionally I will drag it out—but they received \$35 000. The Bridgetown Repertory Theatre received \$22 000. Lakebrook Country Escape received \$99 000 for the establishment of a new luxury glamping experience in Nannup. I could go on. South West Snails received \$99 888 for the expansion of an existing edible snail-growing business in Manjimup.

Hon Darren West: Which one shouldn't we fund?

Hon STEVE MARTIN: That is a good question. The government should actually fund the joinery businesses in Osborne Park that have not got a cent yet and have clearly been impacted —

Hon Kyle McGinn interjected.

Hon STEVE MARTIN: This government has rivers of gold.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Hon Steve Martin.

Hon Kyle McGinn: You're ripping off the regions.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon STEVE MARTIN: Ripping off the regions? Where was the outrage when those regional jobs were killed overnight? There was not a word from members opposite! Union jobs, Hon Kyle McGinn—bang—have gone, thank you very much! There was not a word, President.

Hon Kyle McGinn interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Perhaps we can stay focused on your contribution, honourable member, and not encourage interjections.

Hon STEVE MARTIN: Thank you, President. I was tempted; I will not be again. I will move on from the forestry sector, but there is an enormous amount of work to do to get that ecological thinning to a market and get some certainty in place for those businesses.

I will fly through a quick list of agricultural region issues. An interesting one that has started to bob up—I am sure members opposite are coming across this—is the proliferation of wind farm projects being planned. Almost none of them have been delivered at the moment, but there is a lot of planning going on. Most members will be aware of the Flat Rocks wind farm development at Kojonup. If members have been to Flat Rocks and met the locals, regardless of their view about renewable energy and wind farms, they will know that the community outcome is unacceptable. The level of distrust and anger between proponents—landowners who have towers and landowners who do not—is disappointing. We need those renewable projects in Western Australia, and if we are going to place them in people's backyards, the planning process needs to be seriously considered. I have dealt with local governments attempting to do those planning projects with almost no definitive guidelines in the planning process. A shire planner and CEO put it to me that, when they checked, a proponent could put a wind tower the same distance from a neighbour's fence as a garden shed, which would have meant that the blade could have gone over the boundary. We would hope no proponent would do that, but they could. Those small local governments in the wheatbelt, great southern and midwest are scrambling to catch up. We need that renewable energy. The response to a flagged offshore development in Geographe Bay, which people in Dunsborough, Margaret River and Busselton can possibly see out their front doors, is interesting, is it not, and it is in the ocean, where nobody lives. That is right. Compare that with banging them in the wheatbelt or in the midwest; it will not be a problem. People live there and they will have a view.

The other bit of this wind farm and solar issue that needs some work is the transmission lines. We know most of the transmission lines in those areas are at capacity. We either upgrade them or build new ones. There may be a circumstance in which someone has a suite of wind towers on their property and is getting paid for them, but a transmission line goes through a neighbouring property, whose owner does not get paid. I think there are some issues that need to be ironed out. We need some direction from the state around what that planning looks like.

I move on to Geraldton regional hospital. I could not help being cheeky recently with a social media post of a lovely photograph from 2020. Hon Darren West, who has announced his intention to not run at the next election—I wish him all the best—was there with, I think, the Minister for Health at the time, Roger Cook, with shovels in hand.

Hon Darren West: Dirt.

Hon STEVE MARTIN: Dirt was flying. They dug a nice little hole. Just the other day in 2024, the now Premier Roger Cook was there but, sadly, Hon Darren West had been bumped. Perhaps not making that photograph opportunity was the bit that tipped him over the line: “That’s it. I’m done.” There were more shovels. I am intrigued whether it was the same hole, they were filling in the first hole to dig a new one, or it was to announce a different hole. It would be good to know. I will alert the people of Geraldton that it is a new hole and work is about to proceed at Geraldton Hospital—we hope! It has been seven years since it was first flagged.

The Oakajee project is another one; I cannot help myself with Oakajee! I went to the Premier’s vision for WA launch, and there he was extolling the virtues of the key strategic industrial area at Oakajee and how it would drive investment in the midwest. I hope he has been there, because it has been catered for in the budget with \$22 million. I assume the road gets a grade or a new gate at the front, because Oakajee is still a paddock. A long list of companies is lining up to do something in the midwest. We know that it is very prospective. There are a lot of very serious businesses and companies lining up to do some things there, but at the moment we have a stand-off. We have the companies saying it is the state government’s responsibility and the state government saying it is the companies’ responsibility. Until somebody blinks, Oakajee will probably remain a paddock. I think this is a role that the state government can play to get Oakajee off the ground and drive that investment in the midwest because this is a competitive market. It will go to Gladstone in Queensland, to Victoria or overseas if it is not done, but it is still on the list.

I will touch very briefly on education. It is very dear to my heart. I was at the Wandina Primary School’s tenth anniversary last Friday. They had a celebration because it was 10 years since Wandina was opened. There was a nice picture on the screen of former education minister Hon Peter Collier cutting the ribbon to open the school. In 10 short years, that school has become a key part of that community and is doing a wonderful job. It is overflowing at the seams, as members would expect, given that Geraldton is a fast-growing, prosperous place. It is a wonderful example of investment in education. We can see the results—the place looks fantastic, it is well run and it is going extremely well.

There are parts of my region in which education is not going as well. I want to touch on the district high school model. There are a lot of district high schools in the small to medium-sized regional centres that are too far from a senior high school and do not have enough kids to have one. We rely on the district high school model to educate our children. Often, it involves in-person teaching to year 10 and then students can do the next two years on site with some sort of assisted learning. I fear for that model, the people in it and the parents who send their kids there. I think that needs a serious look. It is not acceptable that, at the only school that is available to those people, not all the subjects are available that are available at Rossmoyne Senior High School. I know that we cannot have everything in the regions.

Hon Sue Ellery: How do you propose to fix it?

Hon STEVE MARTIN: We are aware that we cannot have everything and that we cannot have 35 subjects at a school with only 45 kids.

Hon Sue Ellery: I am genuinely interested because I tried to look at it as well. I am interested in how you think it is going to be fixed.

Hon STEVE MARTIN: I have some ideas. I know that communities are very concerned. I think staff attraction is enormously important. They are just not getting the best people that they need. It is sort of in and out. As the Leader of the House would be aware, people go there for a short time and then leave and go somewhere that they think is better.

Hon Sue Ellery: If you want to provide all the options at a secondary level, you do need a certain number of students. How do you address that problem?

Hon STEVE MARTIN: I am not necessarily talking about all the options—I am aware that we have to be realistic—but it is getting to the stage where I am not sure that some of these schools are going to be viable. There is a bit of homeschooling going on—those numbers are up—and others are looking to relocate. We are seeing a hollowing out of some of those communities, with one parent or partner relocating with the kids to Albany, Geraldton, Bunbury et cetera and doing fly-in fly-out—whatever they do in a regional town. I am raising the point. I think it needs some attention.

I refer to the power supply. We saw the larger story around Kalgoorlie; there were certain circumstances around that. I am talking about the broader unreliability of our power supply in regional Western Australia and particularly the agricultural region. Just last week, I had a call from a very irate resident from between Corrigin and Brookton who had gone six days without power. It was not a very large area—it impacted three or four farms and four or five houses—but the response was telling. We heard this response from Hon Darren West some time ago: get a generator. That was the response during the phone call. After four or five days, the resident rang and asked, “Look, what’s going on?” The person on the other end of the line said, “Oh, you’ll be okay; you’ll have a genset.” That assumes, of course, that someone can be home to fuel up the generator set when it runs out of fuel, so people cannot leave their farm for any serious period of time. I think people in regional WA are putting up with sets of circumstances that we would not accept in the metropolitan area.

That brings me to my last point about farming, a topic very dear to my heart. I will talk about the live sheep trade but also more broadly about what is happening with agriculture in Western Australia. In the last week or so, we saw the “keep the sheep” rally, which I think indicated a bigger issue than just the live sheep trade. By all reports, there were 3 000 people at that rally. Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd has only about 3 500 businesses on its system, so to get that sort of roll-up in the city and not in Northam, Merredin or Katanning, where we tend to have those sorts of meetings, I think indicated the level of concern from farmers and people involved in agriculture in those regional towns. I will talk about the live sheep trade issue. Another meeting will be held on Friday, I believe at the Muresk Institute, to coincide with a hearing of a federal House of Representatives committee that will look at that decision. The organisers tell me that a large crowd will go to that meeting. Let us look at the live sheep trade issue in particular. Labor’s decision to ban the trade—it has not happened yet; we have been given a date—has already had a material impact on the livestock sector in Western Australia.

Hon Darren West: Tell me how.

Hon STEVE MARTIN: I am more than happy to, Hon Darren West.

Hon Darren West: It has had no impact.

Hon STEVE MARTIN: If Hon Darren West does not think it has had an impact, he is living in a dream.

Business needs some sort of certainty. Small businesses know that what they do is far from certain. When small business owners put in a crop, run a newsagency or run a restaurant, it is far from certain that they will have a rosy future, but they like as much certainty as possible. When the livestock sector is repeatedly told that it is cruel and unnecessary and it is getting smaller, is it any wonder that people would be unsure about whether they want to invest in that business? They will think, “This is hard work. Why would I keep at this when our country’s leaders clearly do not value what we do?” I think our farmers are the best in the world, as Hon Dr Brian Walker also mentioned yesterday. I will digress very briefly. Hon Dr Brian Walker mentioned that farmers could turn 10 centimetres of topsoil into 1.5 metres, which I think is a stretch, but anyway.

Hon Darren West: Like a lot of things at the moment.

Hon STEVE MARTIN: That is a stretch. I think what is happening with our livestock sector at the moment is a disgrace. That sector is well regulated, very well managed and profitable, but for some reason that export industry is going to be thrown under the bus. That sector is small and getting smaller, cruel and unnecessary. Okay. What will solve it, of course, is the processed meat sector. That is the solution. Farmers are being told to run as many merinos as they like in Western Australia in the autumn and they will all be killed at WAMMCO, Fletcher International Exports, V&V Walsh or somewhere. There will be capacity to deal with those sheep. Let us assume that all of that is correct. If we assume that that myth is 100 per cent correct, we would be taking a competitor out of the market. Less competition will clearly mean less price pressure on the people who are trying to buy that livestock. There would be less competition in the saleyard, which is not a great thing for someone who is trying to optimise the price they will get for their sheep. Why would a processing sector have 100 per cent capacity for the sheep flock in Western Australia? Again, getting back to running a real business, if that is someone’s business model, they will be in trouble, because for most of the year they will not need 100 per cent capacity. They will have staff in and out. There will be a spring flush. The processing sector will do what it does and pay what it has to. In fact, I will make the claim that there will not be more processing in Western Australia after this decision; there will be less because there are going to be fewer sheep. The only thing that will change that in a hurry, of course, will be high prices for sheep, but we are comparing that with land use and cropping. The move from cropping to livestock has been taking place for more than a decade. This will exacerbate that.

There are lots of good things about the livestock sector. It employs lots of people. I went to the rally, leaving from Rous Head in North Fremantle. There were shearing contractors, a lot of trucking operators, mulesing contractors and livestock agents—all the people who are employed in, and make a living out of, the livestock sector in those communities. A smaller livestock sector will clearly mean that there will be fewer people in those country towns, and that is very disappointing.

We know what broadacre cropping looks like. The gear is bigger and fewer people are needed. There will be an impact. We have talked about the district high school model. It gets harder and harder when there are fewer people

in town, and that will be the outcome, but it is not over yet. Pressure can be maintained on the government to admit that it got it wrong. It was a very large rally last week and I saw only a small portion of the crowd, but there is an opportunity for Labor members opposite because the state government purportedly supports this trade. Get out and turn up to the rally and show that support on Friday at Muresk. There are 75 members of the Labor Party in Parliament and a fair few federal Labor people. Turn up and let them know that Labor supports the industry. I think that is important because people in the industry are not feeling very supported by state and federal leaders, considering what they do. We talk about the critical minerals industry. What could be more critical than food? Yet we are just ignoring the industry and saying it is fine. Please, show your support for those people on Friday.

I will refer to transport issues extremely quickly. The tier 3 railway line is a good one. The opposition has been accused of shutting it down, and the Labor Party said that it would fix it. I have been hearing that from members opposite during my three years in this place. Is that true? The only one that has been even remotely talked about is the Narrogin–Kulin line. I have a vested interest in that because it is not far from my farm. However, the \$72 million that has been allocated for that project has been sitting there for two years. Hon Dr Steve Thomas and I have been asking and asking how the business case is tracking. Are we there yet? Are we done? The minister changed her tune. She started by saying that the government was 100 per cent behind the project and would recommission the tier 3 railway. We have to look really hard in this year's budget papers to find any mention of the \$72 million. I could not find any mention of the Narrogin–Kulin line. I hope it is there. Last week I asked what stage the business case had progressed to and was told that it is being considered by government. After two years, \$72 million in mostly federal money has been sitting there while that supply chain for agricultural produce has not been funded. I regularly ride my bike over the Causeway. The cycle and pedestrian path is going full steam ahead. I think that will cost about \$100 million. That project is flying. The business case for that was rushed through cabinet. That will be up and about well before the Labor Party does anything about achieving its goal of recommissioning the tier 3 line, assuming that it does anything.

I will finish on the fairly sombre note of road safety. As a regional member, I think it is a constant issue. It is just awful. The number of fatalities has gone up again this year, largely on regional roads. Hon Darren West knows that there has been a string of really nasty accidents. It is happening again. It is not just about providing more money, clearly. It is also about people's attitude. However, it is somewhat about money. The program to widen the edge lines was a combination of state and federal money that was spent on the state's roads, and it was a good program. I saw the results on Albany Highway when that trial was done a decade ago. It made a 50 per cent change almost immediately. That was good work and it was not very expensive. However, most roads in Western Australia are local government roads, and there are tens of thousands of kilometres of them. The RAC and the Western Australian Local Government Association are talking about implementing a similar program that is worth consideration. Our road toll remains stubbornly high. Western Australia is one of the worst jurisdictions in the nation. I hope we get to consider that further. Thank you, President, for the opportunity to make those remarks. I enjoy a good budget reply and look forward to next year's—in government!

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Hon Peter Foster**.

DUTIES AMENDMENT (FIRST HOME OWNER CONCESSIONS) BILL 2024

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by **Hon Sue Ellery (Minister for Finance)**, read a first time.

Second Reading

HON SUE ELLERY (South Metropolitan — Minister for Finance) [2.05 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

The Duties Amendment (First Home Owner Concessions) Bill 2024 will amend the Duties Act 2008 to implement the increase to the transfer duty concession for first home buyers purchasing a home, as announced in the 2024–25 state budget. This duty relief will provide more assistance to first home buyers purchasing a home to reflect the increase in median house prices in Western Australia since the concession was last adjusted.

Since July 2014, a full duty exemption has applied to homes valued at up to \$430 000, with a concessional rate of duty applying to homes valued at between \$430 000 and \$530 000. The changes in this bill will increase the thresholds for agreements entered into from 9 May 2024, so that eligible first home buyers will pay no transfer duty on homes valued at up to \$450 000. A concessional rate of duty will apply to homes valued at between \$450 000 and \$600 000. The new rate and thresholds will apply to the purchase of established, newly constructed or substantially renovated homes.

These changes will benefit almost 5 000 first home buyers each year and increase the maximum value of the concession to \$15 390. To allow eligible first home buyers to benefit from the additional duty relief as soon as possible, I published a pre-enactment determination notice under the Taxation Administration Act 2003 to allow the changes to be administered from mid-June 2024, before the bill is passed. Any agreements entered into from 9 May 2024 that were assessed using the previous thresholds can be reassessed to take the threshold increases into account.

Pursuant to standing order 126(1), I advise that this bill is not a uniform legislation bill. It does not ratify or give effect to a bilateral or multilateral intergovernmental agreement to which the government of the state is a party; nor does this bill, by reason of its subject matter, introduce a uniform scheme or uniform laws throughout the commonwealth.

I commend the bill to the house and table the explanatory memorandum.

[See paper [3226](#).]

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

FIREARMS BILL 2024

Committee

Resumed from 11 June. The Deputy Chair of Committees (Hon Steve Martin) in the chair; Hon Stephen Dawson (Minister for Emergency Services) in charge of the bill.

Clause 1: Short title —

Progress was reported after the clause had been partly considered.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: I want to pick up where we left off yesterday. I start by checking with the minister on what I have referred to as the explanatory memorandum on the government’s amendments. Can the minister update the house on the progress of that?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Unfortunately, honourable member, I do not have an explanatory memorandum for the amendments I have put on the supplementary notice paper. However, I have been able to provide notes on the amendments. I will table that document and ask the staff to provide members with copies of it.

[See paper [3227](#).]

Hon NICK GOIRAN: While that document is being tabled, I put on the record our appreciation for that. The use of the phrase “explanatory memorandum” was merely mine. If there is a working document or a set of notes that explain the amendments that have been put forward by the government, that would be appreciated. It can be digested by members, and I think it will facilitate the consideration of those amendments in due course.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: I do not intend to say too much at clause 1. I think it is important, given that I am the Chair of the Standing Committee on Uniform Legislation and Statutes Review, and it is fair to say that that committee has been named many times during debate on this bill over the last —

Hon Stephen Dawson: A very hardworking committee, too.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: It is a very hardworking committee. On behalf of the committee, I am sure that we will take all the positive comments that have been made, including by the Minister for Police, who probably did not know there was a uniform legislation committee until this bill came before this house.

Hon Darren West: He does now.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: He certainly does now.

The reason for me raising this now, as the minister will appreciate, is that the committee obviously considered the bill closely in the context of its terms of reference. Although it would be prudent to perhaps deal with a couple of the main issues raised by the committee at the respective clauses, I also appreciate that given the bill has now been declared urgent, it may well be prudent to deal with them now. When the minister summed up, I noted that he primarily dealt with the issues that were raised during the second reading debate and not those considered by the committee.

Just to be clear, the committee obviously looked at a number of matters. It initially raised a number of issues with the Minister for Police, particularly in the context of the regulation-making powers that were present. On behalf of the committee, I have to say that we were appreciative of other responses provided by the minister and for some follow-up that took place. That certainly allayed a number of the committee’s concerns, which is outlined in the committee’s report.

The committee made 13 findings and three recommendations. Just to enable things to progress, I will only focus on those three recommendations. That is probably easiest. I am happy to reflect on each three in turn. That may be helpful if that is convenient to the minister. The first recommendation related to the definition of “disqualifying offence”. This relates to clause 5 of the bill. The recommendation stated —

The Minister representing the Minister for Police explain to the —

House —

why existing disqualifying offences under clause 5, paragraphs (c) to (f) of the definition of **disqualifying offence** cannot be included in a Schedule to the Firearms Bill ...

As set out in the preceding comments in the committee report, the committee agreed with the fact that there is a need for a regulation-making power to prescribe new disqualifying offences, and that that was justified. However, existing offences that risk public safety—this was reflected in the committee report—are identifiable. Certainly, the minister actually identified some of those in the response he provided to the committee.

The question for the committee in this case with regard to existing offences—appreciating the need for flexibility in the regulations, that need could not be demonstrated by the minister’s response—notwithstanding that there may well be a number of offences, is whether that should preclude the inclusion of a schedule. Schedules are routinely added to bills, so it is not new. As the committee noted, it had already been undertaken in the Community Protection (Offender Reporting) Act 2004 and the Working with Children (Screening) Act 2004. There are certainly precedents for that.

I ask the minister why, firstly, such a process was undertaken and why existing disqualifying offences could not be included in a schedule to the act.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I thank Hon Donna Faragher not only for her questions, but also for her conversation behind the chair when she advised me that she would ask these questions. It certainly was my intention to respond to these things at the appropriate clauses. However, the member made a very valid point, and it certainly is appropriate to do that now.

Further to the Minister for Police’s response to the committee, the ability to add disqualifying offences via a regulation-making power is a necessary one. There are offences that do not meet the definition of a serious offence under the Criminal Investigation Act 2006 but still impact upon public safety. As the acts listed in paragraphs (c) to (f) are amended over time or when community expectations change, the executive, informed by the objects and principles of the Firearms Bill 2024, should be obligated to incorporate additional disqualifying offences. This process still has oversight through the parliamentary power to disallow regulations.

It should not be the case that significant time is required between a firearm authority holder being convicted of an offence, impacting public safety, and an amendment made to the act to include such an offence or when a proposed amendment to one of the other acts occurs and consequential amendments are required to be identified for the bill. The state government and the Western Australia Police Force have a duty to ensure the good regulation of firearms, affirming that possession of firearms is a privilege in line with the 2017 National Firearms Agreement. Although some other legislation includes schedules of offences for similar purposes, there are others that do not, notably the Security and Related Activities (Control) Act 1996, dealing with licensing persons to conduct security activities, which may prescribe offences as a disqualifying offence. The bill proposes a narrower view of the acts under which a disqualifying offence is identified. Should further acts be identified, an amendment to the bill, once enacted, would be required.

Some disqualifying offences have been identified, but a complete picture is being identified through the drafting of regulations.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: Just to respond, as set out in the report, the committee does not take issue with the notion that there be a regulation-making power for prescribing new disqualifying offences. We understand that flexibility is required, particularly to enable a quick response, as the minister mentioned. The committee is not making an issue of that; the issue relates to existing offences, about which the minister knows, appreciating that they can still be added. The minister has identified some, so I suppose I want to ask a question about a schedule for existing disqualifying offences and why they cannot be defined. I appreciate that the government clearly does not propose a schedule, but, for the benefit of the house, can the minister please advise some of those existing offences that have already been identified, which he already touched on just now and which the Minister for Police has also said will already be incorporated?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Two have been identified thus far. The first is section 74 of the Criminal Code, “Threat toward dwelling”, and the second is section 6 of the Weapons Act 1999, “Prohibited Weapons”. There are only two at this stage.

Hon Donna Faragher: And you couldn’t put that in a schedule?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I am told there will be others. The feeling was that if we were to put them in a schedule now and changes were made to other acts at a subsequent date, we would need to make changes to this act, which would be a cumbersome process. Although the member is correct in pointing out that a schedule has been used for other pieces of legislation, as I pointed out, a schedule has not been used in other cases. In this case, the government chose to proceed with this course of action.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: I think we will have to agree to disagree here, but it is useful that we have identified at least two offences that will be covered under this part.

My next question is about the second recommendation and in a similar vein. The minister representing the Minister for Police explained to the house why an existing disqualifying order, as outlined in clause 5 in paragraph (c) under the definition of “disqualifying order”, cannot be included in the schedule to the Firearms Bill. I presume that we will get a similar answer again, but for the benefit of the chamber it is important that we hear the government’s response.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I will provide that answer shortly. Further to my earlier answer, I am told by my advisers in front of me now that the issue as to whether to use a schedule or the regulations was discussed with the Parliamentary Counsel’s Office, and it suggested that this was a better way forward.

In relation to the member's most recent question, further to the minister's response to the committee, the ability to add disqualifying orders via a regulation-making power is necessary. As new orders of a similar kind are made under the Restraining Orders Act 1997, or any other order made under other legislation, the state government should be able to respond quickly to disqualify the person to whom the order applies particularly to address an identified risk to public safety if the person has access to a firearm. It is not the intent to include a schedule to the bill listing orders as not all orders have been identified as requiring such an inclusion. This will continue as new orders are created and the Western Australia Police Force identifies them as being required to be a disqualifying order. The WA Police Force will advise the government who can make the regulations, if they are deemed necessary, to properly regulate the possession of firearms in the state in alignment with the principles in the bill and the National Firearms Act. Such regulations will remain disallowable through parliamentary powers.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: I appreciate the comment that the minister made about the PCO. I have said this in this place before. I have the greatest respect for the PCO and the work that it does. However, it is the Parliament that makes decisions about laws, and it seems to me that, at times, actions are taken with respect to legislation that are convenient for the PCO and others. What the minister is effectively telling me is not that it cannot be done, but that it has been proposed that the better way of dealing with it is through the regulations. That is just a comment, but it is this chamber and the other place, but this chamber in particular, that play a key role in forming legislation and, in that sense, we are the ones who make the decisions.

In a similar vein to my previous question about disqualifying offences, the minister identified two, but he also said there may well be more, subject to working through the regulation-making process. I recall that the minister provided the committee with some examples of orders that will be prescribed as a disqualifying order. Can the minister advise the house of those orders that at this point in time will be included?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Yes, I can give the member some examples of orders that may be described as disqualifying orders. They include a child protection order made under part 5, division 2 of the Community Protection (Offender Reporting) Act 2024, a control order made under part 3 of the Criminal Organisations Control Act 2012 and a control order made under part 5.3 "Terrorism" of the commonwealth's Criminal Code Act 1995.

Hon WILSON TUCKER: I have a few questions about the new firearms system that will be introduced, which is not, as far as I am aware, specific to the bill. However —

Hon Stephen Dawson: Honourable member, by way of interjection, Hon Donna Faragher was two-thirds of the way through her contribution. Do you mind if we just conclude that and then come back to you?

Hon WILSON TUCKER: Sorry. I will relinquish the floor.

Hon Stephen Dawson: Thank you.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: This question is on the same topic. I will continue to take up this line of questioning from Hon Donna Faragher. I will make a comment and then I will ask the question. The problem I have with the PCO is that it has not provided an explanation as to why that is the better way to do it. I understand that it has said to the government that this is the better way, but why is it the better way? It is not immediately apparent to us why it is the better way. If the PCO can provide a comprehensive or cogent explanation at a later stage, it would be appreciated for the benefit of not only this bill, but also future bills. Is the PCO basically saying that there is no place for schedules in legislation moving forward, or is it only in respect of this isolated incident; and, if so, why is that the case? That said, with regard to disqualifying offences found at page 5 of the bill, the minister kindly provided an explanation to Hon Donna Faragher of two examples—one in the Criminal Code and one in the Weapons Act. Why then have offences under the Misuse of Drugs Act been included when no such offences have been identified?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I gave examples of possible offences. We are still very early in the drafting of the regulations. My advisers tell me that there may well be stuff in the future that relates to the Misuse of Drugs Act. However, I am not in a position at this stage to identify that to the member.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: The thing is that somebody has instructed Parliamentary Counsel to list the disqualifying offences in paragraphs (a) through to (f), and somebody has decided to expressly point out the Weapons Act and the Criminal Code. That makes sense when one considers that somebody has also identified section 74 of the Criminal Code, "Threat toward dwelling", and somebody has identified section 6 of the Weapons Act 1999, "Prohibited weapons". Having identified those offences it makes sense that somebody would instruct Parliamentary Counsel to include those particular acts. Then somebody has said to Parliamentary Counsel, "Please include offences under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1981", but apparently has not identified any offences under that act. There is something irrational about that—I say that with respect—because if it is a case of simply listing every single act known in the statute book of Western Australia, we would have a much longer list. Somebody has gone out of their way to specifically mention three acts—the Weapons Act, the Criminal Code and the Misuse of Drugs Act—so there must be the identification of some offence under the Misuse of Drugs Act that justifies its inclusion at this particular point. Can any ancillary information be provided to the house at this time?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I am told that drugs, money and firearms often go hand in hand in criminal enterprise. I have an example: in 2022, a stolen rifle was found, along with a handgun with a serial number removed. It was located

in the possession of an offender with six kilograms of methamphetamine. Having six kilograms of methamphetamine would be deemed a serial offence. Another example was in April that year when a vehicle stop located three firearms, cannabis, steroids and over \$15 000 in cash. A fourth firearm was subsequently located and three of the firearms had been stolen during incidents the previous year. In many cases, firearms, money and drugs go hand in hand in criminal enterprise; therefore, the inclusion of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1981 was deemed appropriate by the government.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: At one level that makes sense, but an offence has not been identified under the Misuse of Drugs Act. An offence has been identified under the Weapons Act 1999 and under the Criminal Code that would justify the use of this regulation-making power; however, no offence has been identified under the Misuse of Drugs Act. To say that circumstances arise when money, firearms and drugs converge may well be true, but if that were the case and an incident involved all those elements, there would be a contravention, either as a serious event under the Criminal Investigation Act, the Weapons Act or the Criminal Code. It is not apparent why the government has specifically chosen to set out the Misuse of Drugs Act 1981. I draw to the minister's attention that under the definition of disqualifying offences, paragraph (b) states —

an offence under the law of another Australian jurisdiction that substantially corresponds to an offence referred to paragraph (a) ...

The reason that is deemed to be appropriate is that it is limited. We do not simply say that it is any offence under another law in the whole of Australia. We say that it needs to correspond substantially to the offence set out at paragraph (a), which is a serious offence as defined in section 128(1) of the Criminal Investigation Act 2006. If another jurisdiction has a similar offence, we say that that should be incorporated—it should be captured—so there is clarity in the drafting. There is clarity in this bill with regard to the Weapons Act because it has been expressly identified. Hon Donna Faragher's committee said that it would be desirable if that were included in the schedule. The government, on the advice of the Parliamentary Counsel's Office, has said no. The same applies for the Criminal Code, yet we still cannot seem to identify the reason for the reference to the Misuse of Drugs Act 1981. Are there other acts, other than the Criminal Investigation Act, the Weapons Act, the Criminal Code and the Misuse of Drugs Act that ought to be included as disqualifying offences?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I am told that the answer is no.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: The answer is no. In the massive statute book in Western Australia, there are only five acts, if we include this bill because in time the Firearms Bill will become the Firearms Act 2024, that justify any offence that is prescribed under those acts to be warranted as a disqualifying offence. If a Western Australian commits an offence under one of those five acts, and one of those offences has been prescribed in the subsequent regulations, it is a disqualifying offence. That is what we are saying here—only those five acts. I do not have a problem with it being only five, but my point is that it is incumbent on the government to explain why it is those five. Clearly it is self-explanatory why this legislation, which will be the Firearms Act 2024, is included. The minister has explained the reasons for the Criminal Investigation Act, the Weapons Act and the Criminal Code; however, there is a missing explanation on the fifth act. What is the precise offence under the Misuse of Drugs Act that the government is concerned about that would warrant its inclusion at this time? Remember, it is the government, including the police minister, who likes to say that massive consultation has occurred on this bill. We quibble with that, particularly on the timing of that consultation. It is one thing to consult with the Law Reform Commission and another to consult on the bill. Nevertheless, let us concede for the purpose of this moment that the police minister might be correct and that there has been so-called massive consultation. After all that massive consultation, and the work of Hon Donna Faragher's committee, we cannot identify any offences under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1981. I put it to the minister that it would justify the removal of these lines in the bill, because why include them? If the government is going to say that it wants to keep it just to be safe, why not include the whole statute book in Western Australia? What has justified the inclusion of this fifth act?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Again, I say that no particular reason has been found at this stage. Regulations have not been written. An example of something that is in the Misuse of Drugs Act is section 8Q, headed "Manufacture, sale or supply of psychoactive substances", which states —

- (1) A person commits a simple offence if the person manufactures a psychoactive substance.
Penalty: a fine of \$48 000 or imprisonment for 4 years or both.
- (2) A person commits a simple offence if the person sells or supplies a psychoactive substance.
Penalty: a fine of \$48 000 or imprisonment for 4 years or both.

That is an example of a reason it is included. However, as I said, at this stage we have not settled on the regulations and we have not settled on the reason, but we anticipate there are other such things like that out there that see the need to include this bill.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: We are saying here as a Parliament that if a Western Australian has been convicted of one of those types of offences, they are ineligible to have a firearm. That is the point of this legislation. We are disqualifying them from having a firearm moving forward. Are all child sex offences considered a serious offence?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I am told that at this stage we are looking at it.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: The government is looking at it now, on the fly, while this bill is passing through the house of review. I put it to the minister that it should be a disqualifying offence. I imagine that 36 members of this chamber would unanimously agree that if a Western Australian has been convicted of a child sex offence, sorry, they have lost—again the police minister’s words—the privilege of having a firearm. They have lost that alleged privilege—I know there is a big debate as to whether it is a privilege or a right; that is not the point right now.

Hon Sandra Carr: There is no debate about that at all.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: It is a rather unhelpful interjection by the honourable member on the government bench to simply say that there is no debate. What I said—the honourable member would know if she had listened—is that there is a debate about that. The honourable member might not agree, and I might even agree with her; that is not the point here. I hope she agrees with me that a child sex offender has lost the right or privilege to be able to hold a firearm. The government says that at this point it is looking at that. What if it is not captured at this time? When are we going to deal with it? Remember that the government, particularly the Premier and the Minister for Police, have now said that circumstances have changed in the last couple of weeks and that this is an urgent piece of legislation. The shot clock is running at the moment. We have nine and a half hours left until this bill has to pass, so let us make sure that we include that, minister.

I find it peculiar that, at this time, the government is not able to identify a precise offence under the Misuse of Drugs Act. The government cannot identify that, despite the consultation that has taken place. Hon Donna Faragher’s committee has expressly drawn this to the attention of the government. No identification has happened since that time. When was this report tabled? It was last month. There has been no identification since then. Now when we ask about child sex offences, the government is not sure. It is going to look at it. I will park that, minister, because it is more of a rhetorical comment than a question. My next question is what about an aggravated assault? If there is a Western Australian who has beaten another Western Australian, are they disqualified under this regime?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I know the member has moved on, but I have not quite moved on from the issue of child sexual offences. I am told that some child sexual offences would be included under the Criminal Code. We have to be careful about whether it is a 17-year-old or a 19-year-old and a 16-year-old or whatever. I am not encouraging people to break the law. I am trying to say that there is terrible and less terrible. The Criminal Investigation Act says that if the penalty is five years or more, it is a serious offence, so it would be captured in the bill before us. On the regulations, we have not yet identified a regulation for child sexual offences. We are looking at that at the moment, as I said. There is still a bit of work to be done on the regulations. Although the consultation has started, we are not in a position to finalise regulations as yet. As a result of the fact that there is more work to be done, again we deemed that the use of a schedule is not the most appropriate vehicle. Being able to have a regulation-making power in the bill will give us the possibility to continue to do the work that needs to be done and to include in the regs what we find after that consultation and work.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: I cannot recall whether it was last year or the year before, but we had a very big debate here about the type of offences that would disqualify a person from holding a working with children card. It was a huge debate. To the best of my recollection, this minister was not handling that particular bill. Ultimately the government—I think begrudgingly, but we got there in the end—agreed to some amendments to ensure that Western Australians who clearly should be disqualified from having a working with children card were going to be disqualified under the new regime moving forward. Hon Simone McGurk was the Minister for Child Protection at the time. Is the minister in a position to inform the house whether it will be the case that, once this regime goes through, a person will be disqualified from holding a working with children card but not disqualified from holding a firearm?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I am not in a position to answer that question. Multiple portfolios, different agencies—apologies.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: I will conclude on this point. I know Hon Donna Faragher will continue to take up the excellent work of the committee. This highlights yet again that the police minister is not ready with respect to this bill. For all of the carry-on that has gone on with the Premier and the police minister in recent weeks and continuing to hammer the opposition as if somehow we are the impediment here, the government cannot tell us whether a person is going to be able to carry a firearm in Western Australia yet be disqualified from working with children. It is unacceptable. Please spare us the lectures from time to time that there has been this fantastic consultation. Clearly not. Multiple portfolios, multiple agencies we are told. The departments are within the same castle. They just have to knock on the door of the Minister for Child Protection and say, “Hang on a second, minister. Are there any offences that are so heinous that we say a Western Australian is disqualified from working with children? I think, as a good whole-of-government approach, we should make sure those same people also cannot hold a firearm.” It is not complicated. That would be basic consultation.

Again, I feel for the minister as the representative minister in this chamber. He is not the minister making vilifying remarks outside the chamber to the opposition; that is the police minister and his friend the member for Kwinana who keep doing that, day in, day out. I suspect they will continue to do it day in, day out no matter what we say

between now and Tuesday, when this bill inevitably passes. The problem is that those people from the other place who are behaving like that outside the chamber are not helping the integrity of this bill one bit. I get very concerned the moment I am told by anyone in government that they are not sure and are going to look at it. The government is not sure about the child sex offences or the working with children checks. It is not sure about those types of things. It is doing work on it and continuing to consult.

Yesterday the minister might recall I asked, I thought, a pretty simple question: when does the government anticipate that this bill—the majority of its provisions—will commence? It was not answered. To the extent that there was a response rather than an answer, it was, “We’re going to do it as soon as possible.” This is despite the fact that I had mentioned that media reports suggest that this act is not going to come into effect until March next year. I might make a political observation that that might be conveniently after the election. Whether it is just a coincidence that March was mentioned is neither here nor there for this particular purpose. The point is that the government must have a timetable. It is inconceivable to me that the Premier and the police minister, after all their carry on in recent days and the last few weeks in particular, after everything they have said, have not said to somebody within WA police, to the Commissioner of Police or somebody senior, “We want this bill passed by X period and brought into place.” I cannot imagine that. They have certainly said it to the Parliament. We have been told in the Legislative Council, the house of review, “You’ve got until Tuesday to pass this thing.” If it is good enough for the lawmakers in Western Australia, the people elected on behalf of Western Australians to do this review work, I would have thought it would be okay for the public servants who get paid by the Western Australian taxpayers for their work to be told, “We expect it done by Christmas” or “We expect it done by March.” We do not have that kind of basic information available to us here. We are on only clause 1 of this gigantic bill, making best endeavours to do the work that would otherwise be done by a parliamentary committee over the winter recess. That is not a choice some of us have. It is a choice that has been foisted upon us. I express at this time, through the deputy chair to the government as a whole, particularly the Premier and the police minister, how incredibly unsatisfactory it is that matters of this nature are unable to be answered.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I thank the honourable member for his contribution and for raising the working with children checks issue. My advisers tell me that they will reach out to the Department of Communities and ensure that regulations are made—if they need to be made—linked to that issue. The nice thing about regulations, of course, is that they can be made at any time. That work will be undertaken. I know other people are standing up. I asked Hon Wilson Tucker if he did not mind letting us finish this issue first. For those members who have just arrived, if they do not mind, they might stick to my deal, but I am happy to answer Hon Donna Faragher’s questions.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: We are at the last recommendation of the Standing Committee on Uniform Legislation and Statutes Review, so hopefully that will enable further debate to continue at clause 1 by other members. I appreciate the understanding of other members in the house. I think it will be helpful to deal with the committee report now, then we can move forward.

The final recommendation is about clause 17(4), which permits the government by regulation to exempt a person or class of persons from part 5, which relates to firearms authority offences, and part 7, which concerns security and storage. Clause 17(4) is a Henry VIII clause. The government indicated that and stated that in the explanatory memorandum, which I think is a helpful addition. Most ministers ensure that, within the explanatory memorandum, there is reference to where there is a Henry VIII clause and I think that is helpful. Lots of people who have read this report have learned a lot about Henry VIII clauses that they perhaps did not know before. It relates to clause 17(1), which specifically references an “exempt person”. It states —

(1) In this section —

exempt person means —

- (a) a police officer or an employee of the Department; or
- (b) a member of the Australian Federal Police or of the police force of another State or a Territory; or
- (c) a member of the Australian Defence Force.

Clause 17(4) expands the exemption categories without specifying exempt persons. That would be done by regulation. The committee sought further information from the minister about this. His response indicated that the need for regulations was, to use his words, “Adaptability to unforeseen future occurrences”, which is an interesting turn of phrase. The committee recommended that the minister representing the Minister for Police explain why all persons or classes of persons that should be exempt from part 5 and part 7 of the bill are not currently identifiable, given the passage of time since firearms legislation was introduced in WA. They are not set out in clause 17(1) of the Firearms Bill 2024. I have already referred to who is identified in that clause.

I think we will deal with that part first. Why are they currently not identifiable, albeit I note that the minister said in one of his responses that perhaps the Australian Border Force might be included. To give the minister a further question: if we know that the Australian Border Force will be included as an exempt person, why is it not already included within the bill?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: As the member knows, the bill proposes an entirely new firearm scheme, incorporating significant government reforms based on the Law Reform Commission of Western Australia report 105 on the NFA. It addresses the ambiguities of the 1973 act. In doing so, exemptions were identified for the self-evident circumstances for which it is required; that is, the usual course of duties for law enforcement and the Australian Defence Force. Noting that the bill comprehensively addresses firearm activities within the state, significantly more than the 1973 act, circumstances, I am told, may arise when an exemption is required as it is not reasonable to grant a person a licence or permit to conduct firearm activity and they would otherwise commit an offence. Accordingly, no other exemptions to part 5 and part 7 of the bill for the type of person have been identified at this time.

Although the minister may well have mentioned Australian Border Force, certainly nothing else has been landed on at this stage. This does not mean that the legislation should not allow an ability to regulate for future exemptions, either wholly or in part, for a person or type of person for whom reasonable circumstances arise, and the granting of such an exemption does not go against the principles and objects of the bill. Once the bill is enacted and the new scheme becomes operational, this will allow the government of the day some flexibility to grant an exemption when circumstances require it. Should amendments to the bill be required once enacted such as the requirement to add exempt persons, particularly when the exemption is conditional or perhaps limited to a person, I am told this would be burdensome on the administration of the legislation.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: Thank you for that response. I think legitimate circumstances would be understood as to why certain people would be exempt. In the context of the proposal that is being considered with regard to the Australian Border Force, I do not necessarily see that that would be problematic. However, the minister did not refer to, I suppose, legitimate circumstances. He referred to adaptability to unforeseen future occurrences. The committee asked what types of unforeseen future occurrences may require the government to expand the exemption categories by regulation rather than in the amendment bill. It is an interesting turn of phrase, “unforeseen future occurrences”, when we are talking about a particular group of potentially exempt persons. Can the minister please advise the chamber what types of unforeseen future occurrences may lead to certain persons being exempt?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: The member said “unforeseen” circumstances. I will point her to that word. They are not foreseen at this stage. This phrase has been used in this place previously and it may well be futureproofing the legislation. However, it does not have to be a group of people; it can also be an individual.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: I know the difference between unforeseen and foreseen, minister. I accept what the minister has to say.

Hon Stephen Dawson: I cannot foresee.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: Yes, but it is quite clear that the minister is already looking at the Australian Border Force. Consideration is already being given. The minister has advised that in correspondence to the committee. There are exempt persons who have been considered—that is, foreseen. This is what is being said here. Let us set that to one side. The Australian Border Force is in its own right. The minister also mentioned individual persons. Can he give me an example of an individual who may be captured?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: No. I only made the point that it does not have to be a group of persons; it could be an individual. Aside from what has been said, honourable member, and aside from the fact that the minister, wherever he said it, spoke about the Australian Border Force as a potential, I do not have any other advice from my advisers about another category of person or individual who could be made exempt.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: I will end on this point. Page 16 of the committee report details part of the minister’s response, which says —

Presently, the Australian Border Force (ABF) is being considered for exemption in the regulations.

The minister said that. I appreciate that Hon Stephen Dawson is the minister representing the Minister for Police. I will leave it at that. The fact is that the minister has already identified another group that will potentially be exempt. It is unfortunate that the minister has not been provided any further detail about that. I think it is a fair question that the committee has asked. It will be up to others to decide whether the response from the government has been adequate.

The DEPUTY CHAIR (Hon Dr Sally Talbot): Can I check that this is the same point? I am under orders to give the call to Hon Wilson Tucker when you have finished this point.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Thank you, chair, for the call. I thank Hon Wilson Tucker for his longstanding patience as we continue to interrogate the work of the Standing Committee on Uniform Legislation and Statutes Review. If I understand the discussion that has taken place between the minister and Hon Donna Faragher, there will be people to whom this law does not apply. They will be exempted from the provisions of this proposed law. If we look at proposed clause 218 on page 107 of the bill, it says —

A person who unlawfully uses a firearm commits a crime.

Penalty: imprisonment for 7 years.

Why would we want any Western Australian to be exempt from a maximum term of seven years' imprisonment if they unlawfully use a firearm?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: We heard different things at the table. Does the member mind asking that question again, please?

Hon NICK GOIRAN: I was pointing to a particular offence in the bill. It is clause 218, which is entitled "Offence of unlawful use", and it reads —

A person who unlawfully uses a firearm commits a crime.

The penalty is a maximum term of imprisonment of seven years. My question is in respect of the discussion the minister had with Hon Donna Faragher about the work of the committee. Clearly, that particular provision that the member discussed, clause 17, looks to exempt certain individuals from the application of the law. They do not need to follow this law, at least not in respect of parts 5 and 7. My question is: why is it that we are exempting anyone in Western Australia from this offence, which is that if they unlawfully use a firearm, they might go to jail for seven years?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: The exemption is not a broad exemption; it is an exemption from such things as holding a licence or storage provisions. It just means that a police officer or indeed an Australian Federal Police officer or Australian Defence Force member will not have to get a licence every year as an ordinary person will. They will be exempt from that. They will not be exempt from part 6 of the bill.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: I was referring to part 5. Part 5 includes this offence of unlawful use. Is it the intention that a police officer in Western Australia who unlawfully uses a firearm could go to jail for seven years pursuant to clause 218?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: If they do something unlawful, they will be captured by those provisions. They will be captured by the penalty or the fine, or they will go to jail.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Clause 17(4), which the minister discussed with Hon Donna Faragher, is the government asking the Legislative Council to empower it to draft regulations to exempt persons from parts 5 and 7. Is the minister saying to the chamber that under those regulations, the government will not exempt anybody from the unlawful use of a firearm under clause 218?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: The exemption has to relate to a person doing unlawful activity. The bill will not exempt them from something that is unlawful. As I said earlier, the exemption will be around such things as holding a licence or how to store firearms. If someone breaks a law or carries out their duties unlawfully, they will be captured by clause 218.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: They will not be captured by clause 218 if the government gives them an exemption. Clause 17(4) will pass, so, shortly, the Cook Labor government will be given the power by the Legislative Council and the Parliament of Western Australia to exempt certain people from this law, including specifically part 5. Within part 5 is this unlawful offence. The government will have the power to do it. I would strongly urge it not to.

Hon Stephen Dawson: By way of interjection, that is not the intention.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: If that is not the intention, why does the bill not say that? Why is the bill giving the government carte blanche the opportunity to exempt people from things that it has no intention of doing whatsoever? If somebody has gone out of their way to say, "Look, we would like to have the power and we may do it with regard to part 5, but, actually, here is one example in part 5 where we have no intention", that is good. I am absolutely in lockstep with the government. If a police officer unlawfully uses a firearm, of course, they should have the rule of law applied to them as it applies to the rest of us; it goes without saying. But why does the bill not say that? Why does the bill leave it open like this? The point I ask the minister to now consider is if this is one example in part 5, then we actually have no intention of exempting anyone. If the bill will not exempt a police officer, it will not exempt any person in Western Australia. With regard to clause 218, what are the provisions in part 5 that we are looking to exempt someone from? I know the minister mentioned storage. My understanding is that storage is under part 7. I am not asking about storage; I am asking about part 5, which is about the use of firearms. What are we looking to exempt police officers and the other special classes of person from?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Police officers need to be undertaking activity in the ordinary course of their duties. If they are not doing it in that circumstance, they are doing it unlawfully. We are not giving them carte blanche to go and hold up the servo on Saturday night or whatever. But they can carry a gun in the ordinary course of their duties that is not licensed or, indeed, in terms of part 7—I am conflating parts 5 and 7—they do not have to store the gun. Can I say, there is no intention of not being able to charge police officers for doing unlawful activities. Certainly, as with other regulations, we will make the regulations, and those regulations will be tabled in Parliament when they are finished, and they can be disallowed. But I give the member the guarantee now that this is not about making new laws to make it broadly easier for police officers to commit crimes. This is solely about this new bill and solely about enabling people in the ordinary course of their duties to undertake an activity like carrying a gun.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Since the minister has introduced part 7 back into this debate, I will just touch on that. Part 7 deals with security and storage. Is it the intention to exempt a police officer from the provisions in this bill that require a person to follow the legislation very precisely with regard to security and storage? I imagine that there is some expectation that police officers in Western Australia have to store their weapon and that they need to keep it secure. I do not want this to sound frivolous because that is not my intention, but, for example, we simply cannot have the situation—I am not suggesting any police officer would do this—whereby an officer just leaves their firearm on the kitchen table. Of course, nobody wants that, and any self-respecting police officer would not do that. To prevent an ordinary Western Australian citizen from doing something so reckless, part 7 sets out very precisely the requirements for them for security and storage. Why is it that we then exempt police officers from that particular task?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I am told that police, like the Australian Defence Force, already have stringent internal policies on operational matters including firearms. There are storage requirements already in place by means of internal policies. There may well be instances in which police have need for ready access to firearms, particularly the tactical response group. They do not need to be captured by the storage provisions in this legislation because they already have their internal guidelines and rules in terms of their jobs.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: If a police officer breaches this internal guideline or policy, will the penalty for that police officer for failing to have properly secured and stored their guns—as the minister says, they are already under these stringent internal requirements—be at least as severe as it would be for a Western Australian citizen?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I am told that if they are not doing it in the ordinary course of their duties, they would be committing an offence. Separately, regarding what course of action might take place if an officer does not store their gun according to police guidelines, internal disciplinary processes would take place and could lead to that officer being dismissed from the service.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: “In the ordinary course of duty” seems to be the defence here. If the police officer was acting in the ordinary course of their duties, they would not be subject to the same penalties as the ordinary Western Australian. Again, if I take the example earlier in which the firearm was simply recklessly left on the kitchen table, the minister will say, no, it needed to be in the course of ordinary duties. In this example, if the police officer was in the police station, in what I will describe for the purposes of this example as the morning tea room, they left their firearm on the kitchen table, and they were in the ordinary course of their duties, with their uniform on and having clocked on in the morning and were busy going about their work, but just recklessly left the gun on the table, would the penalty for that person be the same as for any other Western Australian?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Again, if they were not following the guidelines for the procedures as set out by the commissioner, they could be captured by the law, by this bill.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Is the minister saying that the moment that a police officer in Western Australia breached those internal policies and guidelines, these stringent requirements, they would be acting unlawfully and would be captured by this law?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I will not say that they were necessarily acting unlawfully, but they would expose themselves to that, so obviously an investigation would take place to ascertain whether they were or not.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: It will all hinge on this special distinction that we are giving, or the elevation of the status of the internal policies, guidelines and stringent requirements. If the person has complied with those, they will get to shield themselves with this exemption. If they do not, they will be captured by all of this. Where is the link in this legislation in this clause 17(1) exemption provision that elevates those guidelines and those policies? I cannot see it anywhere in clause 17 or elsewhere in the bill.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: The same provisions are essentially in the 1973 act, so they have been in operation for a very long time —

Hon Nick Goiran interjected.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I am not saying the exact numbers, but I am saying the clauses relating to these issues are similar to provisions in the 1973 act. This has been the standard practice of the police for longer than we have been alive, so we do not think there will be any change. The practice has been in place. If a police officer had done the wrong thing and had fallen foul, action would have taken place. In some cases it would have been disciplinary action, and over the years police officers may well have been charged under the legislation. That is the intention of moving forward as well.

Hon WILSON TUCKER: I will just change tack ever so slightly and focus on the new licensing system that will be put in place. I understand that it is not specific to this bill, but is related to the wider gun licensing and gun control reform that we are debating in this place. Just to expedite the back and forth, is there a term or definition we could use for this new licensing system that is being rolled out?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: It is colloquially known as “L and R”—so licensing and registration. The member is very welcome to use that terminology and I will know what he is talking about, and it might save some time.

Hon WILSON TUCKER: I will just call it the licensing system.

Hon Stephen Dawson: Or L and R, whichever you want.

Hon WILSON TUCKER: Okay.

Firstly, how much has the system cost the taxpayer so far and how much is it expected to cost?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: A total of \$27 million has been set aside for it. As to what it has cost so far and what it may cost, they are questions that are best asked of the estimates committee or through the parliamentary hearings. The officers here would not have any understanding; probably the finance areas of the departments would. Certainly, \$27 million has been set aside for this new system.

Hon WILSON TUCKER: The amount of \$27 million that has been allocated and set aside is obviously significant. The next logical follow-on question is: What is the expected timeframe for this system to be completed? Are any aspects of it operational right now? What is the hard, fixed deadline for the system to be fully completed?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I am told that it is partly operational now, but it will take until the calendar year 2026 to be finalised. We have heard from Hon Peter Collier numerous times since he has become shadow Minister for Police, and not just over the last few days, talking about his frustration at the ability to get answers to particular questions over time. The system we have currently is outdated and so a big piece of work needs to take place. Lots of it is operational but there is a bit more to do over the next two years.

Hon WILSON TUCKER: Given it is partially operational, can we just take a step back and define what functionality will be delivered as part of this system upgrade? Can the minister give this chamber an indication of the processes that will be included as part of the system update? From the perspective of the WA resident, the ability to apply for and renew a gun licence and register some land for a gun to be shot on are three things that come to mind, but can the minister give a breakdown of what processes will be included in this \$27 million system upgrade?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Some of the workflow processes that have been completely upgraded and are within the new L and R system include an ability to make an application and all stages of assessment of those applications through to either approval or refusal; receiving and completing a renewal of licence and/or any correspondence regarding a licence or application; industry reporting of firearms going in and out of businesses, together with a record of sales of ammunition and other related items; reporting on minimum activity requirements for competition shooters, including club and range reporting activities; and providing the managing written authorities in support of a licence holder for either hunting or competition purposes.

Hon WILSON TUCKER: Is that the exhaustive list of all the workflow processes?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: No, it is not an exhaustive list; there are other things. It is a full online portal where people will be able to make online payments and register their property. It will be integrated with the new national register as well.

Hon WILSON TUCKER: Within these workflow processes, which departments will have access to the system? Will access be incorporated as part of these workflows or will access to this online portal be created as part of the system upgrade?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I am told it will be only the Western Australia Police Force.

Hon WILSON TUCKER: To clarify, when the minister says only WA police, is that the only department that will have access to the overall \$27 million system upgrade or will other departments have a role to play in that underlying workflow?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: If the question is: who is assisting the police with the work on the portal? The answer is that the Office of Digital Government and the Department of the Premier and Cabinet is working with police on the new system. But if the question is: who else will have access to it? The answer, again, is only WA police will have access to the data on the portal.

Hon WILSON TUCKER: I just have a few more questions. The government has budgeted \$27 million for the system. Is the system considered to be on a cost-recovery basis? When talking about the current licensing aspect, WA police is not there to make a profit from someone who applies for a licence. The police are providing a service on a cost-recovery basis, so the amount it takes to provide that service is reflective of the licensing cost. Is that an accurate assessment? Is the current licensing system considered to be on a cost-recovery basis and will it be, moving forward?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: We are not seeking to cost recover the \$27 million. The current cost and the recurrent cost of managing the registry is fully cost recovered at the moment. Moving forward, the intention is to continue to try to at least cost recover the management of the registry.

Hon WILSON TUCKER: To clarify—I think we are on the same page—the operating cost of the existing system is considered on a cost-recovery basis and when the new system is implemented, the operational overhead will be on a cost-recovery basis. Is that correct?

Hon Stephen Dawson: Yes.

Hon WILSON TUCKER: Great. It is good to have clarified that. The next question I have is about the efficiencies and the justification for the potential \$27 million spend to implement the system. I imagine that when a business case was put forward for this, there was obviously a net benefit, hopefully to the end user, about putting the system in place, otherwise why would we go through this very expensive exercise to do it? What will the efficiency gain look like after the new system has been installed and completely rolled out?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: There are lots of efficiencies to be gained. If the member has been listening to the debate in the last few weeks or to the answers to any of the questions a number of honourable members have raised in this place over a long time, he would know that there are inefficiencies in the current system. Data is held in different places, and it is very difficult at the moment to get granular data. Sometimes it is held at police stations and not centrally, and a lot of the time it is held in a manual format and is not easily accessible. Therefore, to answer questions in this place, an inordinate time has to be spent trawling through papers. That will not happen under the new system. Under the new system, the enhanced accessibility for applicants and licence holders will reduce the time taken for them to complete the application process. That will occur by digitising the process and making it accessible online 24/7 without the need to attend a post office or a third location on multiple occasions, which, in cases, can be a significant distance from the person's address. The registry will be able to let people know the correct fees that need to be paid and the charges that will be structured under the new process. This will make it easier for not only people who need to interact with the licensing and enforcement division, but also police. For members in this place who have an interest in WAPOL and its business, it will certainly help get answers to parliamentary questions. I think Hon Peter Collier may say that this is \$27 million well spent.

Hon WILSON TUCKER: Thank you, minister. Some of those efficiencies sound good at face value. When we talk about providing data to members who ask questions that require interrogating the police database, I imagine that it is quite difficult to put a value in very simple and quantifiable terms because it is potentially more of a technical requirement. However, when we focus on the experience of WA residents and their interactions with the system, can the minister provide anything to quantify what that \$27 million spend will go towards?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I have already given reasons. Certainly, firearm owners who may need to interact with the system are Western Australian residents. From their perspective, it will be helpful. I think that many Western Australian residents would say that holding the agency and the government to account is a good investment to make. To enable police to do the job they need to do in a more efficient fashion and not to have to spend an inordinate amount of time going through pieces of paper may well lead them to do other things, which, again, I think the Western Australian public would support. I see that as a benefit to Western Australians.

Hon WILSON TUCKER: Focusing on the use case of renewing a firearms licence, does the current system have any metrics or service level agreements in place around the processing times of applications?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I am told that we do not currently have metrics. In the case of applying to renew a licence at the moment, a form is mailed out. Those of us who live in or represent regional Western Australia, especially after Australia Post's announcement that we will not get mail every day, know that it can take days and sometimes weeks to get mail to a regional community. If a person who has to interact with licensing enforcement can do it on an online system that is available 24/7, there are significant efficiencies to be gained. There will be efficiencies from that.

Hon WILSON TUCKER: I understand what the minister says when he talks about snail mail taking a long time. That is outside the control of the WA police in the licence renewal process. However, within the four walls of the police department's system is a workflow process over which the police have complete control. Is the minister saying that no SLAs or metrics are being recorded for the processing times under the existing system?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I am told that if an assessment is made on the quality of a licence, it is about the quality of the assessment, not about getting it done in a day, two days, a week or a year. Again, I am told that no, there is not.

Hon WILSON TUCKER: Moving forward, when the new \$27 million system is in place, will service level agreements or key performance indicators be put in place for the processes and workflows that were outlined earlier?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I am told that the only time limit that exists in the current legislation is 42 days, being the number of days before someone can get a licence. No KPIs have been established yet. The biggest KPI in this place, whether it is an annual report or not, is whether MPs can get answers to parliamentary questions in a timely fashion. When the system is operational, we will have a better understanding of how good it is, how efficient it is and how easily we can get answers to questions about data, processing and the like.

Hon WILSON TUCKER: The minister mentioned that there are efficiencies in the new system, which is the point of the system. Obviously, getting answers to parliamentary questions a little quicker would be nice, but spending \$27 million just to cut down the response time—I think Hon Peter Collier would probably agree—is probably a misuse of taxpayers' money.

I am really concerned about the efficiencies that will be introduced in the system if we do not have the baseline for the old system. As the minister mentioned, no metrics or KPIs will be put in place as part of the new system. How can the government quantify the value and justify this \$27 million spend to the taxpayer if it cannot provide

a comparison or any efficiencies in the form of SLAs to people applying for a licence or wishing to renew a licence and all the other workflows that the Western Australian population will have to navigate when they use this very expensive new portal?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: With the greatest of respect, my job this week and over the past few weeks has not been to sell to the Western Australian community the merits of the \$27 million IT system. If the member has questions on what the spend entails, the appropriate place to ask them is during estimates, when the appropriate people—the finance people—will be able to tell him what will be spent over what period of time, and exactly what they are hoping to achieve.

The new system will have automation in place to replace manual handling, including the ongoing check of a person's fit and proper status. As I have indicated in multiple answers, the new system will have a variety of benefits. I read those out to the member. If the member has further questions on the finances or otherwise, I ask him to ask them during the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations hearings.

Hon WILSON TUCKER: I appreciate the minister's consideration and I take his point. I will ask one more question on this and then I will do some further digging during the estimates process.

Just to wrap up this line of questioning, the minister mentioned that this is a cost-recovery process moving forward. Given the efficiencies—I take the minister's point that we have not quantified exactly what the efficiencies are—can Western Australians expect a reduction in their licensing fees given that the new system is about cost recovery and being heralded as a more efficient system? Will that be reflected in licensing costs?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: It is too early to say. We have a bill going through Parliament at the moment. We will work through the regulations next. The costs will be identified at a later stage. I am not in a position to say yes or no, but there certainly will be efficiencies. As to whether the fees will reduce, who knows? I am not sure whether fees ever reduce. Certainly, efficiencies will be gained through people's interaction with the agency and the licensing and enforcement division. Perhaps we can say that there will be economy-wide efficiencies because if people do not have to interact with the police as often, they will probably be able to go about their jobs more efficiently, whether they are pastoralists or the like.

Hon PETER COLLIER: I have a couple of questions on the same theme.

The DEPUTY CHAIR (Hon Dr Sally Talbot): We were going along in a very orderly way, so we will proceed on that basis.

Hon PETER COLLIER: I also have a couple of questions on this issue. They fall pretty much into everything I was talking about yesterday—moving towards a more efficient system with regards to the registration of guns and whether it will serve that purpose. Before I do that, this proves the point, I guess, of why we need the new IT system. Yesterday I tabled a document from the WAPOL website setting out a table of firearm licence types. I went back to look at the response I received to a question. For the benefit of members, I asked how many guns fell into each category. The response I received was that the categories do not exist, yet they were listed on the WAPOL website. This is what is causing confusion, particularly among a lot of gun owners. Can I get a response to that from the minister first?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Analysis of licensing data was performed in 2023 and looked at the number of individual licences with firearms licensed for recreational hunting and shooting and firearms licensed for club or competition. The analysis resulted in the figures that have been quoted numerous times during this debate, so 8.78 per cent for hunters and 2.57 per cent for competition shooters. However, it is important to note that analysis required manual interrogation of the data held by the out-of-date IT system and crosschecking to avoid any duplication. It was a labour-intensive process, with impacted numbers revised over time. It is not possible to simply press a button and obtain the same data for any point in time. The figures produced were estimates only and the estimates were based on the assumption that everyone with firearms licensed for recreational hunting and shooting would transition to a hunting licence under the new system and everyone with firearms licensed for club or competition would transition to a competition shooting licence. That may not be true for every licence holder. Some may transition to other licences, such as a primary producer licence or a business licence. Further, the assumptions were based on the proposed policy and drafting process at that time in 2023, which was obviously prior to the completion of the bill.

The question that the member asked in November last year, question 1475, referred to the licence types proposed to be introduced by this bill which had not yet been finalised at that stage and which do not exactly correspond to the current licence types under the 1973 act. It would not have been possible to determine with respect to each existing licence holder who would transition to what licence and whether they would then be over the proposed limits. That forms part of the work being done by the transition team. Obviously, that was discussed last night and today.

Hon PETER COLLIER: I do not think that is accurate. I will not dwell on this any further. There are specific categories on the WAPOL website, and they say they do not actually exist. I do not think the response that the minister just gave me explains that.

Hon Stephen Dawson: They are on the website talking about what is coming. This is forward looking.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes, but they will fall into a category. They have to.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I think we are comparing apples with oranges. The member's question was probably misunderstood. The categories may well be different from the categories that we currently have, and they may not have the same names as the categories in the Firearms Bill before us.

Hon PETER COLLIER: As I said, I am strident on this. There is so much confusion out there and a complete lack of clarity behind some of the responses I got. I have spent enough time on that; I am not going to repeat it. I am delighted that there will be a new information technology system. I will not go over all the detail that Hon Wilson Tucker has already referred to, but, very briefly, did I hear the minister mention that the system will be implemented by the end of this year?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: No, I did not say that. I said that the implementation has started. The new system has started in some areas. A new IT system has begun operating, but it will not be fully implemented until the 2026 calendar year.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Considering that we have been dealing with this bill for over two years, it is a real shame that that did not start much earlier to be completed earlier because it is causing some problems at the moment. Let me explain. The minister might be interested to know that a lot of people are watching this debate. I do not know about anyone else, but it has been piled on.

I have received a complaint, out of frustration—it is important that the minister hears this—from an actual licensing support officer from the Western Australia Police Force who says that he and his staff are completely inundated and confused at the moment. It is frustrating for them. We would know this because it has been in the media over the last couple of days. They have been given a direction to contact all current applicants who will be affected by the limits proposed in the bill. We know that that is the case. The options being given to the applicants are to reduce their firearms holdings to comply with the new limits; to withdraw their application for a full refund; or, if they still wish to proceed with their application, it will be refused. That is easy for the recreational shooters as the new limits are well understood. However, for those who may have firearms under the recreational hunting and shooting category there was a bit of confusion, and, having spoken to them, they are, in fact, primary producers. Primary producers will be limited to 10 firearms. Some primary producers have more than 10 firearms. The support officer said that they were verbally told by their supervisors that a primary producer could have an individual licence for up to five hunting firearms in addition to the 10 firearms granted under a primary producer licence. Everyone knows that that is simply not the case. Can the minister confirm that a person cannot have two licences?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: No, a person cannot have those.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Thank you. I know that. I would be disappointed if that were the case. There is no reason for this individual to make this complaint. It is not political commentary. He is just expressing his frustration as a licensing support officer working at the firearms licensing support unit. I suggest that somehow this message gets back to the minister and to the licensing support unit. There was no venom in his message. It was a plea for help due to his frustration. There are mixed messages out there. With all due respect, the very average messaging that took place over the last 12 months that was more intent on directing venom towards gun owners than anything, has created these mixed messages. It is staggering that the current system cannot identify whether the firearm used to commit a crime was licensed or unlicensed. I hope that the new IT system will be able to provide that information.

Within the licensing section in WAPOL, has there been an increase in personnel in the last six months to cope with this change in regime? I want to make it clear that it is happening now. The bill has not even gone through and it is happening at the moment, which is extraordinary. I guess they have to be prepared at the same time, but that has put an enormous responsibility and an onerous, dare I say it, workload and stress on those officers. Have additional personnel been placed within the licensing section at WAPOL?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Yes. I will get to that in a second. If the member is being contacted by people from that registry, I urge him to tell them to talk to their supervisors because they are the appropriate people to talk to. It should not be a case of me talking to the minister or anybody else. The member should talk to them and tell them to talk to their supervisor because they have got the wrong end of the stick. I will feed back to the minister's office to make sure that the leadership of the licensing enforcement division are reminding their staff about what is in this bill and what they need to do. In terms of the resourcing question, yes, an extra 33 staff have gone to the division.

Hon Peter Collier: When did that happen?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: In this financial year, on top of the roughly 102—obviously at a point in time—who are already in the division.

Hon LOUISE KINGSTON: I have a couple of questions about the new licensing system. I did not hear the minister mention whether the health checks will be managed through the system. Can the minister elaborate on whether that is the case; and, if not, how will the health checks be managed for people to do them, hopefully, online?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Yes, they will be, honourable member. Sorry, I did not have an exhaustive list. I just gave examples, but the member was quite right to point it out. It will be included as part of the new system.

Hon LOUISE KINGSTON: Hon Wilson Tucker referred to that information being available to only WAPOL. How will the security and sharing of that information be managed? For those people who do not want to use the new system, will there be a manual system that will secure their information?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: The health data will not be provided to the police. It will still be kept at the doctor's surgery. It will be only the doctor's view on the patient that will go to the police. No health data will be stored in the system. In terms of data generally, the agency has an existing data security policy and any data that relates to personally identified information will be handled as per the existing data security policy.

In terms of people being able to apply by other means, substantive quality measures will allow people who cannot use the system to apply in other ways. Those alternative arrangements are being worked on at the moment.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: I thank the minister for his response in his second reading reply to some of the issues I raised. I appreciate that. Notwithstanding my position on the bill, it is good to get a bit of detail in that regard. So much of this bill is yet to be regulated and the regulations remain of some concern to me, but in yesterday's uncorrected *Hansard* the minister said this —

... the regulations will incorporate in some way current storage practice while also applying a graduated storage scheme. This means the greater the number firearms or the higher risk of the firearms such as handguns, the greater the storage requirements.

That is potentially a change to current practice. I do not have a lot of questions but I might start with this. Was a regulatory impact assessment made on this bill or will one be done; and, if so, when might the community expect it?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I am told no, and police are exempt from having to do a regulatory impact statement.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: That is much as expected. Unfortunately, we are not in a position to know what the regulatory impacts will be. It is difficult, because there are various areas to consider and I do not intend to try to prosecute the argument all the way through for all the parts of the regulations that will come, but I will concentrate for a minute on storage to give an example of what might happen. Is the minister in a position to tell us whether, for a small number of firearms that are not high power—the small handgun holder or recreational shooter who has, let us say, two firearms—the current standards of storage, particularly gun safes, will be adequate under the new regulations, accepting that the government does not have regulations it can tell us about? What is the expectation that there will be a significant change in the requirements for the storage of two simple firearms, for example?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Although we have not made a final determination, I am told that some storage will be grandfathered so that licence holders will not be required to change anything—for example, two category A firearms, such as a rifle and a shotgun stored in a residential premise. We anticipate grandfathering the rules; however, we have not made a final determination on that.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: At the lower end, current firearm owners who are doing the right thing may not be particularly impinged upon. Is the minister in a position to tell us when we might know what that impact will be? I am not particularly interested in the impact on existing firearm owners who are not collectors or large gun owners.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: It will be detailed in the regulations. I am told that that element of the regulations is quite advanced; however, I am not in a position to give the member a date as to when we might be able to announce what the requirements will be. Again, I mention that consideration is being given to grandfathering in the case we mentioned earlier in terms of the two category A guns.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: I might ask one more question and then take the opportunity for a 60-second comment at the end. Is there an intent for any firearm owners, particularly for the group we are talking about who have two category A firearms in a currently compliant gun safe within a house or a locked shed, to be required to install security—motion sensors or other electronic security—as part of the registration process?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Electronic monitoring of the land by CCTV would likely involve a combination of self-monitoring or company monitoring, depending on the individual circumstance. Other considerations regarding where the storage is located may also be impacted—that is, an occupied home versus a back shed, or a metropolitan location versus a remote property. They are considerations that are being worked through at the moment.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: It makes it difficult to have a debate about what the impact will be. For example, there are concerns that the average non-heavily invested firearm owner will suddenly have to pay an electronic monitoring company. It is a little problematic to be able to assess that. I think this will be the problem with a fair bit of this legislation. I will not go on about it, because I do not think I can change it or fix it. The situation is a bit like the Aboriginal cultural heritage legislation. The bill itself might be somewhat contentious but the regulations might be significantly worse and the impacts on the honest non-risk firearm owner—I believe they exist—might be burdensome. Some might take the view that the intent is to make it so burdensome that it is unlikely that they continue to be gun owners. That might be an agenda; hopefully, it is not. It will be difficult to assess the impact. Rather than trying to pin down the minister on all the regulations that he cannot comment on at the moment because they are either not written or not public, I urge the government to consider the impacts they are likely to have. The

experience has generally been that regulations come to this place and we debate them and we empower government to provide for regulations—the opposition often does that begrudgingly—and we find that the intent of the regulations is significantly different from the debate we had in the house. That is not a personal slight on the minister; I know he does his work very conscientiously. However, that is the risk with this legislation and it remains a risk. I would rather see many of those things in the act so that we can debate them. Let us see where we end up. Those regulations are a concern. Any reassurance the minister can give us that the regulations will not dramatically shift the workload or increase costs for those who are currently doing the right thing would be greatly appreciated.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Storage is a complex issue and is being thoroughly considered.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas: That is not reassuring though.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: It is to ensure the requirements can be manufactured and delivered to the community with as little impost as possible for all. Obviously, there are issues in terms of where someone is located—whether it is in the metropolitan area or regional area—and whether people are holding these things for work-related, trade-related, or, indeed, personal purposes. The consultation continues on that and the regulations are being worked on. Was the honourable member going to make another comment?

Hon Dr Steve Thomas: I do not think there is much point, unfortunately. No disrespect is intended, but I cannot pin down regulations, so I do not intend to drag it out.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Okay; I might take this opportunity then to answer some questions Hon Martin Aldridge asked me yesterday. He asked about the variance between the 14 000 firearms in the briefing note compared with the 15 000 the minister spoke about recently. The number outlined in the document was an early iteration of the analysis that was undertaken on the potential impact of the proposed legislation, which at that time was still in early draft form and was not anywhere near settled. The number was superseded by the ongoing analysis of firearm data against the different provisions contained within the bill currently before the chamber. I think that briefing note was from February 2023. About six weeks later, an update was undertaken that identified the potential impact at about 21 950 firearms. That number was provided by me to this chamber after that date. I hope that answers that issue. Hon Martin Aldridge can ask me more questions if he needs to.

Obviously, we know now that a briefing note was released in a redacted form in September last year under freedom of information legislation. On 29 May this year, Hon Martin Aldridge asked for those briefing notes to be tabled.

The government was not aware that they had already been obtained under FOI. In the time available to answer questions without notice it was determined that the documents could not be redacted and we could not be confident that they did not contain documents captured by cabinet confidentiality. It is fair to say that had I known that documents had been released, I would have asked further questions. Certainly, a clearer answer could have been provided to the member on the day. I apologise to the member and to the house for the answer I gave on that date. As I said, I am the responsible minister in this place, so I provide answers on behalf of ministers. From time to time, I say that I am not providing the answer today because I have further questions or I am not confident that the answer is correct. In this case, I took the answer that I was given at face value. Again, I apologise to the member for that answer.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: I thank the minister for that explanation. I wonder whether the minister has been able to source the redacted briefing notes that were requested in that question, and is he in a position to table them?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: No, we have not. They have been asked for, but I do not have them yet.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: I think that would be useful, particularly given the police have released them. I make the point that redactions to those documents could be made under the Freedom of Information Act because the information fell outside of the scope of the application or for reasons other than cabinet confidentiality. I ask the minister or the Minister for Police to turn their minds to that point if those briefing notes become available during the course of this debate.

The minister mentioned a figure of 21 950 firearms, which he said he had used in an answer to an earlier question. It appears now to be 15 000 firearms. I wonder about the most recent modelling by Western Australia Police Force on the impact of this bill's policy decisions on firearm reductions. Clearly, Western Australia Police Force has done the modelling on a few occasions. It was done back in February 2023, and then it sounded like some revised modelling was done, I think, six weeks later. I wonder what the latest advice is about the impact on firearm numbers in Western Australia arising from the passage of this bill.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I do not have any further detail to give the member. The licensing enforcement division says that the legislation could potentially take 90 000-odd guns off the streets. Obviously, it does not seem to me that that will be the likely number. A number of numbers have been given in response to questions. The minister thought that 15 000 guns would come off the streets as a result of this.

Hon Martin Aldridge: As a result of the numerical limits?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Yes.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: I make the observation that the government's stated public policy intent is to reduce the number of firearms and, therefore, increase community safety. I find it interesting that in February 2023, the police gave the Minister for Police very specific advice—signed by none other than the Deputy Commissioner of Police—that roughly 130 000 firearms would be reduced by the policy of the bill. I take the minister's comment that the bill has been refined further and those further decisions might have had an impact on that number, but I find it somewhat bizarre that we are unable to provide any sort of specific advice about numbers. I note that there probably would be lower and upper limits based on police modelling of how many firearms are being targeted by this bill.

The figure of at least 130 000, or roughly one in three guns, that was mentioned in the briefing note of February 2023 appears to have been revised to about 90 000 firearms, but we do not have any specificity beyond that, other than about 15 000 firearms of the 90 000 would be related to numerical limits on licences. Other policy measures in the bill, such as health assessments and the new licensing categories and the like, may well reduce those numbers further, but a reduction of 90 000 guns is about the best advice we have at this point in time.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Western Australia Police Force has been given an allocation of money that will allow 98 000 guns to be surrendered through the buyback scheme. That figure is the possible limit, I guess.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: It is within the realm of 90 000 to 130 000, between the February 2023 advice and the latest advice. The point I make, and this is one of the questions I was going to raise later but I will raise it now, is that we were working towards the timeline of the bill passing by August, which was the government's stated timeline, and being implemented maybe late this year or early next year after the IT development and regulation making. That changed fairly rapidly when the bill was declared urgent yesterday. That was something that even the minister's office was not aware of when we had our briefing on Tuesday morning. That was an interesting point that we learned on that occasion. Nevertheless, the bill is now urgent, and the timeline has changed.

The issue is that the buyback scheme ends on 31 August. The buyback scheme has already captured 13 000-odd firearms, and that potentially up to 90 000 firearms could be impacted by this bill. I doubt that many of those impacts will occur prior to 31 August. I doubt that the government will be able to proclaim the bill and its regulations, and have all its systems operational some time sufficiently prior to 31 August. Keep in mind that the transition period in the bill is, I think, a period of two years or something, so this bill will remove firearms over a long period. My questions are: Why do we have such a hard date of 31 August? Is the government considering extending that date? Was an earlier time set to perhaps motivate people to surrender their firearms, but between now and 31 August we will find that another media statement is made to extend the timeline of the buyback?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: The number of firearms that have been returned under the buyback continues to grow. The minister and the agency have funding approved until 31 August, so that is the end date. I cannot hypothesise on future things, but that is the date that has been signed off by cabinet and that the minister and the agency have to work towards.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: It sounds like an administrative decision, but I ask the government to consider that the impact of this bill will be felt over months if not years as WA police transition existing firearm licence holders from the current system to the new system. I do not think we have any chance whatsoever of exhausting this funding by 31 August; I think there is literally zero chance of even getting close. I would like government to consider extending the buyback, with consideration particularly given to the transition period, because police will not be able to do all this on day one. It will have to be done over time.

I cannot remember, but I think 6 000 to 8 000 firearms are likely to be impacted by the implementation of health assessments, and the health assessments will be done over five years. There will be a rolling program of health assessments over five years, and in some instances the health assessments may result in people being refused the continuation of a firearm licence and, therefore, they will have to surrender their firearm. I think the government should at least consider this with regard to the implementation of the legislation and the relevant transition periods, particularly in light of my view that we have zero chance of getting anywhere close to the financial limits applied to the buyback scheme.

I want to take up the line of questioning started by Hon Dr Steve Thomas on storage requirements. When I had my first briefing on this bill—it was a briefing for the opposition—I am pretty sure that Hon Steve Martin asked specifically about the regulation-making powers for storage requirements. We were given a sense at that briefing that the Western Australia Police Force was thinking that the greatest effect was going to be on what are considered higher risk firearms licence holders. They could be a higher risk in terms of the number of firearms or, indeed, the higher calibre they own. A commitment was made by the advisers at that briefing that the draft regulations for storage requirements would be available before the debate commenced in the Legislative Assembly. That commitment was made. It appears, from listening to the exchange with Hon Dr Steve Thomas, that information about the proposed storage requirements under the new legislation is not available. I want to know why that commitment was made and why it is not being honoured.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: The advisers have a different recollection of that meeting. They say the commitment was not made. I again confirm that the regulations are not ready.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: That is certainly not my recollection. I do not know whether my colleagues who were at that briefing can recall anything. I am certain it was Hon Steve Martin who raised the issue towards the end of the briefing. It was effectively neutralised because a commitment was made that the information would be known prior to the debate. It literally became a non-issue because we knew that we would go into the debate in the Assembly with our eyes wide open to the issue of storage requirements at least. I am disappointed that we have different recollections. In fact, I can recall the exact officer who gave that commitment at the briefing.

I will move on to another area. At least two groups were formed as part of the consultation process. One was the Primary Producers Firearms Advisory Board. The other was the health assessment working group. There may have been others but those are the two groups I am aware of. There seems to be varied information around who formed the membership of those groups. Perhaps we can start with whether any other groups were formed to advise the minister on the formation of this bill. With regard to the two groups I am aware of, is the minister able to advise us of their membership?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Is this information needed for the honourable member's next line of questioning? I have seen a list and I have asked the advisers to see whether they can find it in the file. I am not sure that we have it with us now, but I can undertake to get it for the honourable member later if he has other questions to go on with.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: It was going to be the starting point for a number of questions. I assume that those questions may be futile as well. I want to know the product of those working groups. Apart from references to them in media statements, I am not actually sure —

Hon Stephen Dawson: You keep asking questions and I will see if we can get it in the question time break.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: Yes. Apart from the membership of those groups, I am interested to understand what the working group and the advisory board produced and their advice to the minister. Was that to be done formally or informally? I assume that quite a number of stakeholders formed these groups so there would have been some formal recommendations, a communiqué or something of that nature. I am interested to know how frequently they met and how the advice provided to the minister was formed. I think the consultation on the bill was quite early. It was well in advance of the 29-day public consultation period. It was the early work done on some of the policy decisions that resulted in the bill that went out for public consultation. Is that something the minister might want to take on notice or can he provide some advice on that now?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I have written down the questions the honourable member asked and we will undertake to see whether we can provide an answer to him later today; and, if not, tomorrow.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: I have raised another issue in my contribution to the second reading debate and in parliamentary questions. I know we have not been able to make much progress on the storage requirements issue. I find it most interesting that such a data-driven organisation as the Western Australia Police Force is unable to ascertain specifically how many firearms storage facilities are inspected annually. Anyway, that issue was canvassed yesterday.

I asked the minister about seeking access to one submission dated 9 February 2016 made by the Western Australia Police Force to the Law Reform Commission of Western Australia's consideration of the Firearms Act in the report *Review of the Firearms Act 1973 (WA): Project 105 final report*. I asked to access that submission on 14 May. Is the minister in a position to table that submission to the Law Reform Commission?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: No, honourable member, I am not. I do not have any of the submissions to the Law Reform Commission, but I am told that the agency is currently working through that parliamentary question.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: The problem is that the minister declared the bill urgent yesterday. The house has resolved the question of whether this bill should go to a parliamentary committee. I asked the question, and I was instructed to put that question on notice. On Tuesday morning, we had a briefing on the government's amendments at which Hon Peter Collier asked why the timeline for this bill has changed. The Minister for Police's office and the advisers said that it has not changed and we are still on track for August. What is the minister talking about? We are talking about the fact that yesterday a declaration was made that this bill is urgent. Unbeknownst to the Minister for Police and his office, this bill now needs to pass by dusk—maybe not by dusk, but by midnight next Tuesday. The problem is access to the document, the submission WA Police Force made to the Law Reform Commission on 9 February 2016. I am sure WA Police Force is more than capable of identifying one document in its filing cabinet prior to this bill passing on Tuesday. In fact, I am sure WAPOL could do it before we rise today—it could identify that one document in the filing cabinet and have it tabled in this house. It is hardly a top-secret document. It was a submission by WA Police Force to the Law Reform Commission on 9 February 2016. I think the reason the government will resist the tabling of this document, as it continues to do, is because, as the Law Reform Commission's report pointed out, WA Police Force agreed with the Law Reform Commission's view about not supporting numerical limits for firearms. That is the reason WA Police Force suddenly cannot find the file in the filing cabinet. It is because WA Police Force agreed with the Law Reform Commission. If WAPOL had supported the government's newly found view now that there should be numerical limits, the document would probably have been tabled months ago.

But, once again, this is the behaviour we see in the Legislative Council with seven hours and 49 minutes counting down on the guillotine. We will not see this document tabled in the remaining time because it shows that in 2016, WA Police Force did not support the view of the government in 2024.

Another issue I want to take up with the minister is one I took up with him when he and I last had an exchange on a firearms amendment bill, which I think might have been in 2021. I set a challenge for the government and WA Police Force to do more in the interests of community safety about educating firearms licence holders and potential firearms licence holders about the things they could practically do, which do not require regulation, legislation or buybacks, to improve firearm safety in Western Australia. In my contribution to the second reading debate, I talked about the Department of Transport's work around recreational skippers and those seeking to obtain a motor vehicle or motorbike licence. These are not unfair comparisons because, of course, the government has used similar comparisons between licences held by motor vehicle users and firearms licence holders.

I can assure members that not much has changed on the WA Police Force website since 2021 when we last had this discussion, apart from a whole bunch of stuff now about the firearm reform project. There is literally no information available from WA police on its website that informs even to a very minimal level about things that can be practically done by firearms licence holders or those seeking a firearms licence to improve firearm safety. The police could produce an equivalent to the Department of Transport's *Ride Safe* handbook called "Gun Safe". The only thing on WAPOL's website is an explanation of the requirements about the storage of firearms. Why do we entirely lack any sense of innovation in the licensing enforcement division—any? There is literally no guidance, no handbook, no guidance material, interpretation of legislation or video tutorials. There is literally nothing apart from advice about the storage of firearms with respect to the regulations. The website is literally void of any information for firearms licence holders or those people seeking to gain a firearms licence about how they can safely use, store, carry, service or maintain a firearm and, importantly, how the law might apply to them in different circumstances. For example, that is exactly what the Department of Transport's handbook on the recreational skipper's ticket does. It tells us about the laws of the water, how to safely maintain a vessel and things a person can practically do to ensure the safety of themselves and those around them. If the paramount concern of the government is community safety, why in 2024, still, with a \$27 million IT build underway, is nobody in WA Police Force turning their mind to these practical issues that cost very little?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: There is information on the website about how to store and transport guns. If the member is asking for a glossy, one does not exist at the moment. There is practical information about how to do certain things or what the requirements are, but the member has made his point.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: I will not flog a dead horse, minister, like I have done over the course over the last few amendment bills we have considered on this issue, because nothing has changed, but it leads me to ask a question—this is a personal view, not a party or opposition view—about whether WA Police Force is even the right agency for, at least, the licensing of firearms. The Department of Transport has very significant systems for licensing motor vehicles and vessels. In fact, my firearms licence has the same number as my motor vehicle licence, so there is some correlation between the two. Obviously, police will quite rightly always have an enforcement function under the Firearms Act, it is the best agency to do that, but I have serious doubts about whether it has the capacity, will continue to have the capacity or, indeed, is the right agency to regulate firearms in Western Australia. The government likes to espouse that we are leading the nation in many ways and showing other states how to do things. I think the government should reflect on this because WA police has had plenty of opportunities to take up in the interests of community safety and it has not.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I draw the honourable member's attention to the department's website where there is a link to the *National firearms safety code*, which is a glossy document from the federal Attorney-General's Department that sets out how people can be aware of their responsibilities in relation to themselves, their families, fellow shooters and the community. It lists the code and what is required under the code. It is a helpful document. I draw this to the member's attention—perhaps it might answer his question.

I have further answers to give, but they will take more than the minute we have available, so we might move on to question time.

Committee interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 2832.]

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

POLICE — RESIGNATIONS AND RETIREMENTS

669. Hon PETER COLLIER to the minister representing the Minister for Police:

- (1) How many police resigned in May 2024?
- (2) Of those referred to in (1), how many were —
 - (a) male;

- (b) female; and
 - (c) other?
- (3) How many police retired in May 2024?
- (4) What was the total number of police in Western Australia on 31 May 2024?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. I provide this answer on behalf of the Minister for Emergency Services.

The WA Police Force advises the following.

- (1) There were 20.
- (2) (a) There were 19;
- (b) one; and
- (c) zero.
- (3) Three.
- (4) The total was 7 083.

POLICE — PROTECTIVE ORDERS AND POLICE ESCORTS

670. Hon PETER COLLIER to the minister representing the Minister for Police:

I refer the minister to his response to question without notice 611 on Thursday, 30 May 2024, and in particular the comment that —

The threshold requirements of a police order are derived through legislation ...

What are the specific requirements of a police order, as identified through legislation?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question. I provide this answer on behalf of the Minister for Emergency Services.

The Western Australia Police Force applies section 30A of the Restraining Orders Act 1997. For the benefit of the honourable member, I table the relevant section of that act.

[See paper [3228](#).]

SERVICE JETTY — BUNBURY OUTER HARBOUR

671. Hon COLIN de GRUSSA to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Ports:

I refer to the conversion of the service jetty located at the Bunbury outer harbour to an accessible fishing jetty by the Southern Ports Authority in 2020.

- (1) Why did the Southern Ports Authority proceed with the conversion of the jetty when a condition assessment clearly indicated the limited life span of the existing jetty?
- (2) What communication took place between the Southern Ports Authority and the state government prior to any decision to upgrade the jetty?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

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

- (1) The conversion of the service jetty was undertaken to fulfil an operational need for the Southern Ports Authority to house its pilot boats. The structural assessment clearly stated that, with repairs, the service jetty could be suitable for continued use for the next five to 10 years. The area, including the service jetty, was planned to be transitioned to the Department of Transport for the Transforming Bunbury's Waterfront project within the same timeframe and was never intended to be a long-term asset for the port or community.
- (2) Southern Ports Authority discussed the proposal with several agencies, including the Department of Transport and the South West Development Commission.

PARLIAMENTARY COUNSEL'S OFFICE — BILLS — DRAFTING APPROVAL

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

I refer to the legislative priorities of the government.

How many bills is the Parliamentary Counsel's Office currently drafting?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question. The Attorney General has provided me with the following answer. There are currently 77 bills with approval to draft.

SCHOOL CHAPLAINCY PROGRAM

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

I refer to the answer provided to question without notice 1204 asked on 11 October 2023 regarding a grant agreement between the Department of Education and YouthCARE for the delivery of the school principals' chaplaincy program, which advised that the agreement would expire on 30 June 2024.

- (1) Has the grant agreement been extended or renewed beyond 30 June 2024?
- (2) If yes to (1), when will the new agreement expire and how much funding has been allocated to the program in 2024–25?
- (3) If no to (1), why not?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

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

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The new expiry date will be 31 December 2024 and \$223 419, inclusive of GST, has been allocated.
- (3) Not applicable.

STRATEGIC INDUSTRIES FUND

674. Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS to the minister representing the Minister for State and Industry Development, Jobs and Trade:

I refer to the budget announcement of \$500 million for a strategic industries fund to unlock development in 13 strategic industrial areas.

- (1) What specific funding allocation has been apportioned across each of the 13 SIAs and how much of the \$500 million is already committed to each of the Kwinana and Rockingham SIAs?
- (2) Why is the Peel SIA linked to the Karratha SIA, which is 1 600 kilometres away, and why is this combination limited to \$20 million?
- (3) Why is the goldfields SIA linked to the south west SIAs, which are only 700 kilometres apart, and why is this combination limited to \$20 million?
- (4) How much of the south west funding will be directed to providing key and desperately needed services of roads, water, wastewater and power to the Kemerton SIA?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. I provide this answer on behalf of the Minister for Emergency Services.

- (1) Up to \$126 million is allocated for the Kwinana and Rockingham strategic industrial areas, comprising \$125 million allocated to Latitude 32 in Kwinana and \$1 million for the Australian Marine Complex at Henderson. A further \$20 million is allocated for SIAs in the goldfields and south west regions.
- (2) The allocation is for general industrial land in Peel and Karratha, as opposed to SIAs. It is not linked; it is an aggregate amount for general industrial land in these regions.
- (3) It represents an aggregate amount for SIAs in these regions without suggesting any direct links.
- (4) This will be determined through business case development for the Kemerton SIA.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE PAYMENT

675. Hon NEIL THOMSON to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Education:

I refer to the WA student assistance payment.

- (1) Statewide, how many claims have been made for eligible schoolchildren under the WA student assistance program to date?
- (2) How many eligible schoolchildren are there in the state?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

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

- (1) Claims for 336 455 students have been paid.
- (2) There are 492 078.

FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE — FUNDING SUPPORT

676. Hon SOPHIA MOERMOND to the minister representing the Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence:

I refer to yesterday's media statement, which said that the Cook government has committed \$7 million in funding support to victim-survivors of family and domestic violence in Western Australia.

Can the minister table the list of the more than 40 organisations that will share in the funding?

Hon JACKIE JARVIS replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. The following response has been provided by the Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence.

The Department of Communities has provided a list. I seek leave to incorporate the list of organisations into *Hansard*.

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

Funding for the flexible support packages is provided to a range of organisations that deliver family and domestic violence accommodation services and Safe at Home services across Western Australia.

The following organisations will receive funding in 2024/2025. These organisations are:

Allambee Counselling Inc.
 Anglicare WA Inc.
 CFSS WA Ltd.
 City of Stirling
 Comunicare Inc.
 Community Focus National Ltd.
 Desert Blue Connect Inc.
 Esperance Crisis Accommodation Service Inc.
 Gawooleng Yawoodeng Aboriginal Corporation
 Goldfields Women's Refuge Association Inc.
 Hedland Women's Refuge Inc.
 Indigo Junction Inc. (Eastern Region Domestic Violence Services Network Inc.)
 Mamin Bowa Dumbara Aboriginal Corporation
 Maminwartikura Fitzroy Women's Resource Centre Aboriginal Corporation
 Mamja Jarndu Women's Refuge Inc.
 Mawarnkarra Health Service
 Mission Australia
 Nardine Wimmin's Refuge
 Newman Women's Shelter Inc.
 Ngaringga Ngurra Aboriginal Corporation
 Ngnowar-Aerwah Aboriginal Corporation
 One Tree Community Services Inc.
 Orana House Inc.
 Pat Thomas House Inc. trading as OVIS Community Services
 Pilbara Community Legal Service Inc.
 Rise Network Inc.
 Ruah Community Services
 Salvation Army (WA) Property Trust
 Share & Care Community Services Group Inc.
 South West Refuge Inc.
 Starick Services Inc.
 The Lucy Saw Centre Association Inc.
 The Patricia Giles Centre Inc.
 UnitingCare West trading as Uniting WA
 Waratah Support Centre (South West Region) Inc.
 Women's Health Care Association Inc.
 Wungening Aboriginal Corporation
 Zonta House Refuge Association Inc.

Additional organisations will receive funding through this initiative once the procurement process is completed for the 3 new Safe at Home services.

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING — THIS IS CLIMATE ACTION

677. Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:

I refer to Paul Murray's opinion piece in *The West Australian* of Saturday, 1 June 2024 in which it was reported that the Cook Labor government disclosed that the campaign budget for climate action in WA is \$2.7 million, and the response to question without notice 410 on 8 May 2024.

Why was the government unable to give a figure for the climate action in WA campaign spend when asked in Parliament on 8 May 2024 but was able to answer the question from Paul Murray approximately three weeks later?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

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

Legislative Council question without notice 410 did not request the budget allocation for the campaign; rather, it requested the allocation for advertisements and sponsored media posts.

HOMELESSNESS — ENTRYPOINT PERTH

678. Hon WILSON TUCKER to the minister representing the Minister for Homelessness:

I refer to my previous question regarding Entrypoint Perth. It has been confirmed to me that Entrypoint is not required to provide call metrics but does so voluntarily.

Given this context, could the minister please provide a list of the categories and metrics that Entrypoint provides to the Department of Communities and table the most recent data provided?

Hon JACKIE JARVIS replied:

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

The Department of Communities advises that the requested data cannot be provided within the time required. Should the member wish to place the question on notice, the minister will endeavour to provide a response.

SOUTH COAST MARINE PARK

679. Hon Dr BRIAN WALKER to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Environment:

I refer the minister to Professor Jessica Meeuwig's piece in today's *The West Australian* that urges the Cook government to listen to the science as it finalises its plans for the south coast marine park.

Given that as many as 34 leading Australian marine scientists have co-signed a submission supporting stronger marine protection, as outlined in the article, will the minister table that submission; and, if not, why not?

Hon SAMANTHA ROWE replied:

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

No. Submissions provided to the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions are treated confidentially. An analysis of submissions will be made public when the management plans for the south coast marine park are gazetted.

LIVE EXPORT — MEAT INDUSTRY WORKERS — UNION REPRESENTATION

680. Hon BEN DAWKINS to the Minister for Agriculture and Food:

My question without notice, of which none has been given, is to the Minister for Agriculture and Food.

In the last 12 months, what communication has the minister had with any of the unions representing abattoir workers concerning the proposed ban on live sheep exports?

Hon Sue Ellery: How could she answer that without looking at her diary?

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon JACKIE JARVIS replied:

Several unions represent abattoirs. I note that the Western Australian Meat Industry Authority has in its act a requirement for someone representing the workers—being a union representative—to be on its board, but it has been unable to find someone suitable, mainly because I believe only one representative represents the majority of the meat workers. I have met him. I could not tell the member whether it was within the last 12 months, but I have met him at some time during this term of government. To be honest, I cannot remember the full name of the union.

It might be the Australian meat workers union; that is the best I can do. If the member can put the question on notice, I can certainly check my diary, as the Leader of the House has kindly suggested.

GERALDTON HEALTH CAMPUS — REDEVELOPMENT

681. Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Health:

I refer to the media event held at Geraldton Health Campus on 6 June 2024 when the minister participated in a second sod turning for the same long-awaited and much-anticipated project.

- (1) Was the front-end loader used as a backdrop for the announcement already on the site for works or was it brought in for the media event?
- (2) Why was it necessary to conduct a second sod turning for a project when the sod had already been turned some four years prior?
- (3) Did the minister take the opportunity to recycle the same shovels used by the former Minister for Health and now Premier four years prior?
- (4) When will the redevelopment of Geraldton Health Campus be complete, and can the minister guarantee that there will be no further cost blowouts associated with the project?

Hon PIERRE YANG replied:

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

- (1) The front-end loader was already on site.
- (2) The sod turning had not previously occurred for main works on the Geraldton Health Campus redevelopment. A sod turning occurred for forward works.
- (3) The shovels were supplied by the WA Country Health Service.
- (4) Building market conditions were significantly impacted by the pandemic. The Western Australian government remains committed to the \$166.1 million redevelopment of Geraldton Health Campus. Works are expected to reach completion in 2026.

FIREARMS — BUYBACK PROGRAM

682. Hon LOUISE KINGSTON to the Minister for Police:

I refer to the minister's response to question without notice 559 regarding how many firearms have been voluntarily surrendered to WA police.

- (1) Will the minister provide an update on how many firearms have been voluntarily surrendered to date?
- (2) How much of the allocated \$64.3 million has been expended to date?
- (3) Were any of the firearms surrendered pursuant to section 33B of the Firearms Act 1973, "Amnesty for things surrendered to Commissioner"?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

On behalf of the minister representing the Minister for Police, I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

The Western Australia Police Force has provided the following advice.

- (1) The number of firearms that have been voluntarily surrendered to date is 12 608, as at 4 June 2024.
- (2) To date, \$4 677 214 has been expended, as at 31 May 2024.
- (3) No.

CORRUPTION AND CRIME COMMISSION — POLICE INVESTIGATION — OVERSIGHT

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

I refer to media reports revealing that the Corruption and Crime Commissioner has decided to exercise its powers to independently monitor and review the internal investigation by the Western Australia Police Force into the handling of repeated warnings and requests for help from the family of Floreat murderer, Mark Bombara.

- (1) How many allegations of police misconduct have been received by the CCC in this calendar year?
- (2) Of those, how many has the commission decided to exercise its powers under section 33(1)(a) of the Corruption, Crime and Misconduct Act 2003 to independently investigate without the involvement of WA police?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question, which was originally asked yesterday. These figures are up to date as of yesterday.

- (1) The CCC has received 495 allegations regarding WA police misconduct.
- (2) One.

APPRENTICESHIPS AND TRAINEESHIPS — SCHOOL-BASED

684. Hon STEVE MARTIN to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Training and Workforce Development:

I refer to school-based apprenticeships and traineeships.

- (1) How many students completed an SBAT in 2021, 2022 and 2023?
- (2) For each of those years, how many were in building and construction?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question. The following answer has been provided to me by the Minister for Training and Workforce Development.

- (1) It was 1 161 in 2021, 1 064 in 2022 and 970 in 2023.
- (2) It was 37 in 2021, 25 in 2022 and 24 in 2023.

COMMUNITY PROTECTION (OFFENDER REPORTING) ACT — REFORM

685. Hon PETER COLLIER to the minister representing the Minister for Police:

I refer to the minister's response to question without notice 500 asked on 15 May 2024.

- (1) Is it the intention of the Labor government to include young adults on the register to apply to have their reporting obligations and names removed from the sex offender register?
- (2) Is it the intention of the Labor government to include those with a spent conviction order on the register to apply to have their reporting obligations and names removed from the sex offender register?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

On behalf of the minister representing the Minister for Police, I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1)–(2) As the honourable member has been previously advised, the state government is progressing the drafting of the amendments to the Community Protection (Offender Reporting) Act 2004. It would not be appropriate to provide further comment on those amendments until the process has been finalised. It is anticipated that legislation will be introduced into Parliament this year.

DROUGHT — EQUESTRIAN INDUSTRY — FODDER AND HAY

686. Hon COLIN de GRUSSA to the Minister for Agriculture and Food:

I refer to the lack of availability of hay and fodder to the equestrian industry and horse owners.

- (1) Has the minister or the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development met with the industry on this issue?
- (2) Has the minister received any communication from horse owners regarding their inability to access hay or fodder for their horses?
- (3) Has DPIRD undertaken any investigation on the potential animal welfare issues that may arise as a consequence of horse owners not being able to access feed or fodder?
- (4) What strategies has the government investigated to resolve the issue?

Hon JACKIE JARVIS replied:

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

- (1)–(4) The Cook government knows that rural communities across Western Australia have been doing it tough because of the challenging season. It should be noted that recent rainfall has provided some relief. As part of our significant \$8.6 million funding package for drought-affected farmers, horse owners who derive 50 per cent of their income from primary production may be eligible for financial support. The owners of companion animals are responsible for the welfare of their animals. Anyone who may have concerns about the welfare of companion animals should contact the RSPCA on 1300 278 358.

LLOYD STREET BRIDGE PROJECT

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

I refer to the Lloyd Street Bridge extension project, which is presently stalled.

- (1) What was the project's original level of funding and what was the split of funding sources between the commonwealth, state and local governments?
- (2) How much has been spent on the project to date and on which aspects of the project?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

On behalf of the minister representing the Minister for Transport, I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1)–(2) The original budget was \$40 million, with \$20 million from the commonwealth, \$13.33 million from the state and \$6.67 million from the City of Swan.

CHILD AND PARENT CENTRES

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

For each child and parent centre in Western Australia, will the minister advise the total amount of funding allocated for the 2023–24 financial year?

Hon JACKIE JARVIS replied:

I have a question that is worded slightly differently. I will check that.

DESIGNATED AREA MIGRATION AGREEMENTS

689. Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Training and Workforce Development:

I refer to the delivery of designated area migration agreements—DAMAs—by the federal government after discussions with the state government.

- (1) Is the state government negotiating or promoting a statewide DAMA for Western Australia?
- (2) If yes to (1), why?
- (3) How will the government prevent the new statewide DAMA from undermining the existing south west and goldfields DAMAs?
- (4) Will the existing DAMAs either be closed or merged with the new statewide DAMA or remain separate and have to compete directly with the statewide DAMA in the future?
- (5) Why is the government undermining the existing DAMAs?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question. The following answer has been provided to me by the Minister for Training and Workforce Development.

- (1)–(5) Western Australia's strong economy means that there is continued strong demand for skilled workers. Western Australia's allocation under the state nominated migration program has been significantly reduced by the commonwealth government. We continue to advocate strongly to see an increase in migration numbers. All options to address these demands are on the table and are being explored in consultation with unions, industry and regional communities. Any existing designated area migration agreements are in place with the commonwealth government.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE PAYMENT

690. Hon NEIL THOMSON to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Education:

I refer to the WA school student assistance payment. Please provide figures for the following regions in tabular form.

- (1) How many claims have been made for eligible schoolchildren under the WA student assistance payment program to date?
- (2) How many eligible children are there in the following regions —
 - (a) the Kimberley; and
 - (b) the Pilbara?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

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

I know that the member is asking for the information in tabular form, but he is asking for information for only two regions, so it is not in tabular form.

- (1) Claims for 336 455 students have been paid.
- (2)
 - (a) There are 7 088 eligible children.
 - (b) There are 10 856 eligible children.

PRACTICAL DRIVING ASSESSMENTS — WAIT TIMES

691. Hon SOPHIA MOERMOND to the Leader of the House representing the Minister Assisting the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the delays in booking practical driving assessments across Western Australia and recognise that the government is continuing to assess its service delivery in high-demand regions.

- (1) What is the average waiting time for practical driving assessments in the Perth metropolitan area?
- (2) What is the average waiting time in the south west?
- (3) What changes have been made to address increased demand, particularly in regional WA?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

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

- (1) There is no waitlist for practical driving assessments.
- (2) As at 11.30 this morning, practical driving assessments were available at the Department of Transport's regional Bunbury and Busselton offices over the next two weeks.
- (3) Demand for practical driving assessments is regularly monitored and local resources are redeployed to meet any peaks in customer demands.

PROPOSED ARTIFICIAL REEFS — THEVENARD ISLAND

692. Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Fisheries:

I refer to the proposal by Chevron to transform disused oil and gas infrastructure from the Thevenard Island operations into artificial reefs and to transfer ongoing responsibility for this infrastructure to the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development.

- (1) Has ownership of the infrastructure transferred between Chevron and the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development?
- (2) If ownership has not transferred and this proposal proceeds, when is this transfer intended to occur?
- (3) If this proposal proceeds, what is the ongoing cost to the WA government associated with taking on ownership of this infrastructure—for example, ongoing monitoring, maintenance and end-of-life decommissioning?

Hon KYLE McGINN replied:

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

- (1) No.
- (2) This is not yet determined.
- (3) This would be subject to further consideration.

SCHOOLS — ENROLMENTS — TOWN OF PORT HEDLAND

693. Hon WILSON TUCKER to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Education:

Can the minister please provide total student enrolment figures per calendar year since 2017 for each government school in the Town of Port Hedland?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

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

I have the information that the honourable member requested.

The enrolments for public schools in the Town of Port Hedland from 2017 to 2024, noting that these are enrolments as at the semester 1 census, are set out in tabular form. I seek leave to have the table incorporated into *Hansard*.

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

Enrolments for public schools in the Town of Port Hedland from 2017 to 2024^(a)

School Name	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
BALER PRIMARY SCHOOL	593	577	591	543	555	547	543	557
CASSIA EDUCATION SUPPORT CENTRE	20	15	15	18	17	26	36	43
CASSIA PRIMARY SCHOOL	488	514	562	601	572	555	490	466
HEDLAND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL	834	846	879	931	999	1022	1045	1091
PORT HEDLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL	475	444	515	524	546	524	544	489

PORT HEDLAND SCHOOL OF THE AIR	24	25	18	24	18	23	27	21
SOUTH HEDLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL	206	229	231	249	241	256	259	261
YANDEYARRA REMOTE COMMUNITY	33	35	32	35	23	20	23	27

^(a) Enrolments as at the Semester 1 student census each year.

MEDICAL CANNABIS — RESEARCH

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

I refer the minister to a recent groundbreaking study from medical scientists at the University of Arizona, which concludes that terpenes found in the cannabis plant rival morphine as a painkiller for those suffering chronic pain, while having fewer adverse side effects.

- (1) Is this research being monitored by the Department of Health?
- (2) If no to (1), why not?
- (3) Since a medicinal cannabis advisory body might rightly bring this sort of scientific evidence to the minister's attention in a timely manner, why are we still lacking such a body here in Western Australia, 12 months after the government agreed in principle to establish one?

Hon PIERRE YANG replied:

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

- (1)–(3) The Western Australian government supported in principle the recommendations of the report of the Select Committee into Cannabis and Hemp to conduct a feasibility study on a cannabis advisory service. The Department of Health is undertaking this work. Medicinal cannabis is already accessible in Western Australia as a prescription medicine.

BIRTHS, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES REGISTRATION AMENDMENT (SEX OR GENDER CHANGES) BILL 2024

695. Hon BEN DAWKINS to the minister representing the Minister for Community Services:

I refer to the WA government media statement of 23 February 2024, with the headline “New LGBTQIA+ inclusion strategy to promote equality”, and specifically that the organisation Living Proud has been or will be the recipient of government funds to conduct the strategy and action plan.

- (1) Does the minister agree with the definitions made by Living Proud in the glossary section of its *Gender Questioning* newsletter published on its website, namely, that the word “sex” is usually used to describe our biology, whether we are born with a penis or a vagina, and the word “gender” describes how we are expected to act as a male or a female?
- (2) Does the minister agree with the definitions provided by Living Proud with respect to sex and gender?
- (3) If yes to (2), will the minister support the inclusion of these, or similar definitions, as amendments to the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Amendment (Sex or Gender Changes) Bill 2024?
- (4) If no to (2), will the minister provide the government's definitions of “gender” and “sex”?

The PRESIDENT: Just before I give you the call, minister, there were two parts to that question, and I thought I heard a request for an opinion in each of those parts. If that is the case, from memory, standing order 105(1)(b) requires that questions without notice shall not seek an opinion. I have noted that that has occurred a number of times. Nevertheless, on this occasion, I will allow the minister to attempt to provide an answer, but note that seeking an opinion definitely breaches the standing orders and may be ruled out of order next time.

Hon JACKIE JARVIS replied:

Thank you, President. I have received the following response from the Minister for Community Services, which does indeed ask me to draw the member's attention to standing order 105(1)(b). It would appear that this question is out of order, so I do not have a response.

PREMIER — GERALDTON — TRAVEL

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

I refer to the Premier's travel to Geraldton on or about 5 and 6 June 2024.

- (1) Was a private charter aircraft used for any portion of the travel?
- (2) If yes to (1), what was the cost of air charter associated with this travel?
- (3) If yes to (1), what was the departure and arrival destination for each leg of the chartered flight?
- (4) If yes to (1), what was the reason why government aircraft were not available for this travel?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

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

- (1)–(4) The Premier travelled to Kununurra and Geraldton between 4 and 6 June 2024. Due to unscheduled maintenance, the government aircraft was not available for the return journey from Geraldton to Perth. As such, alternative transport was arranged by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. The department is not liable for any costs associated with this travel. All remaining transport, including from Perth to Kununurra and Kununurra to Geraldton, was undertaken on the government aircraft.

POLICE DONATION — FIREARM STOCKS — SUBIACO MEN’S SHED

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

I refer to the donation of firearm stocks to the Subiaco Community Men’s Shed by the Western Australia Police Force from the surrendered firearms.

- (1) Does the Minister for Police consider a firearm stock a “major firearm part” under the Firearms Act 1973?
 (2) If no to (1), why not?
 (3) Were the firearm stocks donated to the Subiaco men’s shed modified?
 (4) If yes to (3), how?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

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

- (1)–(4) Western Australia Police Force advise that the stocks provided to the Subiaco men’s shed were rendered in such a manner that it was no longer considered a major firearm part.

CHILDREN IN CARE — WHEREABOUTS UNKNOWN

698. Hon NICK GOIRAN to the minister representing the Minister for Child Protection:

I refer to the answer to my question without notice on 28 May 2024.

- (1) Has the child recorded as unaccounted for—not in contact been found?
 (2) For how many days was the whereabouts of the child unknown?
 (3) How many children who are in the care of the CEO have their whereabouts currently recorded as —
 (a) unaccounted for—in contact;
 (b) unaccounted for—not in contact; and
 (c) missing?
 (4) In this calendar year, how many children have had their whereabouts recorded in one of these three categories on more than one occasion—in other words, repeat episodes?

Hon JACKIE JARVIS replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. The following response has been provided by the Minister for Child Protection. I note that the response was correct as of yesterday, Tuesday, 11 June. The Department of Communities advises the following as of 11 June 2024.

- (1) Yes.
 (2) It was 19 days.
 (3) (a) There are two children.
 (b) There is nil.
 (c) There is nil.
 (4) There are 48 children. Out of the 48 children and young people, only 10 per cent of the instances relate to the child or young person being recorded as missing.

SOCIAL HOUSING — ALTERNATIVE CONSTRUCTION METHODS

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

I refer to the minister’s media statement on 20 March 2024.

How many social homes have been built over the last 12 months using the alternative construction methods identified as —

- (a) modular builds;
 (b) timber frame;

- (c) prefabrication; and
- (d) steel construction?

Hon JACKIE JARVIS replied:

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

From 1 July 2023 to 30 April 2024, the Department of Communities has added 754 social housing dwellings. Of these, 192 dwellings have been delivered through alternative build methods.

- (a) For modular, there were 43.
- (b) For timber frame, there were 81.
- (c) For prefabrication or structural insulated panel, there were 12.
- (d) For metal frame, there were 56.

BUNBURY REGIONAL PRISON — STAFF COMPLAINTS

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

- (1) How many bullying complaints by staff against staff have there been at Bunbury Regional Prison in 2024 to date?
- (2) How many sexual harassment complaints by staff against staff have there been at Bunbury Regional Prison in 2024 to date?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the Leader of the Opposition for some notice of the question. The Department of Justice advises the following.

- (1) There have been six.
- (2) There has been one.

ELECTORAL AMENDMENT (FINANCE AND OTHER MATTERS) ACT — IMPLEMENTATION

701. Hon TJORN SIBMA to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Electoral Affairs:

I refer to the 10 May correspondence sent to the Electoral Commissioner by the senior office bearers of four registered political parties seeking an urgent meeting to discuss a number of serious matters relating to the implementation of key provisions of the Electoral Amendment (Finance and Other Matters) Act 2023.

- (1) Was the 10 May letter replied to; and, if so, can the minister please table that reply?
- (2) Did a meeting or meetings occur as a result of that request; and, if so, on what date or dates?
- (3) What was or were the outcome or outcomes of the meeting or meetings?
- (4) Which specific transparency and accountability provisions will be operational by 1 July, and what contingency arrangements will be put in place for all provisions if that deadline proves impossible for the Western Australian Electoral Commission to achieve?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question. The following answers have been provided to me by the Minister for Electoral Affairs.

- (1) Yes, the letter was replied to, and I table that document.

[See paper [3229](#).]

- (2) Yes, on 14 May 2024 the Deputy Electoral Commissioner met with the representatives of the registered political parties.
- (3) The following occurred after this meeting. The Western Australian Electoral Commission —
 - (a) had a scheduled briefing on disclosure requirements with the registered political parties brought forward to 17 May 2024;
 - (b) committed to further briefing sessions on legislative amendments impacting candidates and parties, the first of which will occur on 17 July 2024; and
 - (c) acknowledged the parties' concerns about communications to date and undertook work internally to enhance its communications processes.
- (4) From 1 July 2024, the political entities will have responsibilities relating to disclosing political contributions, maintaining state campaign accounts and recording political expenditure. The commission is currently working with registered political parties, progressing the development of the online disclosure system as well a series of user guidelines for political entities that provide practical explanations of how the new provisions will work.

RACING AND WAGERING WESTERN AUSTRALIA — DR KATAKASI*Question without Notice 666 — Answer*

HON STEPHEN DAWSON (Mining and Pastoral — Minister for Emergency Services) [5.04 pm]: I would like to provide an answer to Hon Dr Brad Pettitt's question without notice 666, asked yesterday.

I seek leave to have the response incorporated into *Hansard*.

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

-
- (1) Dr John Katakasi is not engaged through direct contract, direct employment, sponsorship or as a volunteer by Racing and Wagering WA (RWWA). Dr Katakasi was engaged by RWWA for a one-off presentation at its seminar, "Hock Fractures in Racing Greyhounds: Practical Strategies for Prevention", at Cannington racetrack on Friday, 16 February 2024.
 - (2) N/A
 - (3) A researcher with expertise in veterinary epidemiology is conducting the study.
-

CHILD AND PARENT CENTRES*Question without Notice 688 — Answer Advice*

HON JACKIE JARVIS (South West — Minister for Agriculture and Food) [5.04 pm]: Earlier today, Hon Donna Faragher asked a question. I have been given two different versions of the question. I will give the member an answer tomorrow once we have sorted it out.

FIREARMS BILL 2024*Committee*

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting. The Deputy Chair of Committees (Hon Dr Brian Walker) in the chair; Hon Stephen Dawson (Minister for Emergency Services) in charge of the bill.

Clause 1: Short title —

Committee was interrupted after the clause had been partly considered.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: If the honourable member does not mind, I have some answers that I will provide. Earlier on, Hon Martin Aldridge asked about the health assessment working group and the Primary Producers Firearms Advisory Board. The health assessment working group members were Commander Lawrence Panaia, who was the chair, from the Western Australia Police Force; Acting Inspector Ken Walker, again from the WA Police Force; Sue Hunter from the WA Police Force; Dr Mariam Bahemia from the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners; Dr Samir Heble from the WA Country Health Service; Chris Kane, the WA Primary Health Alliance commission representative; Hamish Milne from the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners; Subhan Della Bosca, from the Office of the Minister for Health; Mental Health; Laura Bajurny from the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists; Peter Zappelli from the Office of the Minister for Police; Jim Vanopoulos, from disability services and the Department of Communities; Dr Sudhakar Rao from the Australian Medical Association of WA; Dr Sophie Davidson, from the Mental Health Commission; Chris Dunnell, from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet; Dr Teresa Ballestas from the Department of Health; and Dr Richard Taylor from the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners.

The Primary Producers Firearms Advisory Board had representatives from the Western Australian Farmers Federation, the Pastoralists and Graziers Association of WA, vegetablesWA, the Kimberley Pilbara Cattlemen's Association and Wines of Western Australia. The health assessment working group, as I indicated, was chaired by Commander Lawrence Panaia. The official chair of the Primary Producers Firearms Advisory Board was the Minister for Police, Hon Paul Papalia, MLA.

I am told that the groups meet monthly. The Primary Producers Firearms Advisory Board meets directly with the minister and, in fact, met this morning. The health assessment working group, as I indicated, includes representatives from the offices of the Minister for Police and the Minister for Health. Outcomes from this group are circulated through agendas and minutes as well as briefing notes to both ministers. In terms of what other groups have been formed regarding these reforms, though not formed by the minister, the Western Australian Firearms Community Alliance has been meeting regularly with the Western Australia Police Force and has had direct consultation with the Minister for Police. This group includes representatives from firearms traders, clubs, associations and the WAFarmers Grains Council of WA. Ongoing consultation is taking place with industry stakeholders such as manufacturers and suppliers of storage cabinets and devices, including electronic monitoring, capacity and other equipment.

Government agencies continue to be engaged, and they include the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, the Department of Justice, the State Administrative Tribunal, the Corruption and Crime Commission, the Mental Health Commission, the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries and TAFE. Associations in addition to the

Western Australian Firearms Community Alliance are Sporting Clays, the Western Australian Rifle Association, the Western Australia Arms and Armour Society, professional shooters associations, WA Accessible Sport Shooting and the Alannah and Madeline Foundation, which continue to be engaged as is the Western Australian Council of Social Service, Injury Matters, and a number of other community safety associations. Hopefully, that answers those two questions.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: Thank you, minister, that is quite comprehensive. The minister said that two groups—the minister certainly said the Primary Producers Firearms Advisory Board—are still meeting with the minister. Is the health assessment working group still formed and meeting?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Yes, it is still formed, and it is still meeting.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: I can only assume that that is because it still has a role to play in formulating regulations. Are any other matters actively being consulted on other than regulation making?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: No, only for regulation-making purposes.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: The minister mentioned that these groups kept agendas and minutes, and there was a third category of document, whether it was an email or notes or something. At least with respect to agendas of minutes, are they available to be tabled?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I do not have them at hand. I am happy to ask if they may be provided. I will not be able to give the member an answer to that tonight but I will undertake to see what I can provide by tomorrow.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: Yes; it would be appreciated if the minister could seek that along with some of the other things that I have been seeking. Perhaps the Law Reform Commission submission by the Western Australia Police Force would also be useful.

Hon Stephen Dawson: By way of interjection, in relation to that Law Reform Commission report and the date that the member used, can I ask where the date of the document or the date of the submission came from? You linked a date with that submission.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: It was specifically identified in the Law Reform Commission's report. The report referred to the views of WA Police as outlined in its submission of that date.

Hon Stephen Dawson: Thank you, that is helpful.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: I can confirm that because I am pretty sure I have an extract here with me. If it is useful in terms of identifying it, I would be able to do that further. It was with respect to numerical limits. The report of the Law Reform Commission stated —

Stakeholders were of the view that any limits were unnecessary in the light of the genuine reason test. WA Police were also of this view although they stated that they would consider supporting a scaled limitation on firearms numbers, acknowledging that it would be difficult to establish a definitive number (submission dated 9 February 2016 page 12).

This is from page 55 of the Law Reform Commission of Western Australia's *Review of the Firearms Act 1973 (WA) Project 105 Final Report*.

Hon Stephen Dawson: Thank you again. By way of interjection, I appreciate the member clarifying that. That may help us track down the document. We will have a look.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: Regarding the agenda and minutes, was there another form of output from these working groups? I thought the minister identified three things. I can also check the draft *Hansard*.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: No; I mentioned briefing notes.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: Similarly, to the extent that they are available to the Legislative Council during consideration of clause 1, that would be appreciated. The minister confirmed that there were no other formal advisory or working groups. The long list that the minister provided further included stakeholders with which ongoing consultation was happening, but these were the two primary groups that are run by the Minister for Police.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: That is correct. I also mentioned an external body that had been established that stakeholders and police were involved or engaged with. Yes; I also listed a number of other types of groups that are currently being consulted, but they are the two formal bodies that were created.

Hon LOUISE KINGSTON: Before I go on to firearm collectors, I just want to ask a question on the engagement the minister has had on storage. Can the minister give us some idea around who that is and the basis of doing that?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I am told we are engaging with the larger Australian manufacturers and suppliers.

Hon Louise Kingston: A large number.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: No, the larger companies that make them. I do not have names with me.

Hon LOUISE KINGSTON: I would like to move on to the firearm collector amendments. I just want to draw attention to the fact that collectors collect a range of things. Some could probably equally be determined as being dangerous, say knives, Samurai swords and things like that. They will often do a special release like cars, collectors' cars, small cars and things like that. Special edition firearms are also released. How will that be captured in the amendments, and how will people still be able to continue to collect those? How will those releases be allowed?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: If we are getting into the detail of amendments, the appropriate time to deal with that is when the amendments are moved. I will just give general comments now. If the member wants to dig in, we should leave it to the appropriate clauses.

In terms of the amendments that will be moved, I will move to insert —

A Collector Licence for firearms must not authorise possession of a firearm unless the Commissioner is satisfied that the firearm has significant historical value because of the special significance that the firearm, or any firearm of the same or a related kind, has in connection with a particular period in history.

For both handguns and category C firearms, which are firearms capable of either being carried, concealed and fired from one hand or firing in quick succession, a collector licence may only apply to such things if the applicant can satisfy the Commissioner of Police that the thing has significant historical value. This will be done by being part of an approved society of collectors and by producing some evidence of the historical value, for example, through a certificate of authenticity. The same amendment will mean an applicant for a handgun or category C firearm cannot collect such things under the concepts of the firearm having thematic or commemorative value. It is reasonable to expect the person seeking to possess firearms of a higher risk to cause harm to do so genuinely for the study or preservation of that firearm due to its significant connection to a particular history period. This means a person who is a student of arms could collect a handgun only if they provided some authenticity that it was used in, or manufactured for, a particular historical event. For example, they could be seeking to collect a handgun used by the Anzacs during the First World War or something like a handgun used in the Battle of Little Bighorn in the United States.

Hon Louise Kingston: Can I just interject?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: You can.

Hon Louise Kingston: Does that mean that replicas would not be allowed?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Let me clarify whether the member is talking about replicas or imitations. Replicas will not be allowed unless they meet these requirements. If it is a replica of a real gun that can really shoot and do the same things as the gun it replicates, it will be captured by what I just said.

Hon LOUISE KINGSTON: That is incredibly sad because that is a very big part of firearm collecting. I think there needs to be some thought to how that will be managed because it effectively stamps out a number of manufacturers of replica firearms.

Next is the 50 years that was determined with the change from the previous 1946 law. I need to know how that was determined. In particular, after the first 50 years—it will be 51 years—how is the year before that collected? How are firearms that are less than 50 years old, which have some historical significance, going to be preserved so that collectors going forward will be able to access them once the 50-year limitation has passed?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I am told if someone wants to collect something that is less than the 50-year period, it has to be rendered permanently inoperable. I am told for the 50 years, it was decided there should be a line in the sand. The WA police suggested that a 50-year period was appropriate.

Hon LOUISE KINGSTON: Is it correct that there will be no opportunity for any significant firearms, for the last 50 years, to be kept anywhere for people to be able to collect after the 50 years pass?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I am told people can collect them; they just cannot collect category C or category H firearms.

Hon LOUISE KINGSTON: Of course, that is handguns, which is one of the biggest categories that are collected. How will firearms from the intervening period be classified? I think the minister just answered that. He said they would have to be rendered inoperable of being used; therefore, they will not require a licence. When the minister said that a gun has to be rendered unusable, does that mean people will be able to store the different parts so that when the 50 years passes, they will be able to reinstate it as a collectable handgun or firearm?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: No. It has to be rendered permanently inoperable in an approved manner.

Hon LOUISE KINGSTON: I think I have already answered my question about a gun being rendered inoperable; that is, it cannot be transferred to a collector's licence later. The minister has also answered my question about what will happen to firearms less than 50 years old. He said, basically, that there is no provision anywhere for those historical firearms less than 50 years old other than to be rendered permanently incapable. Therefore, there will be no collectors going forward because all firearms from this point will have to be rendered permanently incapacitated. Is that correct?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: It is correct, but only for category C and category H, not other categories.

Hon LOUISE KINGSTON: Like I said, handguns are the main ones that are collected. Can the minister please tell me what is an approved society of firearms collectors?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: They are the Royal Western Australian Historical Society and the Western Australian Arms and Armour Society.

Hon LOUISE KINGSTON: I presume that those two groups have been consulted and they understand the amount of additional work in recording and providing information that will be required. I presume, like most societies, that they are volunteer organisations. How will that information be collected? What will be the requirements of those two groups? Is there an opportunity for other groups to be formed aside from those two groups? Has any thought been given to how other groups might provide information?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: On further groups, the commissioner can approve other groups. Certainly, the Arms and Armour Society has been engaged in the consultation so far. I do not have any information with me on the WA historical society.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: On this theme of societies, the minister might recall I was running out of time during my second reading contribution some time ago now. I indicated that I had received correspondence from the president of the WA Arms and Armour Society. I think that is one of the two societies the minister just mentioned.

Hon Stephen Dawson: By interjection, yes, that is one of the two.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: I want to read into the record an email from the president, which I received on 28 May this year. It reads as follows —

My name is Peter Collins and I'm the President of the WA Arms & Armour Society.... As a Society we collect militaria that includes firearms i.e., longarms and handguns. Sadly, I've watched on TV and read online about the tragic killing of two innocent women by Mark Bombara. I understand that Bombara had 11 longarms on a recreational/hunting licence and two semi-automatic pistols on a collector licence. As the new Firearms Act is presently being discussed I thought I'd provide you with some information as regards owning/possessing handguns manufactured after 1946 on a collector licence.

Under the present WA Firearms Act 1973, a person collecting a firearm needs to provide WA Police with a genuine reason if it's to form part of a firearm collection or ammunition collection. A genuine reason comprises a significant commemorative, historical, thematic or heirloom value. Note, heirloom has been removed from the new Firearms Act and such owners will need to re-apply under another reason, unless they decide to dispose of their firearm. For the purposes of the Act, a handgun i.e., semi-automatic pistol or revolver, manufactured after 1946 can form part of a genuine firearm collection only if:

- (a) it is owned by a person who is, in the opinion of the Commissioner, a student of arms.
- (b) the handgun is within the scope of that person's interest as a student of arms.

A student of arms means a person who can be shown to have a prolonged and genuine interest in the study, preservation, or collection of firearms. Within WAAAS this is usually in the form of writing papers, making presentations and ongoing participation in collector activities.

The email goes on to say —

Under the present Firearms Act there are currently two accredited societies i.e., the WA Arms & Armour Society and the WA Military Heritage Society. However, it's important to understand that a person collecting handguns has not needed to join an accredited collector society in order for WA Police to approve a person as a student of arms. However, it is unusual for a person to apply for post-1946 handguns without first owning pre-1946 handguns as a way of demonstrating prolonged genuine interest as a genuine collector. Under the proposed Firearms Act a student of Arms would need to be a member of an accredited society. I personally have mixed feelings over this as I want people to join WAAAS that are genuine collectors wanting to participate in our Society and not people who are 'forced' by legislation to have to join. This change moving forward will likely take away a lot of the responsibility from the WA Police, where it belongs, in determining who is a student of arms and placing the onus on volunteer societies such as WAAAS.

It should be understood that unlike sporting firearms clubs ... WAAAS doesn't form part of the application process in providing written support when a person applies for a firearm. However, on occasion WA Police have asked WAAAS if a member making a post-1946 handgun application was considered a fit and proper person. In the case of Mark Bombara, who I understand possessed at least one Glock semi-automatic pistol on his collector licence, I can only state that he has never been a member of WAAAS. Note, Glock pistols were first manufactured in 1982 and Bombara would have had to demonstrate his genuine interest to WA Police in order to be approved by the Police Commissioner as a student of Arms.

Finally, in early consultation talks with WA Police they postulated that a person collecting firearms should not collect ammunition. However, it was pointed out at the time that a firearms collector could say possess WW1, WW2, Korean, Vietnam era rifles ...

The email provides further examples and then goes on to say “and/or handguns” and provides further examples. The email continues —

... all of which calibres are regularly used in modern sports shooting. Firearms collectors are invariably also sporting shooters and so even though they might not be an ammunition collector per se, it's very likely they will possess ammunition for their collector firearms anyway. It is unreasonable to say that a sporting shooter cannot therefore collect a firearm or vice versa.

Mr Collins, the president of the WA Arms and Armour Society, signs off on the email, which is dated 28 May 2024.

My question is twofold: when was the most recent consultation with this particular society, and can the minister provide any reassurance to this society and the other society that was mentioned that the Western Australia Police Force through this legislation is not shifting responsibility to these societies to determine who is considered a student of arms?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: This is not about shifting responsibility. New clause 66A, to be introduced by amendment, states —

(1) A Collector Licence for firearms must not be granted to a person unless the Commissioner is satisfied ...

The onus will be on the commissioner and not on this organisation or the other historical society that was mentioned.

In relation to contact with Mr Collins, a conversation took place with Mr Collins yesterday and I understand that two conversations with Mr Collins took place last week as well. We continue to be in close contact with him.

Hon LOUISE KINGSTON: Thank you, Acting President, Deputy President—Deputy Chair. Goodness me! Can you get a badge so we all know!

The minister just talked about the management of information and the requirements of those two groups. What will happen if a person's membership lapses? How will that be handled? Will that be handled by the organisation and will the organisation be responsible for letting the commissioner know that a membership has lapsed or will it be a requirement of their collector licence? I am concerned about the impact this will have on voluntary organisations and how that will be managed.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I might have to ask the honourable member to repeat elements of her question if I do not answer it appropriately.

An approved society of firearm collectors must notify the commissioner in the approved manner within seven days of a member who holds a collector licence ceasing to be a member of the society.

Hon LOUISE KINGSTON: I think it is absolutely unreasonable to expect that information from voluntary organisations in seven days. Therefore, will that information be in real time? We talked earlier about the new app; will they be a part of that new app as well and will all that information be provided through that mechanism?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Those two organisations will have access to the new portal and will be able to provide that information through the portal.

Hon LOUISE KINGSTON: This clause relates to one form of collection. Will this type of law be extended in the future to include other types of what could be considered weapons, such as, as I mentioned before, collectible knives, samurai swords and things like that? Will they be considered the same?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: No, honourable member. They are not being dealt with as part of the firearms legislation. To extend that answer, the government would need to bring future legislation before Parliament to do such a thing. It is not covered by this legislation now.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: I have a number of questions still, but just to pick up on that point left by Hon Louise Kingston, is it an issue under consideration by government? Before the minister says no definitively, I recall there have been some announcements about knife laws, I am pretty sure, by the Premier and certainly some others in recent times. Clearly, we know there is some proposed law reform taking place on knives. Would this then be captured by that?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Yes, there is work taking place in relation to knives at the moment. My advice is that nothing is being countenanced at this stage in relation to the collection of knives.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: We will pick up at the relevant time why it would be appropriate to capture the collection of firearms but not knives. That said, with respect to the Weapons Act, I note that in the second reading speech—both the original and the amended version that was tabled—there is reference to the 2017 National Firearms Agreement. I understand that Queensland captures everything under its Weapons Act, but Western Australia has a separate Firearms Act and Weapons Act. Was consideration given to incorporating everything under a single act as is done in Queensland?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: The member will probably hang me on this, but, anyway, we took advice from the Law Reform Commission that it should be a separate bill. Obviously, the Law Reform Commission gives lots of advice, and some is taken and some is not, and this is one case when the advice was taken. Yes, Queensland's Weapons Act is essentially its firearms act.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: I understand that New South Wales does not include paintball guns in its firearms legislation. Why have we decided to do so?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I am told that paintball guns have been included since the early 2000s. I gave an answer to Hon Martin Aldridge yesterday about changes to legislation that Hon Michelle Roberts made in 2003 or 2004—I do not have a date in front of me. It has been the case since that time.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: The response the minister gave is that the provision has been included in Western Australian legislation for some time and this bill will do nothing different from what has been in place for the last 20 years approximately; is that the explanation?

Hon Stephen Dawson: Yes.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: But because of that, was no consideration given to proceeding under what I might describe as the New South Wales model, which is to separate those two things, as has been done in Western Australia with the Weapons Act?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: No; consideration was not given.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: What is a firearm is captured later at clause 6. A number of things are included there, but also a number of things are excluded. Various things not considered a firearm are set out at clause 6(3). Where is a nail gun captured? Is it defined as a firearm, a weapon or some other thing?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: A nail gun is not included in this bill. Reference to that can be found at clause 6(3), where it says —

None of the following things is a firearm —

...

- (c) an industrial tool powered by cartridges that contain a propellant or by compressed air or other compressed gas and that is manufactured to fix fasteners or plugs or for similar purposes;

So, a nail gun is not included.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Another example of something in the bill that is not a firearm is —

a thing that is obviously a child's toy and that is manufactured to fire something that is not likely to cause personal injury;

Compare a child's toy, which is not likely to cause personal injury, with a nail gun, which if misused will cause a person injury. The obvious child's toy that will not cause a person injury and nail guns, which might be described as an industrial tool that could cause personal injury, are not defined as firearms, yet a paintball gun is still considered a firearm. Can the minister explain why that is the case? I acknowledge that the minister has said that this has been the case in Western Australia for 20 years, give or take, but that is not a sufficient reason to continue to do that because we are trying to modernise the act, and this bill is a complete rewrite. If we are to undertake a complete rewrite and modernisation of the act, there needs to be an explanation of why we would continue to have a paintball gun defined as a firearm.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: There was debate in the early 2000s about whether to include paintball guns in the existing act. I do not know whether paintball guns were being used in crimes at the time. It predates me and it predates Hon Nick Goiran's time in this chamber as well. They were included at that time and there is no reason to exclude them now, so they have not been excluded. I make the point that a nail gun is an industrial tool. Paintball guns are not industrial tools nor are they a child's toy, but they were included in the legislation and will continue to be.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: I accept that is the answer that has been provided, but I am still not personally satisfied about why paintball guns are captured under this legislation. Is there a prevalence of complaints to Western Australian police about the misuse of paintball guns?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I do not have that information with me. Noting comments and frustrations experienced and raised by members in this place, not only today but over the last few months, I do not think that information will be readily available or easily accessed.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: In the same vein, I guess information would not be readily available to know whether there has been a prevalence of complaints to Western Australian police about a thing that is obviously a child's toy that is manufactured to fire something that is not likely to cause a personal injury. I take it that the minister does not have information available about the prevalence of those types of complaints, and perhaps he does not also have readily available to him the number of complaints about the misuse of an industrial tool like a nail gun. Is that type of data not readily available?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I do not have that information with me, honourable member. That is not to say that that information was not considered or countenanced during the drafting phase or indeed the consultation phase of this bill. This has been in the pipeline for a number of years. It is not an issue that has been raised with me or indeed the advisers up until now, but I cannot rule out consideration of those issues at an earlier stage.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Just to be clear, during this consultation process, people have not raised with the Western Australia Police Force why paintball guns have been included in the legislation.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: There has been ongoing consultation with that sector. I am told that changes were made to the existing act recently—maybe the last time we debated that bill in this place a couple of years ago. Changes were made as a result of feedback from the paintball industry, if I can call it that, but certainly my advisers cannot tell me that that sector has asked for an exclusion from the bill.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Are the changes made a few years ago that are incorporated in the current legislation maintained in this bill?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: They are.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: I move to a different topic. There was a discussion between the minister and a number of members—I think Hon Wilson Tucker in particular—about \$27 million that has been set aside to be used for the rollout of the database. That will obviously be critical to manage this process moving forward. Other than the \$27 million for the database, are there any other one-off budgeted costs associated with the rollout of this new regime? The member may recall me talking about this in my second reading contribution. This is a one-off \$27 million for the database. Is there anything else of that nature that will come at a cost to the taxpayer?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I do not have an exhaustive list with me. There was certainly money in a previous budget for the buyback. There was an amount of money.

Hon Nick Goiran: Just offhand, does the minister know what that amount is?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: It was \$64.3 million or thereabouts. There has obviously been an investment made into the transition team. I previously mentioned to the honourable member or Hon Peter Collier that there are 33—33 interests me because I am Irish—people in that unit; however, I do not have the figures here so that is all I can tell the honourable member for now.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: There are three examples of what might be described as one-off costs. They include the database, the human cost of the transition team and the buyback scheme. Those are three of what can be described as a non-exhaustive list. If a member asked a question in budget estimates or on notice, would an exhaustive list be available?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I do not know. We would have to ask the finance people in the agency. I am not sure, honourable member, but estimates would be the best place to ask. As I sit here and think through the honourable member's question, I am sure a provision would be provided to the agency initially for consultation. There would be other discrete approvals given for various purchases or pieces of work. It has probably been done over a number of years. I am not trying to fob off the member, because we know who will have to answer these questions at a later stage—that will be me. The member can put us on notice.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: We dealt with the one-off budgeted costs and I take the minister's point. He can take this as some form of notice for the hearings in two weeks' time. With regard to the recurring costs, there is currently a unit within the Western Australia Police Force that is responsible for the licensing of firearms. Can the minister provide a compare-and-contrast figure for the cost for the existing unit and the recurring costs for the unit moving forward? My assessment is that the team will need to be bigger because it will have more work than the current team.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: That is not available at this stage. In terms of the new system, there will be an element of automation. I mentioned earlier that there are 102 existing staff members in the licensing and enforcement division, and I have mentioned the 33 on top of that. In terms of moving forward, I do not have a cost. It is anticipated that the new data system will streamline processes and make it easier, so there will be less double handling of information. I cannot say with any confidence that it is going to need X number of extra staff. It may mean that it makes the existing jobs a lot easier and will allow staff to focus on other things. Again, I am happy for the member to ask the question again when we talk in two weeks' time in estimates because I will have more of an understanding at that stage.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: That is probably a good segue into the next thing that I would like to touch on, which is the medical checks. That is a significant point of difference, is it not? As I understand it, medical checks are not required at the moment. Police will continue with this team of 102 staff. They go about their business and fulfil their duty on behalf of the people of Western Australia with regard to licensing and firearms and the owners of firearms. They do so without express regard to medical matters. Moving forward, they will have to. As I understand it, every five years a firearms owner will need to be interrogated or submit themselves to a process and WA police

will need to be part of that process to some extent. I accept what the minister has said to other members that patient–doctor confidentiality will be maintained. I am not expecting WA police to inject themselves into that level of the process, but there will still be, on a rolling five-year basis, much more involvement with WA police than previously. With regard to medical checks, I heard the minister indicate in his second reading reply that work had been done on disability discrimination. I think the minister said words to the effect of, “There is no discrimination”, and the government had obtained advice on those provisions. The minister and I had a discussion earlier about medical checks and certain people being exempted. Would a police officer be exempted from the medical check process?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Yes, they would because they do not have a licence.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Does the minister remember that earlier we spoke about exemptions and he indicated that police officers do not need to comply with a number of requirements because they are already subject to heavy internal stringent requirements? One would think that if a Western Australian citizen will be subjected to a medical check—what I might describe as a stringent requirement for the ordinary Western Australian—there would be a like provision in the police guidelines and policies. Is there any such thing?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Let me comment on the first part of what the member said. My advisers and I were talking about that. Certainly, police are required to undertake a health check when they enter the agency and then they are required to take them from time to time or on an as-needs basis. Maybe the member could go back to the rest of the question.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: I am trying to ascertain the as-needs and time-to-time basis. If a police officer needs to have a medical check upon arrival into the force, at that level, there is no difference between the police officer and a firearm owner who will need a medical check once every five years. The minister indicated that it might be on an as-needs basis or from time to time. What is the actual requirement for police officers in Western Australia to have ongoing medical checks?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: That is the police officer’s job. They deal with this stuff on a daily basis. They have a check on the way in and another check on an as-needs basis. It would be within their senior officers’ powers to send them for a check at any stage. They could go for a check more frequently.

Hon Nick Goiran: Is there a requirement to do one every five years, for example?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: No, there is not.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: The explanation cannot be that it is part of their job because I am sure that farmers in Western Australia would say it is part of their job to use a firearm.

Hon Stephen Dawson: It is the police officer’s role to uphold the law every day. It is not a farmer’s job to uphold the law every day.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Yes, but we are talking about the possession and use of a firearm. The only reason that the government says it is necessary for a Western Australian to subject themselves to a medical check every five years is that they would like to possess and use a firearm. In my case, I have never possessed or used a firearm in my life. This new law will not apply to me insofar as I have no intention and cannot see a circumstance in which I will either need or want to apply to use a firearm. I am self-excluding from this legislation. However, a farmer, as it has been explained to me, will not have that luxury to do what I am doing as a lawmaker. A firearm is a necessary tool as part of their work, just as we might say that the handling of a firearm is a necessary tool for a police officer to fulfil their duty, as the minister says, to enforce the law in Western Australia. The government is saying to farmers and other ordinary Western Australians that from now on the government will require them to submit themselves before a doctor and have a medical check every five years. I am hearing that the government does not require that of police officers in Western Australia. Is there any intention to do that? I accept what the minister said, which is that currently there is not a stringent requirement for police officers to do that. Once this law comes into effect, is it the intention of either the government or the Commissioner of Police for that to be the case for police officers?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: No, it is not. I previously mentioned the guidelines under which the police operate. There is a chain of command in the police department. We cannot say that a farmer has a supervisor or an overseer who makes them do their job within the confines or guidelines of an agency. The government believes that there are sufficient rules and structures within the police department not to warrant the inclusion of such a condition at this stage.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: The government’s argument is that there is a hierarchy or a structure within the WA Police Force and because of that it will not be necessary for police officers to be subjected to five-yearly medical checks, unlike an ordinary Western Australian who is not involved in an occupation that has that type of hierarchy or structure. I would have thought that the hierarchy or structure would have nothing to do with whether or not a medical check was required. As I understand, the government is concerned that people might own and possess a firearm in

circumstances in which they may be considered to be medically unfit to do so. Police officers are not immune from being unfit. If an ordinary Western Australian can be considered to be medically unfit, it follows that a police officer can also be considered to be medically unfit. Under this new regime, WA police will have the confidence that the ordinary Western Australian will be medically fit or will be confident of that at least at one moment in time every five years. We might put to one side how valuable that is, and there has been plenty of consternation in the community about that. I am looking, as a matter of the rule of law, at whether the law will apply equally to every Western Australian. I am not even arguing with the government about whether people should undergo a medical check because it is plain and clear to me that the government intends that to be the case and has no appetite whatsoever for an amendment on that point, so I have parked that line of debate. However, I am arguing that there should be the same law for every Western Australian. It is not clear to me why WA police officers should not be subjected to the same law as ordinary Western Australians. The minister argued that it is because of the hierarchy and structure. In the current calendar year, 2024, have there been any incidents of a WA police officer unlawfully using a firearm?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I do not have that information before me, honourable member, but I can say that officers are often retired medically unfit. Currently, that happens because of welfare checks that take place within the agency. Police officers are supervised, unlike farmers on farms. I know the member is not arguing the point, but I say again that we are confident with the laws that we have in place for police officers at the moment and we do not propose to change that.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: I have to go back to my notes, but I seem to recall that at least one police officer has suicided during this calendar year by use of a firearm—at least one; I think there could have been two. In fact, that is based only on some limited information that I have available to me. The available information that I have is like one drop in the ocean compared with the minister having the whole Indian Ocean of information available to him. My information is incredibly limited, but my recollection is that there have been multiple cases of suicides by police officers involving a firearm. The minister indicated that Western Australians can be confident that there is no need for the Western Australia Police Force to be subjected to the same laws as ordinary Western Australians because there is a hierarchy, they are supervised and some people are deemed to be medically unfit. Something has gone horribly wrong, minister, because if one or two police officers have suicided involving a firearm, what has happened to the hierarchy and the structure? Why were those two police officers not protected by the structure and the hierarchy? They have been left abandoned. That is not satisfactory. Something is wrong here. Maybe the solution to that is to make sure the Western Australia Police Force is subjected to the same laws as every other Western Australian, moving forward, and that they will also have to be subjected to a five-yearly medical test.

I fail to see how the government has made the case that there should be a special exemption for police officers when it comes to medical checks. I know that for the purposes of our current debate on clause 1 and with the time running down, I will not be able to persuade the minister, as the representative of the Minister for Police, to make any change at this point in time on the fly, but I note that in about 10 minutes we will adjourn the debate and we will take up this issue again tomorrow. My hope, and my request, is that this issue will be raised with the Commissioner of Police and the Minister for Police and that tomorrow the minister will be in a position to respond to us about whether there has been a change of heart on this. The Commissioner of Police will certainly know whether one of his officers has suicided this year using a gun. At the very least, the minister will be able to correct the record. If I have manifestly got this wrong today, I would want to be corrected. If no police officers have died this year as a result of suicide involving a gun and the information I have is wrong, I would want to be corrected tomorrow. If it is the case that that has happened, I imagine that the Commissioner of Police would be concerned about that. I would like to hear from the commissioner, through Hon Stephen Dawson or the Minister for Police, why he says it is not necessary for WA police officers to be subjected to the same medical check regime as every other Western Australian. I will just park that. I note that the minister nodded, so he heard what I said. I am not saying that there will be any miraculous response tomorrow. I just accept, given our interactions in these kinds of debates over the years, that he will take that on a goodwill basis.

Hon Stephen Dawson: For the purposes of Hansard, who might not have seen me nod my head, I have certainly listened intently to the comments you have made.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: Thank you. That is appreciated.

If it is the case that a Western Australian fails—I use that word carefully as there may be more appropriate terminology to use—this medical test, how long will that person have to surrender their firearms?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: If the person does not meet the fit and proper test—I cannot recall the terminology that the member used—they have 28 days to show cause. After that time or at that time, the police can revoke the licence and seize the guns, but the person will still have 90 days to lawfully dispose of the guns. Even though the police have seized the guns, they are still the person's guns, so they can essentially sell them in that 90-day period. If they have not disposed of the guns within 90 days, they will belong to the state.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: That is helpful because my question was leading to the issue of compensation. If a person fails the fit and proper test in five years' time for medical reasons, there is a process. Ultimately, if they lose their

firearm because they failed this test, they would still be entitled to some recompense for the loss of the firearm. I know that Hon Martin Aldridge touched on the idea of the buyback scheme continuing. I take it that that recompense would only be private; there would be no recompense through the government.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: That is correct. It would be private.

Hon STEVE MARTIN: Under the fit and proper medical grounds, will there be any communication as to the nature of the failure under the fit and proper test if the person's guns were seized for medical reasons?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: The legislation stipulates that the police have to outline the reasons for their decision. For example, if the honourable member did not meet the fit and proper test, he would have to be told why he did not.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: With respect to the medical check, would that simply be that the applicant or the licensed firearm owner does not currently have a certification from a general practitioner that meets the requirements under the act? Is that the kind of explanation that could be provided to somebody? I accept that that may not be the exact form of words.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I am told that the doctor would say that, in their opinion, the individual does not meet the firearm health standards.

Hon STEVE MARTIN: Sorry to double-down on this, but is it not more detailed than that? If it is not epilepsy or vertigo, is it just a case of answering yes or no?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: No, it is not. We do not want to know and we would not be told details about a person's private health. The honourable member was not here earlier; he was away from the chamber on urgent parliamentary business. We said that we will not get the data; we will not get the medical records. They will remain with the doctor. We get the information from the doctor. Again, it is not the doctor's final decision; the final decision rests with the commissioner.

Hon STEVE MARTIN: I am aware that the government may not want the data or the reason but I am sure the person whose application has been declined would. For example, that person may have walked into the meeting or the surgery unaware that they had a medical issue and suddenly they get a call from someone saying, "Sorry, your application for a firearms licence has been declined on medical grounds. Would they be able to go back and inquire as to why their application was declined?"

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: There is nothing to preclude the person from asking the doctor for their view. If it is a GP, I imagine someone would get a different response compared to somebody who was not their GP. That is a challenge. At the end of the day, the final decision can be appealed but it would certainly be open to the person to engage with us and ask why the application was declined. We would rely on the doctor's advice but the final decision will lie with the commissioner.

Hon STEVE MARTIN: Just to clarify, could the person sitting the medical examination ask their GP or other medical practitioner whether they passed or failed?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Yes, they could. We would encourage that. There is nothing in the legislation that says the doctor has to disclose that information. I cannot see a reason why the doctor would not. Certainly, the person can ask for it.

Hon NICK GOIRAN: We spoke earlier about the 2017 National Firearms Agreement. It is pretty clear that Western Australia is deviating from the agreement in at least two areas. One is this issue of what has been described as arbitrary limits, which has caused a lot of consternation within the community. I think it is fair to describe it that way because even the WA police conceded that point during the Law Reform Commission's review. The second area is the one that we just touched on with regard to the medical checks, whereby the consternation in the community is slightly different and probably twofold. One is the issue that I recently took up with the minister, which is the inconsistency.

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

BLACK HAWK TRAGEDY — ANNIVERSARY

Statement

HON DAN CADDY (North Metropolitan) [6.20 pm]: On this day, 28 years ago, the Australian Defence Force and specifically the Special Air Service Regiment was rocked to its core by what has been referred to since as the Black Hawk tragedy. It was a tragic accident that saw 18 Australian Defence Force personnel lose their lives. Members of the Special Air Service Regiment and the 5th Aviation Regiment were conducting counterterrorism training in the lead-up to the Sydney Olympics in Queensland. On the second day of the exercises, a group of six Black Hawk helicopters was performing a difficult night training operation during which two of them collided and crashed roughly 44 kilometres south west of Townsville. Eighteen soldiers lost their lives that night. Three were from the 5th Aviation Regiment and fifteen from the Special Air Service Regiment. The Special Air Service Regiment holds a unique place in Western Australian history. The first company was raised here in Western Australia 67 years ago, and this year marks the sixtieth anniversary of it becoming the SAS Regiment, in 1964.

Tonight, I read into *Hansard* the names of those who perished that night to show that they are not forgotten. From the Special Air Service Regiment, they were Captain Timothy Stevens, Sergeant Hugh Ellis, Corporal Mihran Avedissian, Corporal Michael Bird, Corporal Andrew Constantinidis, Corporal Darren Oldham, Corporal Darren Smith, Corporal Brett Tombs, Lance Corporal Gordon Callow, Lance Corporal David Frost, Lance Corporal Glen Hagan, Lance Corporal David Johnstone, Trooper Jonathan Church, Trooper Timothy McDonald and Signaller Hendrik Peeters. From the 5th Aviation Regiment, they were Captain Kelvin Hales, Captain John Berrigan and Corporal Michael Baker. The Black Hawk tragedy was, and remains to this day, Australia's worst peacetime military aviation disaster.

Lest we forget.

ISRAEL–HAMAS CONFLICT

Statement

HON DR BRAD PETTITT (South Metropolitan) [6.22 pm]: Yesterday I had the privilege of meeting with members of the Palestinian–Australian community here at Parliament House. They included the president of the Australia Palestine Advocacy Network, Nasser Mashni; the coordinator of Mums for Palestine WA, Hiba Farra; communications director of Palestinian Christians in Australia, Jason Damouni; and board members of Friends of Palestine WA, Hala Shanableh and Ayman Qwaider. I note that Hon Dave Kelly, MLA, and Senator Fatima Payman were also present. It was a really powerful meeting, and at the end of it we asked how we can best represent them. One of the things that came out loud and clear was that they would like their stories heard. With that in mind, I offered to share some of the stories. The one I want to share tonight is from Ayman Qwaider. Members might know that Ayman is a very high-profile Palestinian-born resident of Perth. Sadly, his sister, nieces and nephew were killed in a deadly airstrike on Gaza in October last year. His sister Alaa' Qwaider and her children Eman, aged five years; Faiz, aged three years; and seven-month-old baby Sara were killed after their home in the Daraj neighbourhood of Gaza City was bombed. It was Eman's fifth birthday.

On the weekend, Israel launched a deadly attack on the Nuseirat refugee camp, where the rest of Ayman's family in Gaza still reside. According to my notes, this is his story in his own words —

I came to Australia 10 years ago with my wife Samiha who came to complete her PhD at Murdoch University. Our journey to Australia was hindered by Israel and it was only through advocacy from Australia that we were able to exit.

We left Gaza only 2 months before “Operation Protective Edge” commenced in 2014 ... one of the 7 massacres Gaza has endured during the past 17 years of air, land and sea blockade, during which more than 2000 Palestinians were murdered.

I am an educator and executive member of Friends of Palestine WA, a community solidarity group dedicated to promoting the cause of Palestinian social justice, human rights, and self-determination. My wife is a lecturer at Murdoch University, and we have 2 beautiful Australian–Palestinian children.

Together, we have lived through and witnessed 258 days of genocide in Gaza—a digital genocide—live in the palm of our hands on mobile phones.

This is not unique for me; it is the experience of all Australian Palestinians, their families and supporters.

Just 5 days ago, Israel unleashed a barbaric bombardment on Nuseirat Refugee Camp, the refugee camp where I was born and raised and the same camp where my siblings, cousins, uncles and grandparents were also born.

The entire Qwaider family has lived there for generations.

A once densely compacted camp of 60,000 people now houses over a quarter of a million Palestinians, many of whom have been displaced multiple times and are desperately seeking safety.

On Sunday, my father and six siblings including my disabled sister Reem, narrowly escaped death in the Nuseirat refugee camp. They fled for their lives with nowhere to go as bombs rained down on their neighbourhood.

My brother Anas described the scenes as hell on earth. There were bodies in the streets as Israel carpet-bombed the refugee camp. Over 270 people have been killed, mostly women and children, and more than double that were wounded.

Just another massacre in Gaza.

The West celebrated the rescue of four Israeli captives.

But there was no mention of the 3 other Israelis killed during this ready-for-Hollywood scripted rescue.

There was no mention that the American-built aid pier that was used to smuggle troops into the camp.

There was no mention of the soldiers using humanitarian aid trucks that the starving, captive population surged towards only to have the troops call in their barbaric air strikes.

Whilst the smiling faces of the former captives adorn newspaper front pages, their bios and stories shared across the world, the media shared scant details of the Palestinians that “died”.

There was no reference to the massacre or the fact that only 7 captives have been “rescued” by Israeli forces compared with over 100 hostages released through negotiations.

The disparity in suffering and dehumanisation compounds the continuing fracture in our social cohesion.

Our federal government continues to offer mealy mouthed words of concern, “calling” for a ceasefire, “calling” for humanitarian aid.

Prime Minister, Israel is not picking up the phone!

It is time to demand an immediate cessation of the invasion and attack on Gaza.

Australia must wield every diplomatic tool it has available including expelling the Israeli Ambassador, recalling our own, ending two-way military trade with Israel, committing to and supporting the ICC and ICJ rulings—including confirmation that Australia will fully honour its obligations under the Rome Statute and arrest anyone within our jurisdiction that has an arrest warrant—and finally applying sanctions on Israel until it complies with International Humanitarian Law.

The blueprints are available, and Australia must act. We did when Russia invaded Ukraine, we must do so again.

These are Ayman’s own words, and I want to add some of my own words in solidarity and support of his calls for stronger action by Australia, including support for the International Court of Justice process. As many members will be aware, the ICJ has said there is a plausible case for genocide, and it is hard to find another way to describe the deaths of more than 40 000 people, including 15 000 children over the last six or seven months. I appreciate that this can be seen as a divisive issue, but, surely, all decent people can now see that this war has gone on too long. Surely, we can all see that too many innocent people have died. Surely, we can all call for the freeing of hostages, but also see that when that is done with a military operation, like we saw in recent days, it results in the death of far too many innocent people. Surely, we can all see that a ceasefire is needed now. Surely, we can all agree that what happened in Israel on 7 October was an appalling and horrific act, but also that the collective punishment of innocent people in response to this has been of a scale and horror that is deeply unacceptable. It must stop. Surely, these are things we can all agree on. Everyone deserves safety and to have their human rights protected, no matter who they are or where they are, whether here, in Israel, the West Bank or Gaza.

House adjourned at 6.30 pm

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Questions and answers are as supplied to Hansard.

FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES — WALPOLE FIRE**2022. Hon Dr Brad Pettitt to the Minister for Emergency Services:**

I refer to the recent Walpole fire that burnt 13,700 hectares of land, and I ask:

- (a) on what date and at what time was the fire first reported;
- (b) when were the first Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions personnel on site;
- (c) in relation to (b), were they the first emergency responders;
- (d) if no to (c), who was the first emergency responder on site;
- (e) when did the first aerial support arrive;
- (f) how many aircraft were made available;
- (g) how many water drops were made;
- (h) in relation to (g), at what times and days;
- (i) what was the full expenditure for the fire (please provide a breakdown of costs);
- (j) will the Minister table a map showing the fuel ages across the fire ground prior to this most recent fire;
- (k) did on-ground firefighting efforts continue after dark on 25 April;
- (l) if no to (k), why not;
- (m) what fire-sensitive ecological values exist within the fire ground;
- (n) please quantify the particular efforts that were made to reduce the impact of fire on peats, sunset frogs, granites, tingles, red-flowering gums and other fire-sensitive ecosystems and species during the firefighting effort and afterwards;
- (o) were aerial incendiaries used in the backburning operation as a part of the firefighting effort;
- (p) if yes to (o), where; and
- (q) if yes to (o), how many?

Hon Stephen Dawson replied:

Please refer to Legislative Council Question on Notice 2021.
