



Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

FORTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION
2022

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 12 May 2022

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 12 May 2022

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) took the chair at 9.00 am, acknowledged country and read prayers.

BUDGET PRESENTATION

Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [9.01 am]: Members, I remind you that the budget will be presented at two o'clock this afternoon, members' 90-second statements will occur at 12.20 pm and questions without notice at 12.30 pm, after which I will leave the chair at one o'clock for a lunchbreak.

HOUSING DIVERSITY PIPELINE

Statement by Minister for Housing

MR J.N. CAREY (Perth — Minister for Housing) [9.01 am]: I am very pleased to be able to update the house on the progress of the housing diversity pipeline. Earlier this year, the Minister for Planning and I announced the housing diversity pipeline as an innovative way of ensuring a future supply of social and affordable housing in Western Australia. In order to deliver better outcomes for our state and our people, we need to ensure that we are leveraging available land to its maximum potential and the housing diversity pipeline is doing just that. Through the pipeline, we are bringing lazy government land to market and seeking innovative housing ideas such as ground leasing and build-to-rent schemes to ensure that we get the greatest return of social and affordable housing for our state. All up we have released 12 sites in the first tranche of the pipeline—10 in the metropolitan area, including locations in South Perth, Fremantle, East Perth, High Wycombe and Highgate, and two in the regions in Busselton and Kalgoorlie. The focus of the pipeline is to drive investment in more social and affordable housing in transport corridors and infill sites, such as Metronet precincts. We know that there is a need for more housing diversity and affordability in the market and by encouraging alternative urban housing models such as build to rent, we are seeking to achieve that through the pipeline.

In February, we announced a registration of interest process for the 12 sites to understand what kind of appetite there is across the sector to develop these locations and deliver a boost in social and affordable housing. I can inform the house today that this process was extremely successful. We have had not only interest in all 12 sites, especially the regional sites in Busselton and Kalgoorlie, but also 64 separate stakeholders register their interest, and the interest has been wideranging. We have had registrations from community housing providers, developers and builders, and there was strong interest in delivering models such as build to rent, which is great to see. I am pleased to inform the house that we are now moving on to the next stage by beginning an expression of interest process, which will see potential proponents put forward their ideas on how the land can best be used to deliver social and affordable housing. I note that *The West Australian* referred to this particular project as a visionary idea. I am deeply proud that the Minister for Planning and I are championing this new project, this new vision, for Western Australia.

TOURISM — PARKS AND RESERVES

Statement by Minister for Environment

MR R.R. WHITBY (Baldvis — Minister for Environment) [9.04 am]: Today I would like to update the house on how the McGowan government is supporting tourism in Western Australia through our world-class network of parks and reserves. The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions manages our most precious places, significant animals and plants, and many of the iconic landscapes that are used to promote WA to people around the world. Underpinning this is the understanding that when people visit and enjoy a park with their families and friends, they value the place and want to see it conserved. Although DBCA provides many visitor facilities and experiences, most are provided in partnership with the tourism industry. The industry provides valuable experiences and accommodation that help more people to visit and enjoy these special areas. The McGowan government acknowledges the difficult period that the tourism industry has faced over the last two years and is supporting its recovery through a range of relief initiatives.

I am pleased to advise that new and innovative commercial operations continue to be established across the Swan and Canning Rivers, contributing to our vibrant ecotourism industry. There are currently approvals for 71 commercial operations across the Swan and Canning Rivers. New or upgraded activities that have recently commenced include Swan River Seaplanes, the Matagarup Zip+Climb and The Raft event venue on Perth Water.

The Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority is working with local government authorities on an expansive commercial electric scooter rental scheme for tourists and the local community to explore the Swan River foreshore from Burswood to Matilda Bay with a low-carbon footprint. Meanwhile, in WA's parks, unprecedented investments are

being made in new and refurbished visitor facilities and new mountain biking and walking trails that come with new tourism opportunities. The investments will refresh our parks as a cornerstone of WA's tourism product. Consistent with the McGowan government's *Jina: WA Aboriginal tourism action plan 2021–2025*, DBCA is working with Tourism Western Australia and the Western Australian Indigenous Tourism Operators Council to facilitate Aboriginal tourism in parks. We know that visitors to WA seek these cultural experiences and this represents a substantial opportunity.

With these significant investments and outcomes in parks, WA is well positioned to welcome visitors from around the world to appreciate our nature, our landscapes and our cultural heritage. I encourage people to come and enjoy the tourism offerings across WA's parks and reserves.

BUSHFIRE AERIAL DETECTION FLEET — FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Statement by Minister for Environment

MR R.R. WHITBY (Baldivis — Minister for Environment) [9.07 am]: Today I would like to inform the house of the fiftieth anniversary of the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions' bushfire aerial detection fleet, or as it is commonly known "the spotter fleet". I was pleased to recently celebrate this milestone with Hon Stephen Dawson, Minister for Emergency Services, at Jandakot Airport. Early detection of bushfires is integral to minimising their spread and impact on the community and the environment. This is something that I clearly saw when I was the Minister for Emergency Services and it has been reinforced for me since I have become the Minister for Environment; Climate Action.

Until 1972, fire managers of the forests department had been reliant on manned fire lookout towers for early detection of fires across the south west. However, as aviation technology became more accessible and affordable, they decided to take fire detection to the skies. The detection service began with a trial comprised of one hired Cessna 150 single-engine aeroplane assigned to aerial detection at Pemberton and the surrounding districts. Its success led to a second plane the following year and by 1975, the detection fleet had grown to nine planes.

Today, managed by DBCA, the spotter fleet consists of 10 American Champion Scout aircraft flown by three full-time pilots and up to 14 seasonal pilots. The aircraft play an essential role in supporting on-ground fire management operations for both prescribed burning and bushfire suppression. They provide DBCA staff and contracted pilots with the ability to undertake bushfire detection, prescribed burn surveillance, aerial intelligence and air attack platform duties for many regions across the state. DBCA's spotter fleet contributes to the broader Western Australian aerial fleet, managed jointly by DBCA and the Department of Fire and Emergency Services. The fleet also provides search-and-rescue support to the community and it is used in scientific work such as radio tracking for fauna projects.

Since its inception, the fleet is estimated to have flown more than 200 000 hours and 7.5 million kilometres, which is equivalent to 10 return trips to the moon. The detection service has been particularly active this season, with 10 aircraft operating at bushfires across the state from Esperance to Exmouth.

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: It should be, member, and back several times.

I congratulate DBCA for continuing to provide this valuable community service, for supporting the critical work of frontline firefighters across the state and for the important task of safely conducting prescribed burns as we head into the autumn season.

LOT 556 CURTIN AVENUE, COTTESLOE

Grievance

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe — Leader of the Liberal Party) [9.10 am]: I thank the Minister for Planning for taking my grievance. My grievance relates to the proposed amendment to the metropolitan region scheme that seeks to rezone lot 556 Curtin Avenue from public purposes—special uses to urban. Lot 556 contains the McCall Centre, locally known as the Old Cable Station, and the surrounding bushland. I want to make very clear that I am not opposing the development of this site. I believe that, if done right, there could be substantial community benefit from the preservation and redevelopment of the Old Cable Station. This will be particularly the case if the development is designed in a way that draws people to the area. However, I emphasise the significant local concern that exists about the potential sale, development and destruction of critical bushland on lot 556—concerns that I share. For some time, Friends of Mosman Park Bushlands, with the support of the Cottesloe Coastcare Association and both the Mosman Park and Cottesloe Residents and Ratepayers Associations, has advocated for the land around the Old Cable Station to be set aside. This would provide protection for the Vlamingh Parkland ecological link that currently runs from river to sea.

The minister should recognise that the bushland within lot 556 forms a crucial part of the green link that exists between the Indian Ocean at Mosman Beach and the Swan River at Milo Beach. This link comprises Garungup Park, Minim Cove and the Chidley Point Bush Forever site. This existing tract of bushland, which is unique throughout the

metropolitan region, provides a vital ecological link for rare and endangered flora and fauna that is unbroken by significant residential or commercial development. The Vlamingh Parkland ecological link provides native fauna with a critical habitat. I draw the minister's attention particularly to the thriving colony of quenda at Minim Cove and the 18 bird species that use the bushland and associated water bodies. These include the white-browed scrubwren, the forest red-tailed and Carnaby's black-cockatoo, and the locally rare variegated fairy-wren. Of special interest is the rainbow bee-eater, a migratory bird that uses this area and has seen its metropolitan habitats fall increasingly under threat.

As the minister would be aware, small animals require nearly continuous bush coverage as they migrate. The existing bush link protects these native birds and mammals from predatory birds, cats and foxes by providing them with vital bush cover. Thus, as a vital remaining habitat for locally rare bird species and other small native fauna, it is vital that the Vlamingh Parkland ecological link remains protected. Although the area around the Old Cable Station itself is dominated by non-Indigenous Victorian tea-trees, introduced from south-eastern Australia, the densely packed understory these trees provide creates an ideal breeding and feeding ground for small birds—in particular, the white-browed scrubwren and variegated fairy-wrens.

Additionally, there is every reason to believe that the bushland can be fully restored to reflect the original diversity of Indigenous plant species. In fact, volunteers from Friends of Mosman Park Bushlands, in conjunction with the Town of Mosman Park, have done an outstanding job progressively restoring and replanting the bushland through that area with endemic native flora. Therefore, the existence of some non-Indigenous flora around the Old Cable Station cannot, in good faith, be used as a justification for the destruction of this environmentally critical ecological link. The introduced flora provides a key breeding habitat for Indigenous fauna and there is a demonstrated will and capacity within community groups and the larger community to progressively restore diverse Indigenous flora to the bushland. If the whole area is sold for commercial development, the opportunity to maintain this unique ecological link between the river and the ocean, an ecological connection that protects and provides habitats for our local native flora and fauna, will be lost forever. I sincerely ask the minister to ensure that any development of lot 556 preserves enough bushland to ensure that the Vlamingh Parkland ecological link continues to function. Furthermore, I urge that future planning requirements and those concerns are given proper weight and consideration in any potential development of lot 556.

As per the Leighton regional planning guidelines published in 2000, lot 556 is within the coastal foreshore reserve. The minister would be aware that typically a setback zone of 125 metres from the high-water mark is recommended. That setback creates a buffer against future coastal erosion processes and for this reason should not be built upon. That is occurring to the south-west of the Old Cable Station. Lot 556 starts at just 60 metres from the high-tide mark of an already eroding Mosman Beach. On some points along Curtin Avenue there is as little as 40 metres to the high-water mark. In light of the erosion that is already occurring, this must be considered in any development on that lot.

It is also important to note that lot 556 and the surrounding area are sites of significant cultural heritage interest that ought to be preserved. The bush near the Old Cable Station is adjacent to the Vlamingh Memorial, reportedly the place where Europeans first landed in the Perth area in 1697, and restoring that is important. Moreover, and perhaps more significantly, the area has a rich Aboriginal heritage and has great cultural and historical significance to local Aboriginal families. The seven limestone hills in the area were connected by local Aboriginal families to the Star Dreaming story of the Seven Sisters. The site also adjoins the heritage-listed Aboriginal camp at Minim Cove. That site has been ascertained to have been occupied for over 10 000 years through carbon dating of Aboriginal artefacts. Furthermore, the limestone rocks and the reef immediately adjacent to that area are especially significant and have ceremonial significance to local Aboriginal people.

The minister must recognise that lot 556 and the surrounding bushland has enormous cultural and historical heritage—a heritage that ought to be preserved and handed down to future generations. If the whole area is sold and developed for commercial purposes, much of that will be lost. It is important that the following critical issues are dealt with: maintaining the environmentally critical Vlamingh Parkland ecological link by preserving the bushland on the site; protecting and preserving cultural and historical heritage for both Aboriginal people and Europeans; considering the consequences of ongoing coastal erosion; and ensuring that the realignment of Curtin Avenue in the future is not frustrated.

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan — Minister for Planning) [9.17 am]: I thank the member for Cottesloe for his grievance. As the member outlined, the site is owned by the state government and contains a number of buildings, three of which are part of the former Cottesloe Old Cable Station, which is listed on the State Register of Heritage Places. In more recent years, the buildings on the site have been known as the McCall Centre and were occupied by the then Department for Child Protection and Family Support until 2016. The buildings are now unoccupied and are in a deteriorated state and surplus to government requirements. *Metropolitan region scheme amendment 1389/57: Lot 556 Curtin Avenue, Cottesloe (The McCall Centre)* proposes to rezone the site from public purposes—special uses reservation to the urban zone in the MRS. The intent of the proposed urban zoning is to facilitate the conservation of the heritage-listed buildings and to activate the use of the underutilised site through adaptive re-use of these buildings.

The public submissions period for MRS amendment 1389/57 closed on 29 April 2022. The Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage is currently reviewing submissions on the amendment and it is anticipated that the amendment

will be presented to the Western Australian Planning Commission for its consideration in the second half of this year. In response to some of the issues raised by the member for Cottesloe, the potential retention and protection of the remnant vegetation will be carefully considered by the Western Australian Planning Commission and me when making any decision on the amendment. As part of this, careful consideration will be given to the recommendations of relevant policies and any advice of the relevant state government agencies.

In relation to the further realignment and expansion of Curtin Avenue, I want to make this point: if the Fremantle port were to be retained in its current position for decades to come, there would need to be a significant change to Curtin Avenue. It would need to be duplicated to a four-lane divider road for about six kilometres extending over the Fremantle passenger line and north to West Coast Highway. As a consequence of our decision to relocate the port, we do not believe that is the future of Curtin Avenue. I do not think most people in that area would want to see a complete change in Curtin Avenue. We believe that our plan to relocate the container port to Kwinana and then to change the nature of the Fremantle inner harbour will really help the residents of the western suburbs.

Another key point I would like to make is that when planning the new Fremantle Traffic Bridge, we are trying to take into consideration not only the needs of today, but also of 10 years' time and when, in the future, the container trade will not be there. We envisage the precinct as having a very thriving tourism and hospitality industry with short-term accommodation and, in the longer term, as a full residential accommodation precinct. It is quite an interesting time for that area. Like I said, I believe the opposition's plan is still to build Roe 8 and 9 and retain the Fremantle port for decades, which would have a significant impact on the people living in the western suburbs.

On all the other issues raised, including the coastline, a coastal hazard setback assessment has been prepared for the site. An analysis will be done of the Aboriginal heritage at the development application stage. The protection of the Aboriginal heritage places will be addressed more specifically in the more detailed stages of the planning development process. We will address the coastal, environmental, Aboriginal heritage and, of course, the road alignment issues. The WAPC is a very thorough organisation. Scheme amendments such as this one are referred to all the relevant agencies that will examine the submissions that have been made as part of the public advertising and, of course, the advice from the relevant agencies. I know that this matter has gathered a lot of interest and will continue to gather a lot of interest. Careful consideration will be given to all the issues that were raised today and all the matters that will be raised throughout the public consultation. We will be very much understanding of the local environment and the history of the centre when we look at the future of the precinct. Many of the issues that have been raised can be mitigated or managed as part of the analysis and the scheme amendment.

I thank the member for his grievance. It is certainly something that will draw a lot of attention, as projects in that area often do. We will make sure that we consider all the issues that have been raised.

OLD COAST ROAD–STICKS BOULEVARD INTERSECTION, ERSKINE

Grievance

MRS L.A. MUNDAY (Dawesville) [9.23 am]: My grievance today is to the Minister for Transport; Planning on the issue of road safety at the intersection of Old Coast Road and Sticks Boulevard in Erskine, which is a suburb in my electorate of Dawesville. I would like to start by thanking Minister Saffioti for visiting my electorate recently and personally taking the time to see some of the intersections that have become very dangerous along Old Coast Road. There have been an alarming number of accidents at the intersection of Sticks Boulevard and Old Coast Road, especially in the last five years, which has raised concerns among many residents. Being a former paramedic, I also share their worry and frustration.

Since being elected just over a year ago, one of my main priorities coming into this job was the improvement of road safety. After attending a number of crashes as a paramedic, while working out of both the Mandurah and Dawesville depots, along the whole length of Old Coast Road and the Dawesville Bypass, I know firsthand how important it is for drivers to feel safe and secure on the roads. I have witnessed the impact that accidents have on individuals and their families when drivers have not been safe and secure on the roads.

Between December 2015 and December 2020, there were 20 reported crashes at the intersection of Old Coast Road and Sticks Boulevard. One required hospitalisation, two required medical treatment and the remaining 17 caused damage to property. Many constituents have emailed me with their road safety concerns including Ciaran, who works as a paramedic and also lives in the area. Ciaran stated —

The Sticks Boulevard intersection with Old Coast Rd is a safety concern for me—there is often heavy traffic passing, with poor visibility for cars turning onto Old Coast Road, and often multiple cars pulling into the turning lane between the two directions of traffic. There is often a back up of traffic down this road as cars wait for a clear space to turn onto the road.

My wife and I drive down to the next intersection of Bower Drive to enter onto Old Coast Road, as the traffic lights are much safer, even when it is in the wrong direction from where I am driving. I believe this intersection is unsafe, and would like to see some change. We have been living in the area for two years now, and traffic is getting busier.

In addition, my electorate has experienced rapid growth over the last 15 years, with our population of just over 9 000 expected to grow by 49 per cent by 2036. Having lived in Peel for 10 years of my life, I have personally seen this growth. The section of Old Coast Road north of Sticks Boulevard is used by approximately 40 000 vehicles per day. Recent changes in the area, including the opening of Boundary Island Brewery and the last stage of the Osprey Waters land development, along with the residential growth in and around the City of Mandurah, has also impacted the road network. Given these high figures, my experience working as a paramedic in the area for many years and hearing from a growing number of concerned residents as a member of Parliament, I have taken a stand in the chamber today to highlight to the minister this widespread and dangerous issue that my constituents face on a regular basis. More ongoing development and an increasing population will only see an increase in accidents and near misses.

This is not the only intersection along Old Coast Road that is experiencing problems. Also, between December 2015 and December 2020, Oakleigh Drive has recorded 19 reported crashes, one of which required hospitalisation, five required medical treatment and the remaining 13 involved property damage. I have included the intersection at Oakleigh Drive in my grievance today to demonstrate that two of our major intersections along Old Coast Road have similar frightening crash statistics. These are too high and cannot be ignored. As development occurs and the population increases, these need to be considered as a high priority and looked at for improvement. The intersection of Old Coast Road and Rees Place in Wannanup is another area of concern. Over the last five years, it recorded five crashes, one of which required hospitalisation, with the remaining three causing property damage.

Unfortunately, a recent tragic example occurred over the Easter break when a motorcyclist was killed in a crash on Saturday, 16 April on Old Coast Road near the Dawesville Bypass. Our thoughts are with the victim's family and friends. The Dawesville community has rallied in support. I have had an incredibly high volume of correspondence since this accident occurred, again voicing people's concerns, such as Brian and his wife, Beverley, who live in my electorate. They explained that over the past five years they have noticed the increasing frequency of accidents occurring on the intersection leading into the bypass. Given the continuous developments such as shopping centres, new homes and new schools in the area, the likelihood of accidents occurring will only increase. Brian and Beverley even had a friend of theirs spend three months in hospital as a result of being T-boned at this spot. They, too, would like to see change.

As the minister can see, the issue of road safety is widely felt across all the suburbs of the Dawesville electorate and has affected this area for an extensive time. My residents would like various solutions to reduce the number of crash and death statistics along Old Coast Road and the Dawesville Bypass. Some have suggested reducing the speed limit and others have suggested installing traffic lights or slip lanes. Many choose to take a longer, complicated route to avoid these areas of traffic because they are worried about their safety. As I mentioned at the beginning, the Minister for Transport has already demonstrated her commitment to looking at improving road safety along Old Coast Road and I respectfully ask her for her support on this issue and highlight the need for a thorough investigation into solutions to improve road safety. I thank the minister for allowing me to give this grievance today.

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan — Minister for Transport) [9.29 am]: I thank the member for Dawesville for that grievance. Of course, the member for Dawesville, being a former paramedic, is quite aware of the trauma and the devastation that car crashes bring to families. Her experience in that area is paramount in understanding how we can all work together to improve safety.

As the member for Dawesville highlighted, I spent some time with the member looking at some of the intersections that have been highlighted to understand some of the traffic pressures in that area. When we were there, I realised how busy that area is with local commuters. We do not often take that route anymore, so it was quite incredible to see how much traffic is there.

A member interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: We did it after school. As I said, in March I visited the intersections that the member outlined. Prior to the last election, of course, one of the key commitments we made was to duplicate the Mandurah Estuary Bridge, which is just two kilometres north of some of the intersections highlighted by the member. We were very pleased to secure \$110 million for the improvement of that bridge. Although it is busy now, we expect the issue will worsen a bit when the bridge is being improved. We are trying to manage the efficient movement of local residents around the area, together with the safety of the local road network. As a result of the member's work, we are aware of the many community concerns about intersections such as the ones at Oakleigh Drive and Sticks Boulevard. Also, as the member highlighted, the recent openings of local businesses have increased pressure on that road network.

As a result of our visit, we have recently undertaken a number of inspections across Mandurah and Pinjarra and identified the roads and intersections that need upgrades. Oakleigh Drive and Sticks Boulevard have been identified as high priorities for improvement. This will now trigger a full traffic study of those roads. That will include undertaking video-monitoring of these intersections to capture driver behaviour and patterns of congestion. We

will also analyse pedestrian movements. Again, as the member highlighted, when we drove the streets, we noticed a number of schools and shopping centres, so there is a lot of pedestrian movement in that area. We are looking at the volume of crossings by students and parents from nearby schools like Halls Head Primary School, Halls Head College, South Halls Head Primary and Frederick Irwin Anglican School.

The traffic data from the study will help us to identify the measures that are required to improve those intersections across the area. The sorts of measures that the study will recommend could include assessing the appropriateness of existing speed limits, signalled intersections, additional or extended turn pockets, improved signage and sightlines and any clearing that might be required. As I said, the study will help us prioritise works and then we will be able to seek funding and undertake those works.

I thank the member for highlighting these issues. It was very good to understand exactly the pressure those roads are under. I am very, very keen to see my department undertake that traffic study and work together in the future to improve safety in that area.

TARGET 120 — KIMBERLEY

Grievance

MS D.G. D'ANNA (Kimberley) [9.32 am]: I have lived in the Kimberley my whole life and I want nothing more than to make sure that the Kimberley is a place where our young people, our little ones and future generations can grow and thrive.

I rise today to raise an important issue for my Kimberley community. Ever since I became the member for Kimberley, I have been hearing on the ground that we need to do better. We need to do better for our young people and our families. As a mother, a grandmother and a member of Parliament, I know that we need to break the cycle to give young people the best chance. This means ensuring opportunities for growth, change and support for at-risk young people if they need it. We need to focus on empowering young people and their families to make positive change, but this needs to come with meaningful, evidence-based and culturally appropriate programs that work to support families and young people.

I know that tackling the issue of youth crime in the Kimberley is a complex and longstanding issue, but since I became the member for the Kimberley, my community has consistently raised with me concerns about youth offending in the region. The Kimberley is a large and diverse region, but we know that youth offending is, sadly, a common theme when travelling throughout it. I have been meeting with the community and they have been telling me that we all need to do better. We need holistic approaches that ensure we are supporting families and creating capacity for our communities.

I have seen how the story plays out when young people become offenders. They reoffend, go back to jail, get out and reoffend, and so the cycle continues. I want young people in my community to be supported to make better decisions, to make positive change and become role models for other young people in the community. I thank the minister for joining me last week in Broome to announce a budget commitment of \$11.1 million to expand the Target 120 initiative to nine additional sites across the state. Target 120 is a \$21 million initiative that operates in 11 sites in WA, including Kununurra. I have heard how T120 has supported at-risk young people to help see a brighter future. Kununurra became the first Target 120 site to be led by an Aboriginal community-controlled organisation, Yawoorroong Miriuwung Gajerrong Yirrgeb Noong Dawang Aboriginal Corporation. MG Corporation took over from the Department of Communities in June 2021.

As a respected ACCO in the East Kimberley, MG Corporation is successful because it has the trust and support of our local community. Providing culturally tailored responses for at-risk young people and families is critical. I understand that in Kununurra, to date, around 44 per cent of the participants have had no further contact with the police. That is the story I got from the beginning for T120 in Kununurra, and I know that MG corp reckons that it has become better since it has become the lead. I met with the team at MG Corporation just a few weeks ago to hear how T120 is tracking in Kununurra and how it works for our mob on the ground. When the site was taken over by MG Corporation in January last year, the CEO, Lawford Benning, said —

“This intensive wraparound support program is about building the capacity and self-determination of families, and will now be delivered by traditional owners to traditional owners.”

That sums it up. Aboriginal people are best placed to support and strengthen community and reconnect with country and culture. Given that our Aboriginal people are calling for Aboriginal-led solutions that work best for Aboriginal families and young people, and are also calling for “nothing about us without us”, I ask the minister: How will this investment and the new Target 120 sites—importantly for the Kimberley, in Broome, Halls Creek, Fitzroy Crossing and Derby—help the local community? Can the minister also please explain how local families and Aboriginal community-controlled organisations will be engaged in the process?

MS S.F. McGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Community Services) [9.38 am]: I thank the member for Kimberley for her grievance and her advocacy for these and other issues in her community. She is deeply embedded

in her community and understands the challenges. Although those challenges are many and in some respects their urgency is very apparent, she also understands that the solutions need to be evidence-based and owned and adopted by the community. They are complex issues and they will not be fixed by simple answers.

As the member referred to, Target 120 has been a successful program, and one that I have been very proud to have had stewardship of since coming to government. We took the Target 120 policy to the 2017 election to deal with the causes of youth crime and to support young people before their offending and habits became too entrenched. Target 120 works in a very specialised way. It works with young people aged between 10 and 14 who are at risk of becoming repeat offenders and getting lost in the justice system. They will have had numerous interactions with the police and the court system; however, at this stage, the program does not include those who have been incarcerated in youth detention. It also does not include young people in care, so it is a very specific cohort.

Another important component and characteristic of Target 120 is that the program works in partnership across various government agencies—the Department of Communities and its staff; Western Australia Police Force's juvenile justice; the Department of Health; the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries; and, of course, the Department of Education. It is a cross-government agency program in not only service delivery, but also information sharing, to identify those young people and then track their participation in the program.

Target 120 requires two key things for it to work. One is the agreement of the young person who has been identified; significantly, the other is the agreement of their family. This is not just about the young person who is involved in the offending, but also requires the participation and involvement of their family. This is one of the key strengths of the program, which engages across the whole family unit in whatever form—parents, carers, siblings and the like. In fact, we are seeing a multiplier effect of the program. Of the total 153 past and present participants in the program, the multiplier effect of involvement has extended to 644 family members starting to see some of the benefits of the program.

The program works with one dedicated worker who interacts with the young person and their family to identify goals and develop tailored support plans. By directly tackling the drivers of youth crime that increase the chance of reoffending, like substance abuse, domestic violence trauma, mental health issues and poor school attendance, the program creates a safer and more connected community. Critically, it works. Almost half the young people involved with Target 120 have had no further contact with police since being involved in the program. Statistically, considering the cohort we are working with, this is remarkable.

In 2017, a \$20.4 million commitment was made to this program. It has been successfully running since 2018, when it commenced in Bunbury and Armadale, followed by Kalgoorlie, Northam, Albany, Port Hedland, Mirrabooka, Geraldton, Rockingham and Midland, as well as, as the member notes, Kununurra. Last week, as a pre-budget announcement, we announced a major expansion of the program, committing another \$11.1 million in this budget to expand to nine more sites. They will be Broome, Halls Creek, Fitzroy Crossing, Derby, Karratha, Newman, Carnarvon, Mandurah and Ellenbrook. This means that Target 120 will be operating at 20 sites across the state.

As the member for Kimberley knows better than anyone, and as I said at the outset, there is no quick fix for youth crime. The issues that have led to the sort of behaviours that we are seeing young people expressing particularly in regional areas, but not only regional areas, were many years and sometimes generations in the making. There is no quick fix, but I am confident that through Target 120, we are investing in an early intervention program that is evidence based and has the right design components such as making sure that there is one point of contact to help the young person and their family navigate their way through the sort of supports that are available. Importantly, where we can, we are getting Aboriginal community-controlled organisations to lead this work. So far, we have Aboriginal community-controlled organisations running the program in Kununurra, as the member said, Port Hedland and Albany. I also met with Lawford Benning and Jeremy Donovan from MG Corporation for an update on Kununurra, and they were very enthusiastic about the effects to date. It is great to see. Members can imagine that in situations in which some of the families have had very poor interactions with government agencies, outside organisations—in this case, Aboriginal community-controlled organisations—are much more likely to get a positive engagement. Those relationships have been crucial to the success of the program, in gaining the trust of the family and in the ongoing work, which goes for over 12 months.

Another significant element of Target 120 is the analytics that sit behind it. The social investment data resource, otherwise known as SIDR, is owned by Treasury and has an information-sharing agreement across government agencies. That resource really demonstrates the benefits of early intervention, and I know that we will be able to make use of that resource in future government programs.

APPROPRIATION (RECURRENT 2022–23) BILL 2022
APPROPRIATION (CAPITAL 2022–23) BILL 2022

As to Introduction and First Reading

On motion by **Mr D.A. Templeman (Leader of the House)**, resolved —

That bills notices of motion 1 and 2 be postponed until a later stage of this day's sitting.

DUTIES AMENDMENT BILL 2022*Second Reading*

Resumed from 6 April.

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt — Leader of the Opposition) [9.45 am]: I rise very briefly to speak to this bill and hope that my voice will make it through. From the outset, we thank the minister's office and the department officials for the briefing that was provided to the opposition and state that the opposition will be supporting this bill.

We understand that this legislation will amend the Duties Act and introduce simplification measures to ensure that red tape is reduced. It is an opportunity to reduce red tape for not only businesses but also government departments such as RevenueWA in their processing. It will reduce the general rate of duty, adjust the concessional rate of duty for the principal place of residence and business property, abolish duty on prospecting licences if they are not transferred with any other dutiable property, and introduce vehicle licence duty exemptions for council transaction and service demonstrator vehicles. It will also exempt Family Court orders following a relationship breakdown.

From the briefing that was provided to the opposition, there were no significant issues of concern raised about the proposed changes; in fact, the shadow Treasurer said to the party room that it was a good bill and that we should be supportive as it will actually leave money in people's pockets and reduce red tape. When good pieces of legislation pass through this place, the opposition will not oppose them or unduly hold up Parliament.

In reducing the general rate of duty, the bill proposes that the general rate of duty be reduced to the residential rate of duty. That will apply to all duty on all transactions. It is estimated to benefit 3 000 to 5 000 transactions a year, and, as I said previously, the government advisers told us that it should reduce recordkeeping obligations and administrative burdens for settlement agents and conveyancers, and also reduce administrative overheads for RevenueWA. We also understand that no taxpayers will be worse off as a result of this change. The bill will also adjust the concessional rate of duty for principal places of residence and business properties valued at less than \$200 000.

I refer to prospecting licences. We have regular contact with the Amalgamated Prospectors and Leaseholders Association of Western Australia and prospectors from the goldfields in particular. Anything we can do to reduce their burden in terms of transfer will be welcomed from an industry perspective. We understand that these are low-value transfers and do not raise a considerable amount of revenue for the government. This legislation will simplify the transference of licences and also reduce the administration for RevenueWA.

I understand that the vehicle licence duty exemption has come from discussions with industry and has been requested so that the practices that are put in place will align better to what currently happens in industry, particularly with service demonstrator vehicles. Certainly, this will also bring us into alignment with other state jurisdictions.

The Family Court order exemption following a marriage or de facto relationship breakdown will now be exempt from duty. In fact, duty will apply only when property is transferred. Government advises that that will reduce red tape and simplify administration once again, and it will allow Family Court orders to be self-assessed through the revenue office.

To us, these are all eminently sensible suggestions. No concerns have been raised with us by any key stakeholders. In fact, most of them have been welcomed. We understand that the vehicle licence duty exemption, in particular, will put in place something that has been requested for some time. With that, the opposition offers its support for this piece of legislation.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Leader of the House) [9.50 am]: I want to make a small but not insignificant contribution to the Duties Amendment Bill 2022. I congratulate the minister responsible for the introduction of this bill. Obviously, we are keen to ensure that the measures outlined in the bill, which were also outlined in the second reading speech by the minister, are passed through this place as soon as possible. I hope that the Leader of the Opposition gets better soon.

Ms M.J. Davies: It's not COVID.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I know.

Ms M.J. Davies: I've been testing furiously all week.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: There are a lot of things around at the moment, so I wish her the very best. I hope she feels better soon.

Ms R. Saffioti: My chief of staff has the same thing. It's terrible.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I have self-appointed myself as the designated survivor of the cabinet! In the case that everyone falls down, I will be swiftly sent to a locked room and fed and watered appropriately as all the others fall into disrepair, but I will still be there. I was not secretly hoping, but I was thinking that if the Treasurer was unable to deliver the budget today, I could step up and deliver the first and only Templeman budget! Anyway, let us just say that my financial expertise, although limited, is not insignificant, is it, minister?

Ms R. Saffioti: I remember that the highlight of your career was when you were invited to a roundtable discussion on red tape and taxation.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Yes, by mistake I think it was.

Ms R. Saffioti: There was a brilliant photo of you sitting at the table with the dumbest look I've ever seen!

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I must tell members that story. If I can, I will digress. This is one of the duties of a shadow spokesperson. I was invited to *The West Australian's* business round table. I was enticed, somewhat in a misleading fashion. I thought that we were going to be talking about local government, but suddenly we were talking about GST and taxation reform. I am an expert, of course! I think at one stage I was arguing for a slight increase in the GST, which equated to an increase of about 50 per cent. It was a morning, so I rushed back to Parliament after that and said to our then Treasury spokesperson, Ben Wyatt, "I may have made a few rash statements in a gathering."

Ms R. Saffioti: There was a photo, too.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: There was a photo. It was wonderful. It was a John Kerin moment.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs L.A. Munday): What is a John Kerin moment?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: John Kerin was the very short term Treasurer in the Hawke government when the Keating–Hawke split took place. He was excellent as an agriculture minister but was a very poor Treasurer. His claim to fame was that he stumbled while explaining what the gross domestic product was at the time and then promptly left the press conference and while trying to exit through a door, opened the door but it was a broom closet. It was so embarrassing for him that I do not think he lasted much longer. It was when Keating made his first attempt at taking the leadership from Hawke and he was promptly dispatched as Treasurer to the backbench. Poor John Kerin. That was my John Kerin moment. But I digress and I do not like to digress. Members know me well; I do not like to digress!

I applaud the Minister for Finance for this amendment bill and acknowledge and thank the Leader of the Opposition for her support. The bill will deliver some important reforms, a number of which were highlighted by the Leader of the Opposition. The impact that they will have on the general rates of duties is not insignificant. Concessional residential rates of duty will be impacted positively under the bill. The residential business property concession will be adjusted and vehicle licence duty exemptions will be given. Of course, as has been highlighted by the previous speaker, the duty on prospecting licences, which is an important one that has been advocated for for some time, will be delivered. Even removing the duty on Family Court orders is an important proposal.

The Duties Amendment Bill 2022 is an important progression for reform. The intention is that all stages of the bill will be passed in this place today and it can be delivered to the upper house and debated and passed as soon as possible so that these reforms can be delivered to those categories of the broader community.

I am happy to conclude my remarks there, but again I thank the opposition for its support of the swift movement of this bill through the house.

MR D.A.E. SCAIFE (Cockburn) [9.56 am]: Thank you, Acting Speaker, for relieving me from the chair, because, as you know, I was very keen to speak on the Duties Amendment Bill 2022. I wanted to jump down so that I could jump up and speak on this very important bill. It is a real pleasure to follow the Leader of the House, who is also known by the alternative title of "Minister for Dinner and a Show", as I like to refer to him! He has done what I do not think any cabinet minister has been able to do before, which is to pick up all the good portfolios. We, as members of Parliament, spend our time pursuing promotion to the lofty heights of portfolios such as education or health, which are a lot of hard work. The Leader of the House has actually outfoxed all of us and picked up the excellent portfolio of sport and recreation. I think the Leader of the House has said previously that, as far as he is concerned, the emphasis is on "recreation" in sport and recreation. It is a particular pleasure to follow the Leader of the House on this matter.

One of the issues that I would like to raise is the way that the Duties Amendment Bill 2022 will apply an exemption from vehicle licence duty in the particular circumstances in which the purchase of a vehicle has been cancelled prior to a purchaser taking possession of the vehicle or when the vehicle is returned for a full refund or replacement vehicle. At the moment, if a purchase is cancelled or is returned for a refund and the buyer purchases another vehicle, duty is applied to both the original sale transaction and the second sale, even though the transaction was not completed and the purchaser did not get to enjoy the benefit of that vehicle.

I would like to make reference to Ann Clark, a constituent of mine. Ann is well known to me because she is a frequent attendee at the Yangebup Family Centre. I run into Ann quite often because I am a big supporter of the Yangebup Family Centre's activities. Ann has never had cause to come to my office to seek assistance for anything until quite recently. Ann came into my office a few weeks ago and I happened to be there. I have a policy in my office that if constituents come in and I am not otherwise occupied, I will make sure that I speak to them there and then. I knew Ann from the Yangebup Family Centre. Ann told me that she had received a bill for the transfer duty on a vehicle over the Christmas period and had, unfortunately, lost it in a pile of many other bills, like a lot of people have during the COVID pandemic and these challenging economic times. Ann had missed paying the vehicle

transfer duty bill by five days and as soon as she realised she paid it straightaway, but because she paid it late, the Department of Transport charged her a late fee of \$100. Ann was outraged that she had been slugged with that late fee and thought it was a little harsh, given the difficult economic times that we have been going through. Ann runs a massage business and it has been particularly negatively affected by the pandemic.

Unfortunately, some of the very generous packages that this government has provided to business owners to compensate for lockdowns do not cover Ann's business, so her business has been knocked around a bit and has suffered during lockdowns over the past couple of years. Ann is not in the toughest economic position, but she certainly has had to weather some storms in her business. She came to me to see whether this late fee could be waived. Unfortunately, by the time Ann had decided to come to see me, the late fee had been registered on the Fines Enforcement Registry. An extra \$150 had been piled on top and the late fee had become \$250 rather than \$100. I counselled Ann that in future she should come to me as soon as possible because things rarely get better when they are left.

I took the issue straight to the Attorney General's office and then to the Minister for Transport's office. The Minister for Transport's office was incredibly responsive. I made my inquiry on a Friday afternoon and very quickly the Department of Transport was in a position, because of how small the amount was, to make an independent decision to withdraw the late notice penalty and, as a result, Ann did not have to pay the \$250 late fee. I am very grateful to the Department of Transport and also to the minister's office for dealing with this issue.

The circumstances that Ann faced because she was late paying a vehicle transfer licence duty is not covered by this legislation, but it highlights the unfairness when someone is slugged with a duty twice after the original transaction falls through for whatever reason. Imagine someone in a similar circumstance to Ann who misses paying a bill and ends up having to pay late fees as well. This is a very good bill because, as the Leader of the Opposition said, it will leave more money in people's pockets and people will not be slugged with additional charges. It will also reduce red tape on things such as vehicle licence duty.

I also note there are provisions in the bill that deal with abolishing duty on prospecting licences. This is of interest to me because my family has a great history of prospecting. My grandfather Roy Rowe was a Nannup boy. My family owned Nannup Motors. As you come into Nannup over the bridge, heading south into Nannup, on the left, there is a building that used to be called the Nannup Bridge Cafe. I am not sure what it is called now, but that used to be Nannup Motors and that was the garage that was owned by my family in Nannup.

My Pop was an enthusiastic prospector. He used to take the caravan out into the goldfields and other locations and that was really his version of a holiday. I remember spending time as a kid touring around places like Southern Cross, Norseman, Sandstone and the like with my grandparents, because Pop was an enthusiastic fossicker and prospector. I must say that I do not think there is much to show for my grandfather's efforts. I remember there was a collection of what might generously be described as interesting rocks and the like that were on the mantelpiece in my grandparents' house. Unfortunately, no claims were pegged out and no great riches flowed from my grandfather's prospecting efforts. But prospecting is one of those activities that is part of the fabric of Western Australia. Prospecting is part of the economic story of Western Australia. Some discoveries made by amateur prospectors have developed into very significant mine sites in Western Australia.

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: I think they were some words of encouragement from the Leader of the House.

But my point is that people engage in prospecting socially. I see some members nodding in the chamber, which probably means that they have family members or friends who do the same. Prospecting is not something that the younger generation does, but it was quite common for some in the older generation to pack the metal detectors into the caravan and go out into the goldfields for a weekend away. We would camp out there and dream of striking gold—it was about the journey, not the destination. I can certainly say that my grandfather was someone who was very much focused on the journey and not the destination. He was never in a hurry to get anywhere, a little like me in this speech right now.

Several members interjected.

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: That is why.

Ms S.E. Winton: Do you have a metal detector?

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: I do not have a metal detector, member for Wanneroo, but I have to admit that I think it was a sign. I think most people think that I am older than I am. I am 33, despite my grey hairs. Also, the hair is falling out, which I think I might have sped up with my latest hairdo! I thought about getting a fossicking licence over the summer break. This is really too much information, but I have an interest in rock carving and the like, so I looked into getting a fossicking licence. There is a whole process in WA whereby people must go through, I think, the Warden's Court to be issued with a fossicking and prospecting licence. That is the point I am making. Prospecting and fossicking is part of the social and economic fabric of Western Australia. For generations, people have engaged in prospecting and fossicking throughout Western Australia. Does the member for Wanneroo have a metal detector?

Ms S.E. Winton: I don't, but I often see them on the beaches and thought I should get to the goldfields and try my luck.

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: I think that it is worth noting that I have never seen anybody with a metal detector who looks like they have struck gold. Having said that, though, I guess the point is that if they have struck gold, they would not be out with the metal detector anymore! As I found through the process of looking at getting a fossicking licence that there is indeed a process that someone must go through to apply for a prospecting licence or a fossicking licence. People cannot just go out on to crown land and start picking up rocks and waving a metal detector around and digging up what they find. People have to have a licence.

At the moment, there is a duty on transactions for prospecting licences. This bill will abolish that duty unless the licence includes other dutiable property. It will make licences more accessible for the public and will cut red tape, which is a good thing. I am absolutely certain that my grandfather would have appreciated it and that many of our fossickers, prospectors and grey nomads will also welcome it. It is worth reflecting on how often we use the term “grey nomad”.

Mrs J.M.C. Stojkovski interjected.

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: The member for Kingsley is quite right; I could be called a grey nomad—except for the nomadic part as I am very much a home boy. Elderly people coming through in campervans and the like is a significant driver of tourism, particularly for regional communities and economics. There is a great demand for facilities such as caravan parks and the like for people doing exactly what my grandparents used to do.

Mrs J.M.C. Stojkovski: My point, member, was that not all people who like to travel in campervans and caravans are grey anymore.

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: That is true. We are all wandering out yonder. I have to admit that I still prefer to be grounded in accommodation than take my accommodation along with me.

Mrs J.M.C. Stojkovski: You’re missing out.

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: I am happy to carry my accommodation on my back. I am a keen hiker and camper. I am quite jealous of the Minister for Finance, the lead minister on this bill, who is training at the moment to do the Bibbulmun Track from end to end, which is something I have always wanted to do. I hope the minister is more successful than I was when I was 23 and I attempted to do the Pacific Crest Trail in the United States. I lasted all of 10 days on that trail.

Dr A.D. Buti: Isn’t that 2 000 kays or something?

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: It is about that. It goes from the Mexican border in California to the Canadian border in Washington State. My friend and I had great aspirations. The two of us set out. We got the bus down to the Mexican border through all these different desert towns and we struck out with the intention of doing that five-month hike with all of our gear on our backs. We got 10 days in before my ankle gave way going through the San Filipe Hills. It was quite funny, because being a Western Australian I did not really appreciate just how flat our land is. I remember going through this mountain range. It was absolutely punishing. In Western Australia, if you go up the hill, you can see the top of the hill and you just go over the top of it, whereas I discovered ridges in America. I thought I had got to the top and then I found out there was still more to go once I crested that. In the first few days I passed through this mountain range with my friend, I asked another hiker what was the mountain range we went through. She looked at me quizzically and said, “Oh, you mean the San Filipe Hills.” That was when I realised that the Western Australian definition of a hill and a mountain is very different from the global definition of a hill or a mountain. I wish the Minister for Finance the very best—happy trails, as they say, on the Bibbulmun end to end. Maybe one day I will join the minister in the end-to-end club.

Ms S.E. Winton: Make the commitment!

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: I will not make the commitment, member for Wanneroo, because this will be recorded in *Hansard* and it is forever. I know the Minister for Finance is a sporting man and I am sure he will do much more successfully on the Bibbulmun Track than I did on the Pacific Crest Trail.

Dr A.D. Buti: You could do a leg with me.

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: I could come down and do a section with the minister. I will embrace that, if I could just pick the good sections around Donnelly River and the like, which are dead flat because they go along Donnelly River and the scenic sections through the karri forests as well.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: Whoever would have thought the Duties Amendment Bill was my calling in this place. I also appreciate the indulgence of members of the opposition, none of whom have so far called a point of order on me—perhaps generously. This is a very good bill, partly because of what I am talking about. It will not only reduce red tape and duties on activities that, in the case of the transfer of a vehicle, could land somebody in financial hardship if they are unable to pay that duty and have to pay extra fees—as in the case of Ann Clark, one of my constituents—but also on things like prospecting licences, which will mean that activity will be more accessible to members of the public. I am sure that will help to drive tourism and people wandering out yonder and seeing more of our great

state and participating in those activities that are on offer in our regions such as hiking. I know that the Minister for Sport and Recreation made an announcement, I think last week, with the member for Mirrabooka, who is also keen to speak on this bill about the new Trails WA website. That is a great resource for people who are looking to do one of the many excellent trails in our community.

Dr A.D. Buti: Over 800!

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: There are over 800 trails. I hiked one of those trails just a few weeks ago. I did the Warren River Loop Walk just a few weeks ago, which is a 10.2-kilometre loop in Warren National Park. It is rated as one of the best trails in Western Australia. I encourage people if they are down Pemberton way to make their way out to Warren National Park to do that 10-kilometre loop because it is a great trail.

Mr S.N. Aubrey interjected.

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: It is true that the good people of Pemberton are good Labor voters, just like the good people of Nedlands and Churchlands. That is a point well made, member for Scarborough.

A feature of this bill is to reduce the general rate of duty and remove the concessional residential rate of duty. This bill will amend the general rate of duty that applies to non-residential property to be the same as the concessional rate of duty, which effectively provides that the current concessional residential rates of duty will apply to all dutiable transactions. That can only be a good thing, because it means that the rate people pay on residential property will apply to transactions of all properties, which, as the Leader of the Opposition says, means less impost on people and more money in people's pockets that they can spend in other parts of the economy. Of course, we all know that when people have that extra money, they will spend it on things like hospitality and retail supports jobs.

It is important that we support those jobs, because people working in hospitality and retail are often working in insecure work. They are often in casual employment and may be on award rates. Not only making sure we have the economic stimulus out there in the form of government stimulus, but also making sure that consumers have more money in their pockets to spend on that sort of discretionary spending supports those jobs and means that those workers can be afforded better pay rises, for example. It was heartening to see a federal Labor leader make the statement that wages should keep pace with inflation. That is essentially what Anthony Albanese said. All he is saying by that is there should not be a real decline in people's wages. He is saying that people should not be going backwards. If the cost of living is going up by five per cent or more and wages are going up by less than that, we are seeing a real decline in wages. Frankly, that is what we have seen for the last 10 years under the federal Liberal government. Let us not forget that former senator Mathias Cormann said that low wages were a deliberate feature of the Liberal–National government's economic strategy, which is utterly shameful. To deliberately suppress people's wages in order to achieve some kind of cynical economic or political outcome is just shameful, and a decline in real wages impacts on low income earners the most.

As I say, it is good to see that the concessional rate of duty will essentially be applied to all dutiable transactions because that means more money in people's pockets, more money for discretionary spending and more money to support jobs in retail and hospitality, and hopefully employers will pass on wage increases. In that regard, in terms of freeing up discretionary spending, the McGowan Labor government has made a fantastic announcement, which will be confirmed in the budget later today, of a \$400 electricity credit. This bill and the electricity credit mean that there will be more money in people's pockets. I know that my constituents will be very grateful for that. They know that between the previous electricity credit and this current electricity credit a total credit of \$1 000 will have been given back to users of Synergy, Horizon Power and the like. That is really excellent.

Finally, I would like to speak on the aligning of duty relating to Family Court orders with financial agreements made under family law legislation. At the moment, a nominal duty is currently payable on Family Court orders. We all know that going through family law proceedings is incredibly stressful. It is disputes about finances and the custody of children. It is a very personal process and it often happens at a difficult time in people's lives. The last thing people want when they are tied up in legal proceedings and going through this difficult administrative process is to have to pay nominal duty on Family Court orders. That is another area in which we are cutting red tape, reducing the tax burden on some of our taxpayers and simplifying tax administration.

In conclusion, not only is this a good bill for the reasons I have outlined, but also, importantly, it will deliver on an election commitment. The Labor Party said at both the 2017 and 2021 state elections that it is committed to reducing red tape and making sure that public services are delivered as efficiently as possible. That means making them convenient and as cheap as possible while ensuring that the state has the tax revenue base to make the significant investments that we have. The duties that will be removed, or changed, by this legislation are in some respects minor, but they can be significant to people in their day-to-day lives. This legislation will do the sensible job of cutting red tape and, rather than imposing charges, will put money back into taxpayers' pockets, and that will support economic growth and deliver on our election commitment to reduce red tape and simplify tax administration in Western Australia. On that basis, Deputy Speaker, I commend the bill to the house.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, member. The question is the bill now be read a second time. I give the call to the member for Nedlands.

MS C.M. TONKIN (Churchlands) [10.25 am]: I would be the member for Churchlands, Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sorry.

Ms C.M. TONKIN: Yes, we are both in the new Labor heartland of the western suburbs, so people do get confused at times about who is in which seat! We are all interrelated. The member for Cockburn reminded me of my hankering to become a grey nomad, which I fear I will have to put off into my 80s, because I am enjoying so much being the member for Churchlands. I am going to fight for every single vote so that I can retain this seat for a good while to come.

The tax simplification measures in the Duties Amendment Bill 2022 are very dear to my heart. I had a very long career in the field of public sector management in various formats and it was always important to me in that work to find the most efficient way to undertake administrative processes and maximise their effectiveness and the results that can be obtained from them. I know that duties and taxation measures are often considered a very boring part of public administration, but these tax simplification measures really do aim to reduce some pain points for both people who pay and those who administer these forms of taxation.

These measures are part of our 2022–23 budget, which is, indeed, a magnificent budget that demonstrates the government's excellent management of our economy and the state's finances, and will enable our government to put in place measures that really will help our economy, our environment and our people. The measures to be introduced include reducing the general rate of duty, adjusting the concessional rate of duty for principal place of residence and business property, abolishing duty and prospecting licences if they are not transferred with any other dutiable property, introducing vehicle licence duty exemptions for cancelled transactions and service demonstrator vehicles, and exempting Family Court orders following a relationship breakdown. These measures will all reduce pain points for individuals and for our administration of these measures.

Reducing the rate of general duty will help a number of people, particularly small businesses. The concessional residential rate applies to residential property and a general rate to non-residential property. The general rate will be reduced to the residential rate of duty and applied to all dutiable transactions. That change will take effect in the next budget year. The lower rate will be very helpful and it is estimated that it will benefit between 3 000 and 5 000 transactions a year. It will reduce recordkeeping obligations and administrative burdens on settlement agents and conveyancers, and administrative overheads for RevenueWA. When I worked in the field of public procurement, we often found that certain public procurement transactions would cost more to administer than the cost of whatever was being purchased. Any mechanism that reduces an administrative burden and gives a gain to the budget or the community is a benefit. Under the measure to reduce the general rate of duty, no taxpayer will be worse off.

Just a moment, my notes are all over the place.

The concessional rate of duty will apply to purchases of residential and business properties valued at up to \$200 000. The rate will be adjusted to ensure that all eligible taxpayers who transfer residential or business properties up to the value of \$200 000 will receive the concession. This will help small businesses. This measure is a consequential amendment to aligning the general rate of duty with the residential rate.

I must say that going out with a metal detector and prospecting is a great pastime. From my studies in psychology many years ago, it strikes me that prospecting is one of those things that can become very addictive. That is because it provides what is known as variable-ratio reinforcement. I am sure my good colleague the member for Dawesville would understand that. The reason that people become addicted to gambling is that they never know when they are going to win, so they keep trying. It is the same with prospecting. People never know when they are going to strike a big nugget of gold, so they keep trying. It is an addictive pastime. Once people have kicked the addiction, it is really great that they will be able to transfer their prospecting licence without incurring duty. Duty will be abolished on prospecting transactions, and also for derivative mining rights in relation to prospecting licences, unless they are transferred along with other dutiable property. This is, again, an efficiency measure. These transactions are low in value, costly to administer, and do not raise much revenue; therefore, it is not worth undertaking the collection of this duty. This measure to simplify the transfer of prospecting licences will reduce the administrative costs to RevenueWA and will, therefore, be a win-win all around. This change will take effect from 1 July 2022.

Again, my notes are all over the place. This bill will also introduce a licence duty exemption for motor vehicle businesses if they return a vehicle to the seller for a full refund or replacement vehicle or if a deal is cancelled before the purchaser has taken possession of the vehicle. The exemption will also apply to service demonstrator vehicles. This is another pain point. If for some reason a person cancels a vehicle sale, not only is it a nuisance all around, but also the dealer will incur two lots of duty. This measure will remove a pain point for people who have had a difficult experience in purchasing a vehicle, and a pain point for businesses that supply service demonstrator vehicles. That will have a positive impact on those small businesses. This change will take effect from the day after the act receives royal assent. The vehicle licence duty exemption for returned vehicles will apply to vehicles returned to the seller for a full refund or a replacement vehicle. This will align the relevant law in Western Australia with the law in other jurisdictions. This is, again, an efficiency measure. Vehicles must be returned and the refund application made within five years of the original assessment. The exemption will also apply to transactions that are cancelled

after the purchaser has taken possession of the vehicle if the duty was paid in anticipation of the sale. Again, this will remove a pain point. An exemption will also apply to the grant of a vehicle licence to a dealer if the new vehicle is acquired solely for use as a service demonstrator vehicle. This exemption will reduce the number of disputes and more accurately reflect industry practices, again reducing a pain point.

As my good colleague the member for Cockburn outlined, the Family Court of Western Australia process for the transfer of property in a relationship breakdown is very painful and distressing for many people. The proposed change in this bill will certainly help reduce that pain point. The bill provides that Family Court orders following a marriage or de facto relationship breakdown will be exempt from duty. Duty will apply only when property is transferred. Nominal duty will apply if the eligibility criteria are met. This will reduce red tape and simplify administration, allowing Family Court orders to be self-assessed through Revenue Online. This change will take effect from the day after the act receives royal assent. Again, this will reduce a pain point, and make our duty regime more people-friendly and efficient.

I commend this bill to the house and look forward to its speedy passage.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call the member for Wanneroo.

MS S.E. WINTON (Wanneroo — Parliamentary Secretary) [10.35 am]: Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

A member: Are you going to start off where you finished last night?

Ms S.E. WINTON: What a difference a day makes! Members, I am always chomping at the bit to make a contribution, and no more so than on the Duties Amendment Bill 2022. On this most important day when the budget will be handed down, I am really happy to contribute to debate on this important bill.

This is not a sexy bill, and it will not necessarily get in the news headlines tonight, but it is a good example of how this government is absolutely committed to its reform agenda, such as the significant reforms this government has made to the planning regime. This bill is a very good, specific and real example of how this government is cutting red tape wherever possible.

This bill seeks to introduce measures to reduce the tax burden on some taxpayers and to simplify tax administration. In summary, it is expected that these measures will result in savings of \$7.3 million for Western Australians over the next financial year. That is not insignificant, particularly when we explore the details of the bill and appreciate that many of these measures will decrease the burden on small businesses and make the job of doing small business much easier. We know that small businesses are a huge employer of Western Australians. This McGowan government supports our small business sector. It engages with and listens to people in the small business sector and is making important reforms to ensure that this sector can continue to grow and thrive.

This government's support for the small business sector during the last two years of the COVID pandemic has ensured that many of those businesses have been able to continue to operate and thrive. I am sure that other members would have similar stories to tell about their own electorate, but the majority of small business operators in my electorate have been absolutely supportive of the measures that have been taken by the McGowan government during the last two years of the pandemic. We have often heard in the media and from the opposition that this state's closed borders have affected businesses and that we are ruining businesses, but the overwhelming message that I hear from people in the small business sector in my community is that they are absolutely happy with the approach the McGowan government is taking. In fact, many small businesses have said that they are doing better than ever because of the approach of the McGowan government, and I think that will be borne out a little bit later in the budget today through the detail of how well the Western Australian economy has done. We often talk about the mining and resources sector and its contribution to the state's economy. I think the budget today will clearly indicate that our small business sector has been thriving over the last two years, and that is because of the sensible and courageous approach—quite often in comparison with the calls by the opposition throughout the two years—that has seen all sectors of our economy able to continue during the pandemic. It was interesting to note the other day the Leader of the Opposition make the comment that there had been a bipartisan approach during the pandemic.

Dr A.D. Buti: I think it was the Leader of the Liberal Party.

Ms S.E. WINTON: Yes; he said that at all levels it had been a bipartisan approach. I hope someone has the time and energy to go back through *Hansard* and the media releases of the opposition over the last two years. At every step of the way, the opposition opposed the measures that this government took to keep Western Australians safe, and no more so than when the McGowan government made the difficult, but right, decision to delay the opening of the border, together with its tough stance on mandating vaccines, which has meant that we have the highest rate of third-dose vaccinations anywhere in Australia. That in turn is one of the major reasons we are able to cope with the continuing COVID situation now. Our incredible third-dose vaccination rate is making sure that the hospitalisation rate and the impacts of COVID are minimised. Had we had the approach of the opposition—the “let it rip” approach—we would have seen all sectors of the community damaged, and no sector more so than our small businesses. It is very interesting to see the economic outcome of that kind of approach in New South Wales and Victoria compared with the local economy of Western Australia.

This is an important bill to get through the house today because it will come into effect in 2022–23 as part of the budget delivered today. I hope it gets a speedy passage through this place and that the opposition will support it fully so we can send it on its way to the upper house and get it passed swiftly. As I said, although these measures are not sexy and are not going to grab a headline, clearly, they reflect the McGowan government's intent to make sure that red tape and the taxation system in Western Australia are simplified. There will be savings to the tune of \$7.3 million through this bill passing, and it is really important to note that no taxpayers will be worse off through this regime.

I will take a couple of moments to discuss some aspects of this bill. The measures in this bill include reducing the rate of duty for non-residential property, which will assist settlement agents and conveyancers. I will go into the detail of that in a moment, but it is a clear, tangible example of how we are trying to support and stimulate investment in Western Australia for Western Australian businesses. This bill also seeks to amend the transfer duty concession available for small businesses and residential property transfers to ensure that lower rates of duty on assets continue. This bill will remove the duty on certain transactions for prospecting licences. I have to say that the contributions made by my fellow members about that specific element of the bill got me a little bit excited and made me think that I might need to take up prospecting. What psychological term did the member for Churchlands use to describe addiction when she was talking about that aspect?

Ms C.M. Tonkin: Variable-ratio reinforcement.

Ms S.E. WINTON: It is variable-ratio reinforcement. It sounds like a financial term, but it is a psychological term about addiction. I had not contemplated that prospecting would be considered by some as an addictive endeavour. I do have another addiction plaguing me, so perhaps it is time to throw away the fags and get myself a metal detector, and off I go! It might be not only a healthier endeavour, but also a more prosperous endeavour—who knows?

A government member interjected.

Ms S.E. WINTON: I thank the member. If I did that as a result of these measures in this bill, it would be a good thing for people interested in the prospecting game, but also those people who, as the member for Churchlands said, are endeavouring to get out of prospecting because they have conquered their addiction. We will be abolishing the duty on transactions for prospecting licences unless they are transferred with other dutiable property. We know these transactions are low value and they do not raise much revenue, but managing them probably creates an incredible cost and burden through bureaucracy, so it absolutely makes sense that we abolish those licences. It will simplify the transfer of those licences and reduce administrative costs for RevenueWA. Of course, this will take effect from July 2022.

There are some other key aspects to this bill that are important. One, as I mentioned before, is that it will reduce the general rate of duty. A concessional residential rate applies to residential property; the general rate applies to non-residential properties. The general rate of duty will be reduced to the residential rate of duty and apply to all dutiable transactions. In real terms, that lower rate of duty will benefit an estimated 3 000 to 5 000 transactions a year and will reduce record keeping obligations and administrative burdens for settlement agents and conveyancers. It does not sound like a huge implication, but I am sure the small business sector will absolutely welcome the changes within this bill. It will of course reduce the administrative overheads for RevenueWA. It is important to note this is not a money grab. No taxpayer will be worse off under this system.

I also want to highlight the aspect of the bill relating to vehicle licence duties. Under this bill, two vehicle licence duty exemptions will be introduced: for vehicles returned to the seller for a full refund or a replacement vehicle or when the deal is cancelled before the purchaser takes possession of the vehicle, and service demonstrator vehicles. Again, those changes will take effect the day after the Duties Amendment Bill 2022 receives royal assent. I want to highlight that this is an important reform for the car dealer industry that I am sure will receive support from that sector. We are trying to make the cost of doing business cheaper and the process more efficient. The reforms in this bill seek to cut red tape and to make the taxation system simpler for Western Australians and businesses in particular.

I also want to highlight another key element in this bill that has been highlighted by other speakers. This bill seeks to make some important changes to the Family Court system. I do not need to say that for people who have to go through the Family Court, it can be a stressful, sometimes complex and very expensive business. The Family Court provisions within this bill will mean that Family Court orders following a marriage or a de facto relationship breakdown will now be exempt from duty. Duty will only apply when the property is transferred and a nominal duty will apply if the eligibility criteria have been met. Again, this will cut red tape and simplify administration allowing Family Court orders to be self-assessed through Revenue Online. It is a good thing, wherever possible, to reduce bureaucracy, red tape and the burden for not only the people who have to go through the Family Court system, but also, importantly, the actual administration of the Family Court. This change will take effect on the day after the bill receives royal assent. Members, I could go on for hours. This is not a complex piece of legislation, but it is an important one.

There is no doubt that with the delivery of the budget today, the news headlines tonight will be focused on pivotal areas within the budget. When we receive our budget papers this afternoon we will actually realise, and this is what is not often well reported, the incredible work done by the ministers and their various agencies on sound financial

management. This bill is a good example of that work. It is important that people in the community understand that although we want to relieve cost-of-living pressures by making concessions or putting in place various measures within the budget that support family budgets, it is also really important that during budget time we reflect on the incredible amount of work done by ministers in managing their agencies to make sure that they are efficient, that they deliver on the key purposes of those agencies and that every single dollar of taxpayer money is well spent and targeted. This will show that this government respects taxpayers' money and it will ensure that it is able to act sustainably and deliver into the future.

I look forward to the budget this afternoon. I know that it will indicate very strongly what this government can do and what it can invest in when it is financially responsible. This bill will have some \$7 million worth of savings for taxpayers once it has been passed. In large part, that is possible because of the sound financial management delivered by the McGowan government over the past five years and into the future. With that, I will conclude my remarks. I congratulate the Minister for Finance for bringing the Duties Amendment Bill 2022 to this house and I very much want to thank him for the opportunity to make a contribution to this important debate.

MS M.J. HAMMAT (Mirrabooka) [10.55 am]: I, too, am excited to rise today to talk to the Duties Amendment Bill 2022 brought forward by the Minister for Finance for debate and passage through this house. It is a really important bill for a number of reasons, which others before me have outlined. In my contribution today, I want to talk a little about duties and red tape and then I will talk more specifically about the provisions in the bill. It is a little known fact that before I started university and after finishing high school, I had a job for 12 months working for the AMP Society as a claims clerk processing insurance claims for the people of Western Australia who had their insurance policies —

A member interjected.

Ms M.J. HAMMAT: Yes, it was my job to process death benefits and maturities for certain life insurance policies. Members will be interested to hear that one of my jobs required me to go through the death notices every day to see whether any of our policy holders had passed away so that we could begin to prepare their claims in a timely fashion. When we were notified by the family that someone had passed away, we then had that money ready to be paid out to them. As an 18-year-old that was not the kind of work that I expected to be doing—trawling through the death notices every day—but, indeed, that was one of the things I did. One of the other things that I was required to do was to affix duty stamps to some of the policies and documentation that we received. In my desk I had a folder that contained—it was like the post office that has those big folders with lots of stamps in various denominations. I had one of those folders in my drawer and I was required to get the right duty onto certain policy documents. It was a long time ago, members, so it is hard to remember but I think that I had to do that when we were sending an interstate cheque and there was a need to pay duty on that and on certain other payments. I have to confess that I was required to look after those stamps and to balance them. Once I had used all the stamps, I had to go through a balancing process to demonstrate how many I had used and to tally it right back to the proper number. I never managed to get it to balance, I have to confess. I am not sure why I had so much trouble with those duty stamps but it remains with me to this day that I was unable to get them to balance—probably much to the consternation of my supervisors. I can report that after 12 months of working at the AMP Society, I realised that working on insurance claims was not for me and that it was not going to be the place for me to work in for the remainder of my life, so I enrolled in and went off to study at university, like many others had done before me.

One of the things that was very interesting about working at the AMP Society, other than death notices and duty stamps, was that it opened my eyes to the world of work. It was my first permanent full-time job. It taught me a lot about work, workplaces and jobs, and how some jobs are more interesting than others. It was an important developmental time for me and duty stamps remain clear in my mind as a consequence of the time that I spent there.

This bill comes before us today as one of a range of measures that the McGowan government has pursued that are designed to reduce red tape. The government made an election commitment to reduce red tape and the difficulty of dealing with it. I think discussions around red tape are quite interesting. A lot is said about red tape and it is one of those concepts that I think is difficult to define but widely considered not good. I think people would agree that red tape is bad and there is this ongoing attempt in the bureaucracy to improve or reduce it. It is very difficult to drill down and capture exactly what is the nature of red tape. The nature of it is that people assume it is bad and unnecessary regulation. The challenge is that there is no universal agreement on what is unnecessary regulation. Some people would argue regulations are important for community safety or individual safety—they are not at all unnecessary and they are not burdensome and they are not bad and should not be considered red tape—whereas others would argue that any kind of regulation and infringement is a bad thing.

“Red tape” is a very emotive term and poorly defined, so I think in any discussion about red tape it is useful to go beyond that and consider the actual things that are being modified and the regulation in question, and then to have some way of determining whether that regulation is serving a useful purpose in the community. It is necessary because a lot of business groups in much of their commentary on red tape make a lot of claims that often border on hysterical about its burden in Australia. It is good to take their contributions with a grain of salt. I wanted to share some of them.

The Business Council of Australia's chair of the Ease of Doing Business Committee in an article in 2017 claimed Australia is being —

... held back by a noxious culture of overregulation that has infiltrated almost every aspect of our lives.

That was his way of describing red tape. He says it —

... strangles economic development, limits new opportunities for Australian workers and jeopardises their efforts to provide higher living standards for their families.

Clearly, he laid it on pretty thick with language such as that, which is designed to be emotive and over the top. The Institute of Public Affairs similarly made the bold claim that it is costing the Australian economy \$176 billion each year in forgone economic output. It argued for Australia to adopt something along the same lines of what the Trump administration adopted, which was a kind of crude way of dealing with regulation. I think Trump described an idea of "one in, two out", so if we introduce a regulation, we should get rid of two others without any sort of assessment of the purpose of those regulations or the important work that those regulations might be performing. It is almost an obsessive interest in arguing that regulation is a bad thing and that we should just reduce regulation without any assessment of what purpose that performs and, indeed, whether it is having any genuine impact.

I am very pleased with the government's agenda to reduce red tape. The implementation of measures that reduce the burden on individuals and small businesses is important. However, I do not subscribe to those more hysterical contributions whereby anything that can be labelled red tape is inherently bad and should be eliminated. I think we need to understand that regulations serve really valuable and important roles in our community and in our society; they ensure that we are able to function effectively as a collective group. Of course, the bill that is before the house today clearly does that. I will come to some of the details in the bill shortly.

I want to also reflect on how in our obsessive discussion around red tape, many other kinds of tape are now identified as part of our system of regulations. "Green tape" is another phrase that is used, which describes environmental regulation. Again, people argue whether it is a good or bad thing. The literature is keen to talk about "beige tape" or "grey tape". For those members who have not come across those terms before, it is a way of describing not the fault of the regulation, but the problems in how that regulation is administered by a regulator. We have a lot of jargon and terminology. I am really saying that it is important to look behind that and see the detail of what we are discussing. Although I support the reduction of unnecessary regulation, particularly when it has cost impacts or impacts on businesses and individuals, we need to recognise that regulation is important for our community. We should be able to have a discussion about it without the more outlandish claims that some in the business community make as a way of furthering their arguments that they should have an unfettered ability to do whatever they want, which is incredibly unhelpful.

As other speakers have covered before me, the bill contains a number of specific sensible measures to simplify tax processes and assist taxpayers in reducing their burden. These include reducing the rate of duty for non-residential property and reducing red tape for settlement agents and conveyancers. The bill will amend the transfer duty concession available for small businesses and residential property transfers to ensure that it continues to provide lower rates of duty on assets valued at less than \$200 000.

As many members have discussed, it will remove the duty on certain transactions for prospecting licences. I have enjoyed other members' contributions about prospecting licences. Prospecting is not something that I have ever undertaken, but I think it clearly gives enjoyment to many of the individuals who are involved in it. I think it is one of the opportunities for tourism in this state; we should encourage people to Wander Out Yonder, to experience the vastness and the beauty of the Western Australian landscape and get involved in the really unique opportunity to maybe find gold while they are out there.

The bill will also remove the duty for service demonstrator vehicles, cancelled vehicle purchases and vehicles returned to the dealer for refund or replacement. It will also exempt certain Family Court orders from duty. All these are very important changes and, as others have said before me, savings of \$7.3 million will result for Western Australians over the next financial year. They are sensible changes that will not only deliver financial improvements, but also remove burdens from affected individuals and businesses so that they will be able to go about their business without having to undertake certain regulatory practices.

Importantly, when we are dealing with these types of red-tape reduction strategies, one of the things that we are very mindful of is the impact on small businesses. I know it is very much the case that small businesses are often concerned about regulatory frameworks and how much time and energy might be spent on those. In my contribution today, I want to talk briefly about the time I have recently spent visiting many of the small businesses in my electorate of Mirrabooka. I have done a range of things as I have visited them, but one thing has been to talk to them about the support package that the government recently announced for those small businesses that have been impacted by downturns because of COVID, and to share information about that with those businesses. One of the wonderful things about my electorate in Mirrabooka is the incredible diversity and uniqueness of the small businesses that we have in the electorate. Many people will be familiar with the very large The Square Mirrabooka shopping centre, but there are in fact a number of smaller shopping centres around the electorate. Many of them contain businesses

that provide unique products or services that meet a need for the very multicultural community that lives in my electorate. I can report that there are some excellent food shops, including Esmat Bakery, where we purchased some flatbread the other day that had been freshly baked out the back; a number of clothing shops for Muslim women; and interesting and different food shops, with both grocery-type items and cooked food and takeaways. I think that is one of the unique points of difference in my electorate.

I am keen to support and encourage small businesses in any way that I can. One of my election commitments was to provide some support to allow for the upgrade of parking, kerbs and what have you at two of the shopping centres in my electorate, Balga Plaza and Mirrabooka Village—that is a smaller shopping village in Mirrabooka—to really encourage people to spend more time in those smaller suburban shopping centres so that they can experience the unique and diverse offerings of small businesses in Mirrabooka. Changes to duties of this kind will perhaps be good news for them as well, as people who might be looking to purchase property will benefit from the kind of changes that are outlined here.

One of the really important things about reducing red tape and the kind of changes that this bill will make is that it will not only reduce the cost burdens, but also make government more accessible. In my electorate, almost half the population speaks a language other than English at home. Ensuring that we have a government that is accessible to people who perhaps do not speak English as a first language is an incredibly important step in making sure that people get the services, responses and assistance they need and expect from their government. By reducing red tape that is unnecessary, burdensome and perhaps complex, citizens will be able to access government and undertake their business with government. That is a really important part of an overall strategy of addressing red tape. These kinds of provisions will greatly assist by making sure that the people who live in my electorate of Mirrabooka will be able to wade through fewer and fewer regulations to undertake their business. I think that is another general benefit of red-tape reduction, and I do not think it should be understated at all.

With that, I will bring my comments to a conclusion. I just reinforce that this bill is part of a body of work being undertaken by this government that will reduce what we call red tape. I do not use that term lightly, because I think we need to understand the regulation that sits behind it. I congratulate the minister for bringing this bill to the house, which has some very sensible provisions that will provide benefits and save the people of Western Australia \$7.3 million. With that, I commend the bill to the house.

DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale — Minister for Finance) [11.14 am] — in reply: I thank all the members who have contributed to the second reading debate on the Duties Amendment Bill 2022, which seeks to amend the Duties Act. The Leader of the Opposition made some comments in support of the bill before us and I thank her for that. I know that she has been labouring under a heavy flu, from what I understand. Anyway, she is not that well, so I thank her for her contribution.

The Minister for Culture and the Arts; Sport and Recreation, among other portfolios, gave an interesting contribution. Obviously, in terms of his arts portfolio, there are probably not a lot of artists who would need to worry about this because they do not make enough money to pay tax or even have the ability to purchase a vehicle or a house, but there are a couple of very well-off artists. Obviously, one of the most famous Western Australian artists is Juniper. What was Juniper's first name?

Mr D.A. Templeman: Robert Juniper.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Robert Juniper. Is he still alive? I do not know. Anyway, he was famous and quite well-off. But if the minister puts his other hat on, as the Minister for Sport and Recreation, there would be a number of elite sportspeople in that category who will be very interested in this bill.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Daniel Ricciardo!

Dr A.D. BUTI: Yes, Daniel Ricciardo. He probably does not need to worry about these sorts of matters, but there will be a lot of sportspeople who do. Probably a lot of West Coast Eagles players who want to hit whatever disco might have to pay some fines, so they might look for any tax relief they can obtain.

The member for Cockburn gave an outstanding contribution that was very wideranging. It was interesting to hear about his interest in prospecting. My father also took a metal detector out into the outback and sought his riches. Obviously, he was not successful, but he enjoyed the journey. It was interesting that the member recalled his stories there. He also talked about being an avid hiker. He was very ambitious to try to take on the Pacific Crest Trail. Hon Ben Wyatt has an ambition to do that one day. The member mentioned the Bibbulmun Track. I am hoping to do it in July. Members of Parliament who want to join me for parts of it are more than welcome.

The member for Churchlands has wide experience in the public sector. She talked about the need to try to do things efficiently and about variable-ratio reinforcement. For members who were not here at the time, “variable-ratio reinforcement” means addiction. As the Minister for Racing and Gaming, it is probably a term I should know. I thank the member for educating me on that aspect.

The member for Wanneroo talked about the need to support more small business operators and how the budget that is going to be announced this afternoon will be doing that, and how this is all part of that measure.

The member for Mirrabooka gave a very interesting contribution and talked about red tape. Yes, we are always talking about reducing red tape. Her analysis of that was that there is no universal acceptance of what is necessary red tape or regulation. I think that the red-tape reduction sought under this bill would be universally accepted and supported, but the member is right: regulation is important, and we need to try to find that median between what is necessary regulation and what is unnecessary red tape. I thank all members for their contributions.

As was stated by members with various emphasis, this bill seeks to reduce red tape and provide relief to some taxpayers. To summarise, the bill seeks to do that by reducing the rate of duty for non-residential property; reducing red tape for settlement agents and conveyancers; amending the transfer duty concessions available for small business and residential property transfers to ensure that low rates of duty continue to be applied to assets valued at less than \$200 000; removing duty on certain transactions for prospecting licences; and—one that I think really should be supported—removing duty for service demonstrator vehicles, council vehicle purchases and vehicles returned to the dealer for a full refund or replacement vehicle. The member for Wanneroo also talked a bit more about the exemption from duty for Family Court orders.

I commend the bill to the house, and I thank all those who have made a contribution.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

[Leave granted to proceed forthwith to third reading.]

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by **Dr A.D. Buti (Minister for Finance)**, and transmitted to the Council.

MINING AMENDMENT BILL 2021

Second Reading

Resumed from 20 October 2021.

MS A.E. KENT (Kalgoorlie) [11.20 am]: I rise today to talk to the Mining Amendment Bill 2021. In my electorate of Kalgoorlie, mining is the mainstay of the economy. This bill will amend the Mining Act 1978 to consolidate and clarify the conditions and approvals required to undertake activities on mining tenements. It is an important piece of legislation and today I am proud to tell members the story of mining in the goldfields.

As the house would know, the 1893 gold rush resulted in the discovery of the Golden Mile, one of the richest gold deposits in the world. Just a decade later, the twin towns of Kalgoorlie and Boulder would be home to the fabled Golden Mile, reputedly the richest square mile on earth and one of the greatest concentrations of underground mines ever established.

Today, Kalgoorlie–Boulder is not only a thriving region with some 30 000 residents, but also a living heritage area. The new and the old sit in harmony side by side, acknowledging a rich past and looking to fresh horizons. This wonderful history continues. The future of the mining industry is secure, well beyond my lifetime, I am sure, and, of course, my electorate of Kalgoorlie knows how valuable this is.

I am thrilled to be part of the McGowan state Labor government, which is doing its part in securing the future of the economy. The upgrade of the Kalgoorlie TAFE is part of the biggest TAFE infrastructure investment in the state’s history. Work is well underway on the \$7 million workshop, which will expand training for plant mechanic and engineering trades, which, of course, support the workforce needs of the goldfields resources industry. Existing workshops at the Kalgoorlie campus will undergo a \$1 million refurbishment, with a further \$2 million worth of industry-standard training equipment set to be installed. The combined \$10 million capital works project will see approximately 400 apprentices trained at the campus each year in high-demand engineering, fabrication, electronic, electrical and automotive programs.

Then there is the drill core library. The Minister for Mines and Petroleum opened the multimillion dollar expansion of the Joe Lord Core Library in Kalgoorlie–Boulder last year. The McGowan government announced \$7 million to support the library’s expansion as part of the goldfields–Esperance recovery plan. This has resulted in a 2 100–square metre extension that has tripled the storage capacity of the world-class core sample library. The improved facility provides geoscientists, explorers and mining companies greater access to view and analyse drill cores. As the minister said at the opening —

“The extension includes an additional 6,720 pallet storage bays and more roller tables to view the huge core sample collection, which is over 3 000 metres.

He continued —

“The core library supports the very popular exploration incentive scheme, which has just recently offered \$6.35 million grants to 51 exploration projects.

“This is further proof of the McGowan government’s support of the exploration industry and regional communities.”

The completed expansion of the drill core library is welcome news for the local community and mining industry, as it could save millions of dollars in research.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Hear, hear!

Ms A.E. KENT: Thank you, minister.

Let us look at the current state of play in the goldfields region. There is so much activity going on, but I would just like to give the house a snapshot. Northern Star Resources Ltd is currently preparing for a growth project at its KCGM operations, called Fimiston South, which will commence in 2023 at the southern end of the open pit known as the Super Pit. Everyone knows the Super Pit, of course. This \$600 million project will represent the single largest cutback at the pit in more than a decade. As people in the goldfields know, at nearly 3.5 kilometres long, 1.5 kilometres wide and 600 metres deep, the Super Pit is currently so big that it is visible from space.

Fimiston South will extend KCGM operations to at least 2034, providing ongoing benefits to the Kalgoorlie–Boulder community and sustaining hundreds of jobs. This expansion is likely to create about 700 jobs and a long-term continuation of the Super Pit, which is terrific for Kalgoorlie. Almost half, 46 per cent, of Northern Star’s total workforce—that is 1 550 people—reside in Kalgoorlie–Boulder, representing 91 per cent of all employees across Kalgoorlie’s production centre. The economic value that Northern Star returns to society has seen year-on-year growth and totalled \$3.2 billion for the 2021 calendar year—a 57 per cent increase from 2020.

Another couple of important statistics are that \$564 million is spent through procurement locally in Kalgoorlie, Coolgardie and Kambalda. Seventy-six per cent of the total procurement spend is within Western Australia and 23 per cent of Northern Star’s workforce are women, which is higher than the mining industry average of 19.7 per cent. Northern Star is committed to spending \$20 million per annum with Indigenous businesses—this is a really good sign—by the end of 2024.

I turn now to Lynas Rare Earths. Of course, mining has expanded to valuable rare earths, with a ministerial statement issued on 1 February 2022 about Lynas and the Kalgoorlie processing facility and the Environmental Protection Act 1986. Rare earths are used in the manufacture of the many things that we use every day, from smart phones, electrical appliances and green technology such as hybrid and electric vehicles and wind turbines—it is important that the latest electric vehicle charging stations have reached all the way to Eucla. The project will process rare earth concentrate sources from the Lynas Mt Weld mine, about 308 kilometres north east of Kalgoorlie, to produce rare earth carbonate for export. This \$500 million project is expected to create approximately 290 positions during construction and 128 new jobs as a result of this investment.

I will now travel further afield in the goldfields and go to Norseman. History has it that a prospector’s horse is credited with the discovery of gold at Norseman. In August 1894, Lawrence Sinclair, astride his horse Hardy Norseman, was returning to Esperance from Coolgardie when he heard that his brother George and another prospector Jack Alsop were looking for gold in a sandy gully. Laurie met with the pair and decided to try his luck on a nearby ridge where he tethered his horse, Norseman, for the night. The next morning, he spotted a gold nugget where the animal had disturbed the ground and Norseman was created. By January 1895, more than 200 miners were working on the goldfield. The town of Norseman was proclaimed in January 1896 and in the next few years, a post office, bank, doctor’s surgery, courthouse, school, hospital, stores, three hotels and churches were established, and, in 1899, Cobb & Co began a mail run. Norseman became the centre of Western Australia’s second richest goldmine and the Norseman goldmine, despite some periods of care and maintenance, is renowned as Australia’s longest continuously operating goldmine. However, by 1920, most of the mines had closed and the population of Norseman had dwindled to about 300.

Let us fast-forward to the last couple of years. Pantoro Ltd recently announced the acquisition of the Norseman gold project. The current mineral resource is 4.2 million ounces of gold, with an ore reserve of 602 000 ounces. Pre-construction works are well underway, with the first production planned for this year. It will be very soon, actually. With little systematic exploration undertaken since the late 1990s, Pantoro says that the extensive existing infrastructure on site makes production from the historic project a reality.

I move now to Mincor Resources—to Kambalda and nickel. I told members there was a lot going on! We have gold, nickel and rare earths. Mincor Resources delivered its first nickel ore to BHP’s Kambalda concentrator as part of a restart of its operations. The delivery by trucking contractor MLG Oz represents the first time that ore has been trucked from a Mincor mine since the company’s operations were placed in care and maintenance over six years ago. The exciting part is Cassini, a greenfields discovery and a flagship mine, and a brand new nickel discovery—the first one in 10 years. Mincor has said that it will continue delivering ore to build a stockpile ahead of recommissioning the concentrator this quarter. Managing director David Southam described the first delivery of ore as a fantastic achievement, as the company closed in on the first nickel concentrate production. He said that with the current nickel price substantially above the assumed price used in Mincor’s definitive feasibility study, he was incredibly excited to be on the cusp of production once again in Kambalda and, importantly, creating almost 200 jobs. Nickel, of course, has enjoyed a resurgence on the back of its growing profile as a key electric vehicle battery ingredient. With Mincor entering into an offtake deal with BHP’s Nickel West to process and refine its ore, there are exciting times ahead for both Mincor and Kambalda.

We travel now to the northern goldfields, and the next history lesson is from Leonora. In 1894, gold was discovered in the area by a prospector named Morrisey. In the following three years, a number of rich finds resulted in rapid development of the area. By 1897, a residential and business area had been established and the town was gazetted as Leonora in 1898.

Moving to an interesting location two kilometres from Leonora, we find a town site called Gwalia. As luck would have it, Gwalia is the ancient Welsh name for Wales, so there is a huge connection there for me. The town of Gwalia was basically a mining town and most of the residents were employed either in the mine or associated industries connected to it. When the Sons of Gwalia mine closed in 1963, the town quickly became deserted. The little temporary miners' houses, shops, boarding houses and other important buildings were left empty and exposed to the elements. These included the Gwalia state school, the State Hotel, the mine manager's and superintendent's houses and the mine office and assay buildings.

Slowly, as the years went by, people began to realise that the town was disappearing with the impact of the harsh elements of the goldfields outback. A community museum was formed by a group of residents from Leonora–Gwalia. The museum in the mine manager's office was opened in 1972 and the Sons of Gwalia mine itself was reopened in 1981. The site was mined via open pit mining. The open pit mine is right alongside the museum. This provided additional interest for tourists who then could watch the mine in operation from the safety of a tower overlooking the pit.

In 1987, the old Oregon headframe and steam winding engine were relocated to the museum precinct. These two exhibits were very important to save. The headframe made of Oregon pine was designed by Herbert Hoover, who later to become the thirty-first American President, and the engine is the largest steam winding engine in Australia. These are two very important pieces of history for the museum. They both now stand very majestically overlooking the new mining operations.

In 1996, the area celebrated its centenary and part of a gift to the town was a project that restored many of the old miners' huts. As they had been left neglected for some 30 years, suffering cyclones, winds, rain and extreme heat, they were, to say the least, in very poor condition. Some did not have lining, roofs or floors. These camps were originally built as shelters by the miners using leftover filter cloth, old explosives boxes and tin from the mine. The miners were mainly Italian, looking for shelter and something substantial to put over their tents. The community of Leonora–Gwalia has worked very hard to restore these camps using similar implements and materials to those that were used nearly 100 years ago. The buildings are open for tourists to wander around, and all that is asked is that nothing be touched or taken and that children are under supervision. If members have not visited this site, please go to Gwalia. It is incredible and you will not regret it!

And, so, to Leonora today. A goldmine that has changed hands three times in 17 years is set to get a new lease of life. Red 5 is spending \$226 million to ramp up work at the King of the Hills goldmine. The mine is on track to pour its first gold bar in mid-2022 and has an estimated life of 16 years. Red 5 managing director Mark Williams declared to media and analysts on a site tour that “our children will be mining this project.” The reason for his confidence is deep drilling, which has defined new gold reserves over areas equivalent to three or four football fields. Over its projected life, the mine is forecast to produce 2.4 million ounces of gold and generate \$1.54 billion in post-tax cash flow.

As the minister said at the time, King of the Hills has the potential to transform the northern goldfields because there will be a solid anchor mine that will attract other projects and unlock even more opportunities. It is good to think that the mining industry will still be providing high-skilled, high-wage jobs for another generation.

I now want to relay to the house other important factors in the mining industry—the personal stories. A news article last year talked about a city girl who revealed how she went from living pay cheque to pay cheque in the city to earning a six-figure salary after she quit the rat-race to work at a goldmine. Melanie from Perth was working as an administration assistant when she made the career switch at the age of 45. She said —

‘I just felt stuck, I craved adventure and wanted to do something way out of my comfort zone,’ ...

When she was offered a mining role in the northern goldfields, she decided to turn her back on her nine-to-five job for gruelling 10-hour shifts working in scorching temperatures of up to 49 degrees. Melanie said —

‘I quit my job to move 900km away to a remote town called Leonora to find gold—something I knew nothing about. Everyone thought I was crazy to leave my comfortable life and secure job to move to the middle of nowhere,’ ...

On her first day of work, Melanie was told she “wouldn't last a day out here” because she was working in a predominantly male industry —

‘People were saying “it's a man's world” but it just made me more determined to push through and succeed,’ ...

[Member's time extended.]

Ms A.E. KENT: Just one week after she moved, she found herself with nowhere to live because the mine site was forced to shut indefinitely. What did she do? She said —

‘Instead of going home with my tail between my legs I decided to stay, live off my savings and learn everything I could about gold mining,’ ...

‘I slept in a swag as the job on the mine site I originally came up for was also my accommodation ... I slept outside under a wooden pergola for the first few months and showered under a hose.’

She struggled with the heat at first, but she wanted to prove to everyone that she could work just as hard as men. Melanie said —

‘It was a bit overwhelming at first. Summers here are brutal with temperatures reaching 49 degrees and the millions of flies added to the equation,’ ...

‘My team works 10 hours a day and it’s physically hard work, but when you see gold at the end of a shift it’s so rewarding.

‘The first time I went metal detecting and found a nugget, I was hooked. Digging up a piece of gold that has been in the ground for millions of years is an incredible feeling.’

Melanie said she is now loving her life —

‘I’m on a six-figure income, my quality of life is so much better and I don’t miss driving in peak hour traffic every day,’ ...

It may come as a surprise to the house to learn that women were only let into underground mines 30 years ago.

Another personal story comes from Alex Atkins, who joined the WA School of Mines in 1986. She had no idea she would be part of the first wave of women legally allowed to work in underground mines. In 1986, Western Australian mine owners faced fines of up to \$500 if women were caught working in underground mines. New South Wales and Queensland changed their laws in 1989. Alex tells the story; I refer to my notes —

“I have a boy’s name and I caught the bus from Kalgoorlie to Laverton to do some work on the Christmas break”.

“I went to the office, the Supervisor looked at me and said you’re a woman, you can’t stay here ... you need to get back on the bus”.

“He let me stay and I had to walk into town and find someone to help me.

Alex said —

“I found a parish priest and he put me up with a family who let me stay in their garden shed.”

Luckily, this did not put her off. Ms Atkin’s career later took her to mines in Queensland and she became the first female underground mining engineer in Papua New Guinea. She now runs a mining consultancy group and sits on the boards of Ausdrill and the Australasian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy.

One thing for sure is that there are different elements to this industry, but it is a dynamic industry that will be with us forever. It is welcoming to see that the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety and the minister’s office have undertaken considerable consultation with industry stakeholders, including small and large operators, across Western Australia. I am sure many of those were in my electorate.

There are important components in this bill, amongst which is the assurance that very strong environmental controls will be in place. The bill also has provision to exclude areas for mining, such as zones that are close to areas of heritage or environmental significance. The updates in the bill will also, importantly, create an approvals statement. This will be a single source of truth for mining activity conditions, making management and accountability a lot easier. Only one approvals statement will be live at any time. I understand that this inclusion in the bill is very popular with proponents and the regulator.

In closing, I want to leave the house with the latest information for 2020–21 provided by the Chamber of Minerals and Energy. The total direct economic contributions for the goldfields–Esperance region was an eye-watering \$1.63 billion, which supported almost 3 500 full-time jobs, \$444 million in wages, 895 businesses and 131 community organisations. I have no doubt that the next statistics from CME will show considerable growth in those figures. This industry shows no sign of diminishing and we are all very excited about that. In fact, the outgoing CEO of the Chamber of Minerals and Energy, Paul Everingham, said in March at the launch of the mining forum in Kambalda that the goldfields will be more exciting than the Pilbara during the next 10 years. He said that it started there and its very much a more diverse commodity base. I look forward to seeing how the Mining Amendment Bill will further improve the industry and I want to thank the department, the minister and the McGowan state government, yet again, for leading the way. I commend this bill to the house.

MS J.L. HANNS (Collie–Preston) [11.44 am]: I rise to support the Mining Amendment Bill 2021. I agree with a lot of the statements made by the member for Kalgoorlie around the importance and significance of mining to the Western Australian economy. I was particularly pleased reading the provisions of this bill with the idea of

simplifying and streamlining the approvals process, which is supported by the mining industry, notwithstanding the very rigorous environmental assessment processes. Another aspect of the bill I would like to refer to today is the mining development and closure proposal. The approach undertaken by the review will make sure that there is a holistic risk assessment of the whole life of the mine and a clear consideration of closure outcomes, which is an important consideration around mining.

We certainly cannot underestimate the significance of mining to the Western Australian economy—the contribution it makes to gross domestic product and the royalties generated. Clearly, I am from Collie and I represent the electorate of Collie–Preston and we all know that coal is important to Collie. Reflecting on my life, I was actually surprised to find that I have been surrounded by mining my entire life. I want to raise a couple of points around that. I grew up in Yarloop and my dad worked at the old Bunnings mill. When Alcoa set up at Wagerup, he was one of the first employees to move from the timber industry into the mining industry. Mining can create incredible opportunities, particularly in regional communities, and can have a significant impact on families and people living in the area. Through mining, people can access better paying jobs that create opportunities for their families. Mining creates roles for young people in the future. I note that at the time my father moved from the timber industry to alumina production at Alcoa, he was working alongside the member for Forrestfield, Stephen Price. My mum was a cleaner at the local primary school and worked at the local doctor's surgery, but also moved over to Alcoa. She progressed through the Alcoa management and is now working at the Mid West Ports Authority in the finance department. Those opportunities were created for my family members and they have certainly been able to take great steps in securing their futures, my future and that of my brother. I also note that I think my mum worked alongside the member the Cottesloe, Dr David Honey, while he was working at Alcoa.

When I finished high school, I moved from Yarloop to South Africa on a Rotary exchange. I note that the member for Dawesville was also a Rotary exchange student at the Rotary Club of Harvey. I was sent to Brakpan, which is a small town in South Africa. It is certainly not small by Australian standards. It is right in the heartlands of East Rand, surrounded by goldmine dumps. I spent a year there. Gold was certainly a significant part of the South African economy. When I returned I studied teaching—the Minister for Mines and Petroleum has just told me he was an AFS exchange student. I am not sure; perhaps we should have an audit of members of Parliament to see how many people have undertaken exchange programs.

Once I finished university and graduated as a teacher, I taught at Mount Lawley Senior High School in my first year out. It is a great school. I then progressed to Tom Price Senior High School, which was my first country post. Clearly, Tom Price Senior High School supported the children of families working in the iron ore industry. Iron ore is an incredibly important resource in Western Australia and to its economy. My teacher house was located in area W in Tom Price. I am not sure whether anyone in the chamber is familiar with that area. My front veranda overlooked the railway line on which the very, very long trains rolled along, making sure that Gina Rinehart made exceptional and incredible amounts of money. But, again, the particular focus here is on what that resource did for the people living in that economy—the jobs and opportunities created for people in the area.

I now turn to Collie and will focus on coal for a moment. I know the minister came down to Collie a couple of months ago during community cabinet and met with the Coalminers Welfare Board of Western Australia. The coalmining industry in Collie has been around for 125 years. This year, Collie will have been a gazetted town for 125 years. The Coalminers Welfare Board was established during the era of underground mining. As the former member for Collie–Preston would attest from when he worked underground, the working conditions for underground miners meant that they were not even supplied with soap so that they could wash their hands to eat their lunch, which, obviously, they did when underground. I am sure Mick Murray can tell members lots of stories, but my favourite of the stories that he has told me is that he had to wrap his sandwiches in multiple layers of paper so that he would not get sludge all over the food he was trying to eat.

The Coalminers Welfare Board was established to provide personal protective equipment such as helmets and headlamps for underground miners, and also things like soap for them to wash their hands prior to having lunch. The Coalminers Welfare Board leaves an incredible legacy. The board also contributed to the build of Collie Memorial Swimming Pool, which is a 50-metre, eight-lane pool that was built in memory of the people who perished in the underground mining system in Collie.

Another significant contributor to the mining industry and to the local economy and employment sector of Collie is South32, previously Worsley Alumina. The coal and power industries employ 1 150 people and a similar number of indirect workers at suppliers such as Liebherr, Monadelphous and Downer Group. I will not go into the details of the breakdown between the coal and power industries, but South32, as in ex–Worsley Alumina, also employs 1 500 people. Mining in Collie is a significant contributor to the local economy. The traditional employment areas of the people in those industries are boilermaker, coded mirror welder, mechanical fitter, rigger and trades assistant. That is just a sample of the sorts of blue collar jobs that are supported by the mining industry in Collie.

Moving on, I would like to also mention that my electorate takes in the amazing town of Donnybrook. In looking at the history of Donnybrook, not many people realise that it was a significant contributor to the mining industry. Donnybrook is known for not only its gold industry, but also Donnybrook stone. I would like to highlight the fact

that gold was first discovered in Donnybrook in the mid-1890s and was mined in that area until about 1898. In the 1930s, during the time that people were looking for gold, they also discovered and established the quarries that produce Donnybrook stone.

Donnybrook stone dates back to the early cretaceous period of 144 million years ago. Donnybrook stone features the most amazing colours, ranging from white to beige to pink. A lot of prominent public and private buildings in Western Australia feature Donnybrook stone. I want to outline a couple of those to members today. Obviously, the stone was mined in Donnybrook and distributed around the state. The General Post Office in Forrest Place, and the Commonwealth Bank building on the corner of Murray Street–Forrest Place, both feature Donnybrook stone on their upper floors. At Parliament House here in Perth, the building frontage, main entrance and column facings on Harvest Terrace, which we would all be familiar with, are built from Donnybrook stone. The Supreme Court of Western Australia, the State Library of Western Australia, the Western Australian Museum, and Winthrop Hall at the University of Western Australia also feature Donnybrook stone.

Turning to Fremantle, the railway station is constructed from Donnybrook stone. St John’s Anglican Church in Fremantle is also built from Donnybrook stone. I will tell members a story that is a slight aside. I had the pleasure of attending the wedding of my brother and now sister-in-law at that particular church, and I was asked to speak at the wedding, so I stood in the pulpit in front of the congregation. Members may not be familiar with the fact that I am a mad West Coast Eagles supporter, but I will keep that on the down-low this year. If members ever see the name “One Yellow Eye, One Blue” in football tipping, that is me—that is my football tipping name. So I am not a one-eyed Eagles supporter. I digress. I was standing at the pulpit of St John’s Anglican Church in Fremantle, in front of an eagle, and in the Dockers’ heartland. Of course I made a funny joke about the fact that here we are, here is an eagle, and we are in Dockers’ territory. At the end of the ceremony, the priest took me aside and said, “You know that the eagle is a very important religious symbol in the Anglican Church?” So I proved at that wedding that I might have been agnostic.

Mr D.A.E. Scaife: Do you know, member for Collie–Preston, that none of this is making the Minister for Mines and Petroleum unhappy, because he is neither a Dockers nor an Eagles supporter.

Ms J.L. HANNS: Oh! That is correct! I think it is Collingwood, is it not, minister? Yes.

Mr D.A.E. Scaife: He goes for my second team, which is playing the Dockers tomorrow.

Ms J.L. HANNS: Actually, if we are going to digress into football territory, I would like to put on the record—minister, please do not take this personally—that when people ask me whether I am an Eagles or a Dockers supporter, because my dad who has now passed was a mad Dockers supporter, and I have taken on the mantle, I say, “I go for ABC”, which means anyone but Collingwood.

Mr D.A.E. Scaife interjected.

Ms J.L. HANNS: Now everyone knows! It’s no secret.

To turn back to Collie, this McGowan Labor government has made an incredible contribution to the diversification of the Collie economy. We know that as the landscape changes with green energy, and the very important need to take climate change action, that coal will become less and less important within the energy mix over time. The Collie community has accepted that, and the government is working very closely with the community on a just transition process. I would like to highlight just one of the amazing opportunities that has come out of the funding that the McGowan Labor government has delivered for Collie through the Collie industry attraction and development fund. A project called International Graphite has secured a \$2 million grant out of this particular fund to produce graphite, which is a critical mineral in the production of batteries. We know that batteries will play an increasingly important role in energy solutions, not just in Australia but across the world.

I mention International Graphite today for two reasons. One is the fact that when it went to the Australian Securities Exchange to raise \$10 million to further the development of its graphite production project, there was an overwhelming response and it sold \$10 million worth of shares within hours of those shares being listed on the stock exchange. That demonstrates the confidence in the battery and downstream processing manufacturing opportunities within Western Australia. Again, I thank the McGowan Labor government for its support in creating these amazing opportunities right in the heart of my electorate of Collie–Preston. The interesting thing about International Graphite is that also out of that \$10 million float, it has managed to secure Springdale for its graphite source. Previously, it was looking at potentially importing the graphite and processing it in Collie. By securing the Springdale mine, it has made sure that we can source the materials and refine the materials in Western Australia to produce those batteries—an incredible opportunity. Recently, in fact at the end of April this year, International Graphite entered into a memorandum of understanding supported by the state government. That MOU is between International Graphite and ZEN Energy.

[Member’s time extended.]

Ms J.L. HANNS: That brings together the people—Phil Hearse behind International Graphite and ZEN Energy director Ross Garnaut. That also brings together two opportunities to assess the feasibility of building a 600 to 800–megawatt hour battery, which would provide renewable energy to the International Graphite project.

Another opportunity around the Collie industry and attraction fund is that a lot of the businesses that were interested in separate projects in Collie are now being brought together and really finding synergies within their individual projects. That means that we potentially have the opportunity to build hubs for critical battery manufacture or mineral processing.

I touched on mine closure plans being a really important aspect of this new legislation. When a mine was established, particularly in Collie, there might have been a mining lease created 60 years ago and it was really difficult to understand and appreciate 60 years ago what the mine closure plan and the community might look like 60 years into the future. There is an ability to have ongoing review of this aspect of mining in that closure plan and it might change over time. That means that we do not have to start the whole process again. It is an update and, as I said, a continuous review of the closure plans. Out of those things, some outstanding opportunities may be possible.

I raise Lake Kepwari as one of those examples. Lake Kepwari is an open-cut mine that was filled with water. I again refer to Hon Mick Murray, the previous member for Collie–Preston. He told me a story. I hope it is correct because I would hate to speak out of turn. When the Labor government was first elected in 2017, he had the Premier alongside him at the presentation and somebody asked Mick and the Premier when Lake Kepwari would be opened, because there had been about a 20-year process of talking about the fact that there were some difficulties with the management of Lake Kepwari because it was an abandoned mine void. Somehow, as only Mick Murray could do, he got the Premier to agree that within 12 months, Lake Kepwari would be redeveloped and opened to the public. Correct me if that is wrong.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Yes.

Ms J.L. HANNS: Correct. I thank the minister. The Premier agreed, obviously not knowing the background or understanding the intricacies, and Mick thought that was an incredible joke—not a joke, actually; he thought it was amazing that he got the Premier to agree. But true to the Premier’s and Mick Murray’s words—it did take them slightly longer than 12 months—they delivered an incredible outcome from an old mining void that is there for the whole general public of Western Australia.

Mr W.J. Johnston: Can I say something about that?

Ms J.L. HANNS: Please do.

Mr W.J. Johnston: One of the challenges was that the mining department had not determined that everything was done so it could be handed back to the lands agency.

Ms J.L. HANNS: Yes.

Mr W.J. Johnston: That matter had been sitting between the two agencies for several years, so one of the things that we did—Hon Ben Wyatt was the lands minister and I was the mining minister—was we simply got our agencies to work together and resolve the issue. There were a series of genuine problems that needed to be resolved, but nobody tried to resolve them because they had not brought the agencies together. Mick Murray’s forcefulness got the government to do its job. If it had not been for Mick, those two agencies would never have talked to each other, and they would have continued with the challenges that the previous government had allowed by which people just did not make decisions. So Mick should be very proud of what he has achieved.

Ms J.L. HANNS: He should be incredibly proud.

I know that when he was first elected, that was one of the things that he wanted to try to achieve. I will probably be in trouble, but, you know, what can Mick do from here? I think I will let members know about the official opening of Lake Kepwari. We can only imagine as members of Parliament what our long-suffering spouses may or may not go through. Mick’s very, very dedicated wife, Anna Murray—lovely lady; beautiful lady—obviously would have listened to Mick trying to get this project over the line for 20 years. The Premier was in town to help open Lake Kepwari. I was a candidate and came along to look at the project and attend the official opening. The Premier, Mick and I were all sitting there listening to, I think, Hon Stephen Dawson giving an address to start with. Mick shouted an expletive that I cannot repeat in the chamber and ran. At the same time, he turned to the Premier and said, “I’ve bloody left Anna at home now.” We had shown the Premier a few murals around Collie, and because the Premier was there, Mick had gone straight out to Lake Kepwari and left Anna behind. Despite the fact that I suggested that Mick purchase the biggest bunch of flowers that a Collie florist has ever produced, he went home. He was definitely in the doghouse for a number of weeks after that, having left Anna out of the official opening! Note to all members of Parliament: if you ever, ever have the opportunity to open something significant in your electorate, please make sure that you have invited the family member you have chewed the fat with at home!

Lake Kepwari is one example by which the amendments or the changes in this bill will assist with modifications to mine closure plans if there is a relevant land use that can be undertaken. We have other lakes in Collie—Stockton Lake, Black Diamond—that are also significant ex–mine voids that have been used for other uses.

To summarise, I am very pleased to stand today and contribute to the debate on the Mining Amendment Bill 2021. I did say that simplifying and streamlining the approvals process is incredibly important. I highlight the idea that there

is still a significant environmental assessment process that sits alongside that, but in simplifying and streamlining the approvals process, we are adding to the opportunities to create local jobs. When we talk about mining jobs, they are often in the regions. When there are opportunities for families to live in regional areas, work in regional areas and make a better life for themselves and their families in those regional areas, I can only absolutely support that. This will make mine closure obligations and changes flexible around what might potentially happen after mining activity in that area. Like I said about the example of Lake Kepwari, it can only add to the infrastructure in our communities after mining has finished up. I place on record my support for this bill, and I commend the bill to the house.

MR D.A.E. SCAIFE (Cockburn) [12.09 pm]: I am pleased to follow the member for Kalgoorlie and the member for Collie–Preston in speaking to the Mining Amendment Bill 2021. My electorate of Cockburn is not well known for its mines, it can be said, but I nonetheless want to share some insights about our mining industry, even if I do not necessarily have the local mining base of the members for Kalgoorlie and Collie–Preston. I want to make a couple of general points about the significant growth that we are experiencing in mining in Western Australia at the moment and how that has necessitated the Mining Amendment Bill 2021. The growth means that we need to be more efficient in the way we deal with certain mine approvals. I also want to talk about the reasons for that growth in Western Australia because they have a lot to do with decarbonisation.

The growth of our mining industry is a critical part of diversifying the Western Australian economy. I know that people think that we should not be doing more of the same in terms of mining, but it is important that we do more diverse mining and more diverse activities in mining to diversify our Western Australian economy. We have seen significant growth in applications for mining activity approvals in Western Australia because Western Australia is one of the best places in the world, if not the best place in the world, to mine. I would certainly say that it outstrips Queensland, despite the claims of Queenslanders to the contrary. We have great reserves of magnetite iron ore in Western Australia. For those who are not familiar with this area, it is a high-grade iron ore—usually around a 72 to 73 per cent grade iron ore. We have hematite as well, which is a slightly lower grade iron ore but still a high-grade iron ore. We have reserves of nickel, which, of course, were immortalised in the Poseidon nickel bubble of many decades ago. We are again seeing a boom in nickel mining in Western Australia. We also have lithium, which is being mined at Greenbushes, rare earths and other critical minerals. I believe that the member for Kalgoorlie gave the example of Lynas Rare Earths' Mt Weld mine near Laverton.

There is a lot going on; we are not just mining iron ore. The reason for that growth has a lot to do with decarbonisation, which is clearly where the world and the industry is going. State governments around the country have been leading the decarbonisation agenda for a number of years because the federal government has basically vacated the space. The federal Liberal government has been more concerned with debating within itself and also with its National coalition colleagues than it has been on leading in the decarbonisation space. This means that the federal government has been completely vacant in this important space while countries and supranational institutions like the European Union are steaming ahead with the decarbonisation agenda. Industry is also steaming ahead, but it means that Australia risks being left behind. Fortunately, we are not going to be left behind because state governments are picking up the slack left by the federal government.

There are a few reasons why decarbonisation is driving demand for Western Australian minerals. One is that we are likely to see a greater demand for iron ore of a higher grade with lower impurities over the next 10 to 20 years. Having a higher grade iron ore with lower impurities means that that iron ore can be refined into steel with a significantly lower carbon footprint. It also means that the other negative environmental effects from some of the impurities in those ores can be avoided. Part of the demand for that higher grade, lower impurity iron ore will be as a result of the demand for green steel.

This was a finding of a report that was recently handed down by the Economics and Industry Standing Committee that I sit on with the members for Joondalup, Riverton and North West Central and is chaired by the member for Willagee. One of the findings we made is that there will be a greater demand for green steel as part of this global decarbonisation agenda. The move to green steel presents great opportunities for Western Australia. I congratulate the government on its commitment of \$1 million to the Minerals Research Institute of Western Australia to conduct research into and produce a report on the opportunities for Western Australia in the green steel industry. I understand that that report will be released imminently, within the next couple of months. I and many members of industry look forward to seeing that report because it is critical that as the globe goes through this decarbonisation journey, Western Australia takes advantage of the opportunity to get as far up the value chain as it can in green steel manufacturing. But I want to temper expectations. I have no idea what the MRIWA report will say, but based on the work that the Economics and Industry Standing Committee did, it is unlikely that we will ever see green steel manufacturing in Western Australia, and there are some obvious reasons why that is.

Across the globe in places like China and Eastern Europe there are several hundred million metric tonnes of unused steel manufacturing capacity. There are blast furnaces and electric arc furnaces that are not being used to capacity. Many of those furnaces were hot idled due to the downturn caused by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although some of those furnaces are coming back online, we still have much more capacity to produce steel than is currently

in demand. It is incredibly expensive to produce steel. It requires significant capital outlay to establish a blast or an electric arc furnace to manufacture steel. With all this unused global capacity in blast and electric arc furnaces that provide an established and cheaper operation for steel manufacturing, it would be incredibly difficult for Western Australia to step into that space and be competitive. But that does not mean that we cannot get further up the value chain. For example, we could look at like green iron ore pellet production. Although that is not the final product, those pellets are used in the blast or electric arc furnace process.

Just a few weeks ago, I attended the Global Iron Ore and Steel Forecast Conference that was addressed by the Minister for Mines and Petroleum. It was interesting to see the number of industry figures who are already talking about what can be done to move further up this value chain. For example, there was an excellent and interesting presentation by Grant Coyle of Cashmere Iron about the exploratory work that Cashmere Iron is doing around green pellet production out of its magnetite operations in Cashmere Downs. That is an example of industry already moving ahead and exploring these sorts of concepts that I am sure will be greatly supported by MRIWA's research, but it will absolutely not be assisted by the federal government that has been vacant in this space.

Mr W.J. Johnston: My comment there is that we're in constant discussion with a range of people in this space and some of the projects are extraordinary. Colin Barnett would have dinner with somebody and then come in and make a statement to the house saying that a project was arriving. We don't choose that pathway, but it's amazing what industry are looking at in Western Australia, because there's a strong reason to do further processing here in Western Australia. There is a business case for it, not a subsidy. That's the difference. If a business is going to succeed in the long term, it has to be commercially and financially viable.

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: It has to stand on its own feet. I completely agree with that, minister. As the minister said, we do not pick winners as a government, but there are many great examples of industry out there that have projects and are doing exploratory work in this space.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 2255.]

ITALIAN RESEARCH DAY

Statement by Member for Cottesloe

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe — Leader of the Liberal Party) [12.20 pm]: If the pandemic has shown us anything, it is the importance of the work done by researchers around the world, so it was with immense pleasure that earlier this month I joined the Italian Consulate and the Association of Italian Researchers in Australasia for their fifth Italian Research Day. The event highlighted world-leading academics and researchers who originally hail from Italy but are now based right here in WA. Among the speakers was Dr Paola Magni, a recent inductee into the WA Women's Hall of Fame. Hailing from Turin, Dr Magni is a senior lecturer at Murdoch University and a trailblazer in forensic biology. Her research has singlehandedly revolutionised how ocean crime scenes are investigated the world over.

It is a testament to the hard work of the Association of Italian Researchers in Australasia and WA's Italian community that strong academic links between Italy and Western Australia have been established and well maintained. However, the researchers whom I talked to made it clear that there is a need to strengthen WA's position within the international research community. In particular, university research relationships should focus on not only students, but also connecting the world's top minds. Creating these connections will safeguard WA's capacity to attract world-leading researchers to our universities.

Thanks again to the Italian Consulate in Perth and the Italian community here in WA for organising such an important and insightful event.

ROSIE SITORUS

Statement by Member for Geraldton

MS L. DALTON (Geraldton) [12.21 pm]: I rise today to congratulate a Geraldton local who has excelled in every field she has put her hand to, Rosie Sitorus. Rosie has recently been selected to be part of the Local Giants Regional Producers Platform. This program, run by Regional Arts Australia with Performing Arts Connections Australia and Performing Lines, will showcase and share the amazing talent often unrecognised in regional Australia. Rosie will join 14 other regional creatives from June to September. They will share their knowledge in lectures and tutorials with people around the country, zooming into every corner of our wide brown land. Rosie Sitorus is a force to be reckoned with, an expert linguist who has worked with the Bundiyarra-Irra Wangga Language Centre across regional WA, helping to document and preserve the languages of our state's First Nations people. Rosie is an accomplished stage performer, from her Fringe Festival show, *Fat Girls in Bike Shorts*, through to performances with 87-year-old Peter Salmon in the award-winning band Warralgurniya. Peter sings in the critically endangered Thiinma language and the band has previously won a WAM award in the global category. I congratulate Rosie Sitorus, an accomplished writer, poet, producer and performer and a local giant who is willing to share her knowledge and passion for performance.

INTERNATIONAL NURSES DAY*Statement by Member for Vasse*

MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) [12.23 pm]: I acknowledge that today is International Nurses Day and last Thursday was International Day of the Midwife. As such, I take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank all the nurses and midwives in the WA health system for their exceptional service to the people of Western Australia. To become a nurse requires the highest commitment and dedication to care for patients and their loved ones, not only physically, but also emotionally. I am forever grateful for the compassion and empathy I witnessed firsthand at both Busselton Health Campus and Bunbury Hospital at South West Health Campus last year during my mum's final few months, and I have nothing but gratitude and admiration for the nurses who cared for her.

We know that our nurses have been continually asked to do more with less over the past three years, including regular overtime and double shifts, which has often come at a great personal and family sacrifice. It can be a tireless and challenging job, and our nurses deserve both acknowledgement and recognition not only today, but also every day for the invaluable role they play in our health system and community at large. The theme for International Nurses Day is "Nurses: A Voice to Lead—Invest in Nursing and respect rights to secure global health". On budget day, it is a timely reminder of the ongoing need to ensure that our investment in this critical workforce is sufficient to meet the existing and future demand. Without nurses, the system simply falls apart, and I would once again like to thank each and every nurse and midwife in this state for their dedication.

GEO BAY WILDLIFE RESCUE*Statement by Member for Maylands*

MS L.L. BAKER (Maylands) [12.24 pm]: Geo Bay Wildlife Rescue Inc is a newly incorporated charity covering Geographe Bay from Yallingup to Bunbury. Geo Bay Wildlife Rescue values respect, integrity, empathy, transparency and accountability. Volunteers work 365 days a year to save the lives of injured, sick or abandoned wildlife in south west Western Australia. They try to return these animals to their native habitat as soon as they are well. A strong focus for the rescue group is to provide awareness and education to the general public, particularly our schools, about how to protect and help local fauna and their native habitat. The aim is to reduce the incidence of wildlife needing rehabilitation through education and awareness programs, and to train and resource rehabilitators to ensure the best outcomes for wildlife in their care. Geographe Bay rescue works closely with the community, local vets, the department of parks and wildlife and other wildlife groups in pursuit of its aim to ensure the best outcome for all wildlife in the region, especially sick, injured or abandoned wildlife.

I am very proud to accept the position of patron to Geo Bay Wildlife Rescue and look forward to its launch on 22 May. I look forward to working with the group, its members and the general public to promote and support the critical work it does as a community and for our amazing native wildlife.

KATANNING REGIONAL EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION CENTRE*Statement by Member for Roe*

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe) [12.26 pm]: I take this opportunity to thank the wonderful team at the Katanning Regional Emergency Accommodation Centre—KREAC—who recently welcomed me and Mia Davies, the Leader of the Opposition, on a tour of the facilities and a discussion of local issues. KREAC is a short-term crisis accommodation centre for homeless people and families needing accommodation when there is no other option. At a time in WA when housing and emergency accommodation availability is critically low, organisations like KREAC deserve every bit of recognition for their work. They offer a safe place to stay away from violence, connect people with support services, provide advocacy for housing and sometimes even just offer a hot meal and a warm bed. KREAC is one of the few places in Western Australia that can accommodate men, giving women and children in domestic violence situations space in their own home to recover and plan.

Thank you to centre manager, Sheralee Buss, and staff member Kylie for sharing their stories with us. Thanks also go to the other staff members, Lynda Higgins, Donna Kemp and Teresa Flugge, as well as the centre volunteers. The team at KREAC works shifts so that there is always someone available to help those in need, but space at the centre and funding is limited. I urge those in government, especially the Ministers for Housing and Community Services, to take up the invitation from KREAC to visit its centre and provide everything this group needs to keep supporting our vulnerable families.

DIRK HARTOG ISLAND — FRENCH CLAIM COMMEMORATION*Statement by Member for Thornlie*

MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Thornlie) [12.27 pm]: I was honoured to attend the commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the French claim to the western part of the Australian continent made on 30 March 1772. The claim was made on Dirk Hartog Island at Turtle Bay by Commander Louis de Saint Aloüarn and crew members from the ship *Gros Ventre*. I was at the site of the claim and connected by Zoom and satellite to a conference at the

Alliance Française de Perth. The *Gros Ventre* arrived on the WA coast near Cape Leeuwin on 17 March 1772, but bad weather prevented crew coming ashore. The ship sailed north, rounded Cape Inscription and entered Turtle Bay on the evening of 29 March. On 30 March, de Saint Aloüarn sent a landing party to claim possession in the name of King Louis XV. When news of the claim reached Versailles in the 1770s, it was not progressed. In the journals of the *Gros Ventre* crew members, the following comments are recorded. Sergeant Lafortune said, “We learned that New Holland is inhabited”. Sub Lieutenant de Rosily said, “On land, we saw a lot of smoke in one place. We fired one shot from our gun and saw smoke in other places and thicker. We concluded that some inhabitants were signalling to us.” How these and other comments were received by decision-makers in France is an area worthy of further research, especially in relation to the philosophical respect for traditional cultures held by some advisers to the royal court in The Age of Enlightenment. The full story of de Saint Aloüarn’s voyage is documented in the Western Australian Museum’s 2008 publication *1772: The French annexation of New Holland: The tale of Louis de Saint Aloüarn* by Philippe Godard and Tugdual de Kerros.

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY CHAMBER —
PHOTOGRAPHER AND TELEVISION CAMERA ACCESS**

Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [12.29 pm]: Members, I advise that I have approved the presence of television cameras and photographers from 2.00 pm today to enable coverage of the handing down of the state budget.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

HEALTH — FUNDING

287. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the Premier’s comments in *The West Australian* today in which he stated that the government turned state spending around in its first three years and saved an enormous amount on interest payments. Given there were three code yellow emergencies across our health system yesterday, with only seven COVID cases in ICU, how can the government boast about cutting costs when chronic underfunding in health over a number of years has brought our health system to its knees?

Ms A. SANDERSON replied:

That was an interesting composition of issues there—one about Treasury and one about health. Under this government there has been record spending in the health portfolio, without question. The health budget has consistently gone up under this government since 2017. It has not been cut; it has not been reduced. If the member for Vasse read the budget papers, she would see that the funding in the health budget has increased every single year. That is a fact. The member needs to read the budget papers to look at what the funding is actually doing.

We are making record investment in capital works and employing extra health staff. The budget has increased by 22 per cent in the last two years. When we came to office in 2017, we had been left with an absolute shambles of state finances. If that had continued, the health system would not have been able to operate. The public health system that the community relies on, particularly in a pandemic, would be in a terrible state. The former government was borrowing to pay the bills. It was borrowing to pay doctors. It was borrowing to pay nurses. That is what the former government did.

Because of the solid financial management of this government, the health budget has increased consistently in a sustainable way, so that we have been able to support the community over the last two years during the most difficult time that we have ever seen. The government has also provided additional support for businesses during the pandemic, cost-of-living relief to the community as well as one of the best public health services in the world, the budget for which has consistently increased for the entire period of our government.

HEALTH — FUNDING

288. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Health:

I have a supplementary question. When will the minister accept that the government’s one-eyed quest to cut corners, despite a record budget surplus and regardless of the impact on health staff and patients, has led to this crisis in our health system?

Ms A. SANDERSON replied:

I consistently try to bring some facts and some evidence back to this debate, and I will consistently bring the opposition back to the reality and the truth. The reality is that the health budget has increased consistently over the life of this government, full stop. In every single year, it has increased. That is a fact.

Another fact that is lost on the member for Vasse and the opposition is that we are seeing consistent increases in presentations in our hospitals. Despite some of the commentary that is in the public arena, the evidence shows, the numbers show, the people walking through the door and coming in an ambulance show, that more people are coming

through the door. There has been an increase in demand and an increase in acuity. In this year alone, emergency department presentations are up by 24 600—that is a more than four per cent increase in ED presentations. The 000 calls are more than 6.5 per cent higher than at this time last year, and significantly higher than pre-COVID levels. This is an extraordinary time that we are in. We have extraordinarily high COVID numbers and there are a number of staff on leave, on furlough, because they have to be—it is critical to them that they care for the people in their families, or they have COVID. That is the strain on the system right now. The facts are clear—our investment has gone up significantly and steadily every single year of the life of this government.

The SPEAKER: Before I give the member for Nedlands the call, I note that we are dealing with limited time today; if people could take that into account.

PERTH CBD — REVITALISATION

289. Dr K. STRATTON to the Minister for Lands:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's significant investment in the Perth CBD and its commitment to supporting businesses in our city centre. Can the minister please update the house on how this government's investment in activation will revitalise the Perth city centre and encourage more people to come to the CBD?

Mr J.N. CAREY replied:

I thank the member for Nedlands for the question.

As we know, cities around the world have been affected by the global pandemic. Cities in Australia have been no exception; all cities have experienced a reduction in foot traffic. In part, that is because international and national companies have made clear instructions for people to work from home. That has affected the confidence in our city and it has affected foot traffic in the city. As a government, we have made huge investments to support small business, including the small business hardship scheme. But the package that we recently announced is about supporting small business in the city. In my capacity as both Minister for Lands and Minister for Local Government, we announced a \$12 million package to bring and encourage people back into the city. It includes \$4 million to drive new events to attract foot traffic. There will be grants of up to \$100 000 to small businesses and property owners to be creative, get niche events in the city and get that foot traffic.

We are also investing \$7 million into Yagan Square. Like many developments that we inherited from the former government, we have to clean up the mess. Unfortunately, there are some inherent design flaws in Yagan Square. As a result, our government is having to not just invest in simple activation, but also change the layout so that we can get a signature tenant that will breathe new life into the square. We are doing that. We are in negotiations with Nocturnal, which created The Beaufort and The Old Synagogue and is a credible player. We are also giving \$1 million to activate Perth to fill those empty shopfronts.

All this investment is, of course, on top of our safety initiatives, including 175 extra police in the city and expanding homeless outreach by \$1.5 million to have, seven days a week, two mobile teams out in the city. Of course, there is the bigger picture of our \$1.7 billion Perth City Deal that will provide the long-term solution by bringing in 8 000 to 9 000 students through a major new university campus. I am deeply proud that we, as a government, are taking a range of initiatives, both short and long term, to drive economic activity and support small business in our city.

FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE — AMBULANCE FEES

290. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence:

I refer to the financial burden on victims of domestic violence who require an ambulance and who have to find \$1 000 to pay for this service at a time of crisis. Has the minister lobbied the Premier; Treasurer to guarantee the budget will alleviate this cost impost on victims and forgive the debt for anyone who finds themselves in this situation?

Ms S.F. McGURK replied:

I welcome the question from the opposition because they have been few and far between when it comes to a focus on domestic violence. Two-thirds of assaults that are worked through by police are domestic violence related. We know we have high rates of domestic violence in Western Australia and that is why we brought a singular focus of attention to this issue, with additional resources and cooperation across government agencies and the community sector to deliver services, as well as, frankly, the corporate and philanthropic sector. We have worked very hard across a range of different areas.

I was very pleased in the lead-up to the state budget, which we will hear the detail of shortly, to announce \$34.4 million of new money in today's budget. It is a significant increase of funding. For instance, the seat of Armadale will have our third hub, with \$14.7 million allocated to the new hub there. That will be our third hub, along with Kalgoorlie and Mirrabooka. These are alternative places so that people come forward. We are doing a whole lot of work across domestic violence in terms of combating the high levels of violence to make sure that victims are safe. We have two new refuges, the three hubs that I just talked about, and we will also open another

hub in the Kimberley. I am holding perpetrators to account. Part of our budget announcement was to continue some perpetrator programs in the Kimberley. This is very difficult work. There is not a lot of an evidence base for what is effective when working with perpetrators, but we are working with Stopping Family Violence, our peak body in Western Australia, on that front. We are making sure our courts and our justice system are up to the task. We have undertaken very considerable law reform in cooperation with the Attorney General. We are also looking at how we tackle the complex issues of coercive control and what is the best way to tackle this very pervasive but perhaps a very important early warning system for domestic violence. Obviously, we have been doing work with Respectful Relationships in the 16 Days campaign.

What happened for eight and a half years under the government of the Leader of the Opposition to combat domestic violence? What exactly happened for eight and a half years to combat domestic violence under her government's watch? Not a lot! In the final week of the Parliament before the state election in 2017, we finalised the family violence restraining order scheme. That was a commitment that the previous coalition government had entered into as part of a national agreement. That was on the final day of Parliament. We established two refuges; one was under Wungening's management and there was another one, which is not a 24-hour refuge. Apart from those, I cannot think of many things that the previous government did. You left us a lot to do! Other states were getting on with it and working on a range of different matters. We have been working on this. We committed in 2017 to \$21 million of new spending. To date, with the current budget, we will have committed \$150 million of new spending. I know there is a lot of work to do, Leader of the Opposition—you do not need to tell me! I work with services every day. I work with people with lived experience every day. I work with government agencies that are doing this work every day. There is a lot to do, but we are getting on with doing it.

FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE — AMBULANCE FEES

291. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence:

I have a supplementary question. Can I take it from the minister's answer that she has not lobbied the Premier; Treasurer to guarantee that victims of domestic violence will not be left with \$1 000 bills if they are forced to call an ambulance as a result of domestic violence?

Ms S.F. McGURK replied:

I outlined in question time this week that since the current shadow Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence has taken office, we have had one press release from her. There is a lot to do. There is no doubt about it. In the health system, we have the North Metropolitan Health Service, which has its own framework for dealing with domestic violence both in terms of being a high employer of women in their service —

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

Ms S.F. McGURK: I know you might not be interested in some of the detail of what we are doing, but it is actually quite comprehensive. We have one of the bigger health services with its own framework dealing not only with its own staff, but also with patients. All maternity patients coming through the public health system are screened for domestic violence. There is a lot to do, member, and \$150 million of new spending and a strategy to start to work through that is not something to be ignored. Yes, there is a lot to do to look at preventing domestic violence and responding to domestic violence.

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

Ms S.F. McGURK: I am really not of a mind to take a lecture from the opposition on how we should prioritise our spending.

RESOURCES INDUSTRY — SEXUAL ASSAULT AND HARASSMENT

292. Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI to the Minister for Mines and Petroleum:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's efforts to ensure every Western Australian is safe at work. Can the minister update the house on the measures put in place to protect workers in the resources industry from inappropriate behaviour, particularly sexual assault and harassment?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

I thank the member for the question and raising an important issue.

The extent of sexual harassment and other inappropriate behaviour in the mining industry had been hidden for many years. I congratulate Caitlyn Rintoul from *The West Australian* for her series of articles that highlighted the challenges that have faced women in this state. These matters were not being properly reported. One of the reasons they were not being properly reported was the decision of companies to make confidential settlements and move on, rather than bringing it to the attention of the principal regulator, the Equal Opportunity Commission, or the commonwealth regulator, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, or the health and safety regulator, which at that time was the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety. It is a bit like the current federal Liberal government paying \$500 000 to the victim of sexual harassment from Alan Tudge, who would be the education

minister in a re-elected Liberal government. We have seen from the #MeToo movement in the United States that the use of confidential settlements is part of the victimisation of women in industry. We reject that approach. We do not understand why the Liberal Party continues to use that approach.

In December last year, along with the Minister for Women's Interests, the Minister for Mental Health and me as Minister for Mines and Petroleum and the then Minister for Industrial Relations, we established the MARS program—the Mental Awareness Respect and Safety program. I am very pleased to say that in today's budget there is an additional \$6.5 million for the MARS program as part of our continued investment in this important issue. The initiatives include Thrive at Work and This Mining Life, which I launched just recently at the Australian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy's international conference on safety. The Thrive at Work masterclass series will focus on building capability in human resources, safety and wellbeing for managers and chief executives in the mining industry. This Mining Life will complement and align with the Thrive at Work framework and provide customised training and resources designed for frontline managers and workers, and will cover key concepts of mental health, respect, alcohol and other drugs, and legal and moral rights and responsibilities. We have also commissioned the Centre for Transformative Work Design from Curtin University to do a study into the mental health and workplace culture across Western Australia's mining sector. We continue to respond as the issues become apparent in the sector. In the end, there are two things we all know. The first is that companies are responsible for health and safety at work. They have duties at law both in the Equal Opportunity Act and under health and safety legislation. They need to meet their responsibilities. The second thing we know is that sexual violence and sexual harassment starts with disrespect by men. We need to accept as a society that we need to do better. We just had a question to the Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence. Domestic violence is another symptom that we are dealing with in the mining industry. All across this state, women are suffering from these types of issues. We all have to accept that in the end this is a problem that men create and men need to take responsibility for solving.

ELECTRICITY — FEES AND CHARGES

293. Dr D.J. HONEY to the Minister for Energy:

I refer to the \$400 relief package on power charges announced ahead of the budget, which is welcome but is short-term relief and not a long-term, cost-of-living measure that could be afforded from the hard work done by each Western Australian to bring about the massive surpluses to date. Has the minister recommended a freeze on energy fees and charges to provide long-term relief to WA families instead of a one-off sugar hit?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

I am a little confused on how to answer that because many of the issues raised actually fall within the responsibility of the Treasurer. I cannot answer Treasury matters. If there is an announcement in today's budget regarding a cost-of-living rebate to the community, that would be a decision in the purview of the Treasurer and, therefore, beyond my responsibilities as Minister for Energy. However, let me make another point. The Liberal Party and the shadow minister opposed the \$600 rebate that was granted to Western Australians. I imagine that he opposes a future opportunity to give a rebate to the community. It is interesting that when we take account of the \$600 rebate that was provided to all electricity consumers in Western Australia, we see that the cost of electricity fell; it did not go up. Here is the representative of a party that put up electricity prices by over 90 per cent during its time in government. After our rebates, people now pay no more for electricity than they did beforehand. Remember that we froze electricity prices the last time we were in government; electricity prices did not go up. There is only one party in Western Australia that needs to apologise to the community for almost doubling the price of electricity—that is, the party represented by the member for Cottesloe.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr M.J. Folkard interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Burns Beach, we do not need that contribution.

ELECTRICITY — FEES AND CHARGES

294. Dr D.J. HONEY to the Minister for Energy:

I have a supplementary question. I did not ask the minister what decision had been made; I asked whether the minister had recommended it. After two elections and significant price increases and an alarming number of disconnections, is this \$400 sugar hit another example of too little, too late from the government?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

The member raised the question of the number of disconnections. The member knows, because the answer was given in the upper house yesterday, that there were 32 disconnections for people in the state for the month of April. That is not 32 on one day but over the month. I am not quite sure what the member is driving at in that question about the number of disconnections. Fewer than 10 000 people will be disconnected for not paying their bill. What is the opposition's proposal? Is the opposition saying that people who do not pay their bill should be forgiven? Is that

what opposition members are asking for? Fewer people are having their power disconnected now than they were eight years ago. Let us understand that. This is a difficult time for many people. One of the most difficult things is that it is not necessarily low-income earners who do not pay their bill; often it is people who have high mortgage costs. When the federal Liberal government put up interest rates on home mortgages, it may well have put more people into financial hardship. Members opposite need to apologise to the people of this state for the Liberal Party putting up interest rates. When they have done that, they can come back and talk to me.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please! That supplementary did not strictly pertain to the original question. I think that needs some reconsideration. The minister's answer, of course, pertained to one tangent of what had been asked there. I just advise that the concept of the supplementary is that it needs to directly relate to and be a proper follow-up on the original question. The ministerial answer to it should also be relatively short. It is not another primary question as such.

JUVENILE CRIME — KIMBERLEY

295. Ms D.G. D'ANNA to the Minister for Child Protection:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to tackling juvenile crime in the Kimberley. Can the minister outline to the house how the government is working with the community to steer young people away from offending and becoming entrenched in the criminal justice system?

Ms S.F. McGURK replied:

I thank the member for her question. In fact, she outlined a grievance to me today, but I got a bit carried away talking about the benefits of Target 120 and I am not sure that I answered her grievance about the make-up of the delivery of Target 120 and how many Aboriginal community-controlled organisations will provide that service. I will address that.

Target 120 is a great program and I am very proud to be responsible for the delivery of it, although I cannot take credit for it as a policy presented in the lead-up to the 2017 election. That was done by others now serving with me in cabinet. I thank them for that.

What is good about Target 120 is that it is an evidence-based program that puts the young person with a serious offending history and their family at the centre of our efforts. It is an early intervention, so it works with young people aged 10 to 14 years who have had numerous interactions with police and the justice system but are not that entrenched in their habits and do not have a history of spending time in Banksia Hill Detention Centre at this stage. That is the cohort we are working with in Target 120. The results have been fantastic. Of all the young people who we have been working with to date across 11 sites, about half have had no further interactions with police. It really is statistically quite remarkable. It is not just the statistics that we are excited about; it is exciting for those young people and their families. We have been able to work with them and their families to understand the reasons for their harmful behaviour and to engage with them in a meaningful way so that we can see a change in behaviour. The multiplier effect is significant because we deal with their family and we have an agreement with their family. For the 153 young people who have been part of the program since 2018, the program has had a positive impact on 644 family members, which is also really great.

Where we can, we work with ACCOs. Out of the 11 sites, three sites are now run by Aboriginal organisations. That is in Kununurra, Port Hedland and Albany. The member would know that in Kununurra it is being run by the MG Corporation. We have announced as part of the budget \$11.1 million to expand the Target 120 program to another nine sites, so that will be a total of 20 sites. Where we can, we will get Aboriginal organisations to deliver that program where the cohort is likely to be Aboriginal. We want trust and engagement and a relationship with those young people and their families. That is good.

I will quickly outline a story. We cannot identify the young people involved in the program, but I can give the example of one 14-year-old girl who was self-harming, suffering from mental health issues and starting to get in trouble with police for serious offences, including burglary. Through working with Target 120 and the community youth officer, she received specialist trauma counselling and, as a result, has been able to return to school. We have consistently seen increased engagement with school amongst young people. She reduced her substance use and with intensive support managed to avoid a custodial sentence and has returned to live at home with her family. That is really great. That is what we want to see. It is not a happy ever after; it is not magic. There will be some young people who engage well with this program and there will be some young people who do not. But we are starting to see some positive results and, importantly, some analytical capability, owned by and housed within Treasury, with which we can really start to measure the benefits of early intervention. That is another data resource that I am very proud of as part of the McGowan government.

The SPEAKER: Members, that concludes question time.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 to 2.00 pm

JOINT SITTING*Statement by Speaker*

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [2.00 pm]: Members, I wish to advise that I have consulted with the President of the Legislative Council in relation to holding a joint sitting to fill a vacancy in the Senate created by the resignation of Senator Ben Small, and that the joint sitting will be held next Wednesday, 18 May 2022, at 11.00 am in the Legislative Council chamber.

APPROPRIATION (RECURRENT 2022–23) BILL 2022*Introduction and First Reading*

Bill introduced, on motion by **Mr M. McGowan (Treasurer)**, and read a first time.

Explanatory memorandum presented by the Treasurer.

Second Reading

MR M. MCGOWAN (Rockingham — Treasurer) [2.01 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

[The Treasurer read the following speech.]

INTRODUCTION

Today, I am proud to deliver my Government's sixth Budget.

A fair and responsible Budget.

A Budget that helps families through the challenges of today.

And sets up Western Australia for tomorrow.

For a bright future, beyond the pandemic.

Madam Speaker, it is undoubtedly and unashamedly a Labor Budget.

It eases cost of living pressures on households.

It supports workers and small businesses, investing in WA jobs and a diversified economy.

It invests heavily in our health system.

It takes essential action to protect our environment and respond to climate change.

It supports regional Western Australians.

It's in surplus, and pays down Liberal and National debt.

Because that's what Labor Governments do.

For the last two and a half years, we have taken drastic action to respond to the defining challenge of our time—the COVID-19 pandemic.

Today, twenty-six months since the pandemic began, I can stand in this House and definitively say—WA has secured the soft landing our Government set out to achieve.

The soft landing Western Australians deserved.

Across the two years of the pandemic, WA has achieved the best health outcomes, the best social outcomes, and the best economic outcomes in Australia, and potentially the world.

This Budget is evidence that our soft landing has left WA with the best financial outcomes as well.

Financial outcomes that let us boldly invest in the future of our State.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN ECONOMY

The Western Australian economy continues to carry the country.

Our domestic economy grew by 7.2% over the two years of the pandemic, two and a half times the rate of growth of the rest of the nation.

This growth has been underpinned by strong household spending. Annual retail turnover increased by a massive 22.5% between February 2020 and March 2022.

Western Australia's unemployment rate of 3.4% is the lowest in the nation, and our best result since 2008.

More than 1.46 million Western Australians are now employed, which is more than any time in our history, along with the highest ever levels of full-time employment and women in the workforce.

It is clear our WA Jobs Plan is working, with more than 160,000 jobs created since coming to Government.

We pledged to always put WA jobs at the forefront of our economic agenda. That approach has succeeded. The WA Government's actions in dealing with COVID allowed the mining sector to operate uninterrupted, while our competitors were significantly impacted.

The value of sales achieved by Western Australia's resources sector was a record \$230 billion in 2021, up a massive 30% from the year prior.

Western Australia's goods exports accounted for more than half the value of the entire nation's in 2021, further proof that our State drives the national economy.

While activity has been very strong in the building industry, supported by State and Commonwealth grants, global supply chain bottlenecks and rising input costs are placing significant pressure on this industry and others.

There are also increased cost of living pressures for households, including higher fuel prices and grocery bills. Pressures we help address in this Budget.

But despite these challenges, our economic outlook is bright with Treasury forecasting our domestic economy will grow by 5.25% this year, our strongest growth in a decade.

STATE FINANCES

Madam Speaker, our strong economy has again underpinned our strong financial management.

The uninterrupted operation of the resources sector has allowed it to take advantage of elevated commodity prices, while the strong labour and housing markets have also boosted revenue.

Western Australia is expected to record an operating surplus of \$5.7 billion in this financial year.

The Budget will remain in surplus over the forward estimates period, including a \$1.6 billion surplus in 2022–23, based on cautious and conservative commodity price forecasts.

Net debt is expected to fall below \$30 billion this financial year, our third consecutive year of debt reduction and the lowest level of net debt since 2015.

Despite committing more than \$11.2 billion in responding to COVID-19 and investing a record \$33.9 billion in infrastructure in this Budget, net debt is now almost \$14 billion lower than projected when we came to office.

This is a remarkable achievement.

Our declining debt levels are in stark contrast to the financial management around the rest of the country, where debt levels are skyrocketing.

The Commonwealth Government alone is projected to quintuple debt, that is, a five-fold increase since 2013.

This WA Labor Government is the only Government in Australia delivering surpluses and paying down debt.

Indeed, we have responsibly used part of this year's surplus to retire \$1.2 billion of existing borrowings, reducing our interest costs by an estimated \$132 million over the next four years.

Madam Speaker, we always want to spend taxpayer money on better services rather than wasteful interest payments.

Across our first four years in Government, reducing State debt has saved the taxpayer \$2.5 billion in interest costs that were projected under the former Government.

At a time of rising interest rates, paying down debt reduces our State's exposure to ongoing rate rises—an exposure that will be keenly felt by the Commonwealth and other States, who are dramatically increasing their debt.

We all remember the experience in Western Australia of the previous Liberal–National Government, when debt was tracking towards an eightfold increase after just two profligate terms of Government.

It's this WA Labor Government that has the right priorities, and the iron discipline to properly manage the finances.

FAIR SHARE OF THE GST

All States and the Commonwealth have benefited from WA's economic performance throughout the pandemic, with billions of dollars in additional revenue flowing eastward, through the GST system and higher company tax collections, right when it was needed most.

While we have provided the most support to the Federation throughout the pandemic, we have also required, and received, far less than our population share of Commonwealth support.

When it comes to the GST, WA will continue to receive way below our per capita share at 70 cents in the dollar, which continues to be, by far, the lowest per capita share in the country.

If not for the reforms we secured, WA would receive just 15.8 cents in the dollar in 2022–23.

Even with the reforms, WA will still provide a subsidy to other States of \$2.5 billion this year, adding to the \$32.4 billion delivered over the last decade.

The political noise from over east over the GST deal hides the truth that no State has been worse off as a result of the GST reforms.

In fact, all States have benefited from the higher royalties generated in Western Australia.

While other Governments will blame the GST deal for their own financial mismanagement, not one would willingly take our baseline share of 70 cents in the dollar, that they say is too generous.

The GST system failed to recognise that the structure of the WA economy and revenue base is different from the rest of the nation.

If WA mining royalties were treated like other sources of revenue, WA would receive closer to its full population share of the national GST pool, and we would not have this endless debate.

Mark my words—the threat to our fair share of the GST is real.

But I won't stand by and allow our hard fought reform to be destroyed.

HOUSEHOLD ELECTRICITY CREDIT

Madam Speaker, this WA Labor Government has always worked to ease the cost of living for all Western Australians.

We understand the pressures on households to make ends meet, in an environment of global challenges on everything from supply chains to fuel prices.

In this Budget, I am proud to announce that every household in Western Australia will receive a \$400 Household Electricity Credit on their power bill.

This credit will invest \$445 million into Western Australian households to assist with cost of living pressures.

This follows my Government's \$600 electricity credit delivered in 2020 to support households earlier in the pandemic.

This relief is in addition to free Rapid Antigen Tests we have provided households, the two-zone fare cap for public transport and capped regional airfares.

We have delivered again on our commitment to keep increases in household fees and charges to below inflation, going above and beyond this year, with a 3.8% reduction.

This is the second time our Government has reduced the cost of living, and even without our \$400 credit, it will be the third consecutive year we have delivered below-inflation increases in household charges.

It takes a WA Labor Government to ease the cost of living, while still reducing debt.

This is what responsible Budget management can deliver.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

This Budget includes \$1.6 billion to continue our response to the COVID-19 pandemic, increasing the total spend to over \$11.2 billion since the pandemic began.

The \$635 million invested in the purchase and distribution of RATs has helped to limit the spread and ensured our testing systems were not overwhelmed by Omicron. Our Government was the only Government in Australia providing free RATs to households, saving families at least \$150.

The Budget includes a further \$42.5 million to minimise the spread of COVID-19 in schools, including purchasing air purifiers, improving ventilation, providing masks and RATs, and continued enhanced cleaning.

Since the start of the pandemic we have committed almost \$1.7 billion in support for businesses, including more than \$237 million since the Mid-year Review as part of our Safe Transition Plan, and Reconnect WA package, fuelling recovery in sectors such as international tourism, aviation and education as we re-open to the world.

We have also made it easier for impacted WA businesses to access our support packages, which have been amongst the most generous in the nation.

In addition, we have invested more than \$2.1 billion in projects to boost economic activity since the pandemic began to drive industry development, encourage workers to upskill and boost housing supply, primarily through our nation-leading WA Recovery Plan.

INVESTING IN OUR HEALTH SYSTEM

Madam Speaker, the 2022–23 Budget delivers a record additional \$2.5 billion investment in health and mental health, taking new spending on our health system to a total of \$5.7 billion since the last Budget was handed down, just eight months ago.

In this time, 342 new beds have been added to our hospitals, with an additional 188 beds to be added this year.

In the last two years, the WA Health workforce has increased by 15.6%. This includes an additional 1,456 nursing and 512 medical full-time equivalents—the largest growth in our health workforce on record.

This has eased system pressures and ensured that our health system was equipped to respond to COVID-19.

The Budget includes a \$1.3 billion increase in funding for WA Health, \$995 million for health-related spending in response to COVID-19 and a further \$181 million boost in resourcing for the Mental Health Commission.

While more beds and more nurses are essential in responding to record demand, staffing alone will not fix the systemic issues facing our emergency departments.

Better emergency care can only be achieved by doing things smarter. That's why this Budget includes \$251.7 million to improve ED capacity and address ambulance ramping.

A new Ministerial Taskforce will oversee this important work, which includes:

- \$55.8 million to provide registered nurses—around the clock—in 15 metropolitan and regional Emergency Department waiting rooms;
- \$28.8 million to better triage incoming patients in ambulances to appropriate services, and improve the collection of real-time data to manage system pressures;
- \$20.9 million to provide intensive support for patients with complex needs, who frequently attend EDs;
- \$74.1 million for a number of initiatives to help transition long-stay hospital patients—including the elderly and patients with a disability—into appropriate settings; and
- \$55.2 million for expanded telehealth services, including for regional and remote patients, and home monitoring of COVID-19.

We have also committed \$5.4 million to identify and design system-wide solutions to emergency care, and plan for a State Health Operations Centre to better coordinate emergency services.

We will continue to invest in our hospital workforce, with new initiatives such as the \$8.1 million International Medical Graduates registration project, \$3.5 million to retain neurologists locally and \$3.7 million to establish the Aboriginal Health Practitioners profession in Western Australia.

This Budget includes \$47.3 million to respond to recommendations of the Taskforce into Infant, Child and Adolescent Mental Health. This increase will expand the frontline workforce of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service in rural and remote areas, as well as provide additional peer support workers. It includes \$15.8 million to bolster virtual support services for at-risk children, develop new models of care and further develop our mental health workforce.

This Budget sets Western Australia's health system up for the future, with an additional \$223 million investment in health infrastructure—taking the total infrastructure investment to \$3.4 billion over the next four years.

The intensive care unit at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital will be upgraded and two biplanar imaging units will be installed at a cost of \$24.3 million, while \$44 million has been provided to continue the statewide Medical Equipment and Imaging Replacement Program.

Hospitals throughout the State will continue to be upgraded and expanded, with \$2.5 million for a business case to inform options for the proposed WA Comprehensive Cancer Centre. Planning for the new Women and Babies Hospital is scheduled for completion this year, with enabling works to commence in 2023.

In regional Western Australia, the Government will significantly expand its investment in health services. This includes:

- \$30.1 million to expand regional ambulance services—including new ambulances and an additional 18 paramedics;
- an additional \$49.4 million to deliver the Geraldton Health Campus redevelopment project, bringing the total project cost to \$122.7 million;
- \$5.1 million to continue the WA Country Health Service's Mental Health Emergency Telehealth Service;

- \$13 million to build and operate a new Albany General Dental Clinic; and
- \$10 million to deliver a wide range of specialist services at the Karratha Health Campus and in surrounding sites.

My Government is committed to providing the quality health care Western Australians deserve, right across this State. With a total investment of nearly \$50 billion across the next four years, no one can question our commitment to delivering a quality public health system.

WA JOBS PLAN—DIVERSIFYING OUR ECONOMY

Madam Speaker, as we re-open to the world, my Government will double down on its commitment to expand and diversify our economy as part of our WA Jobs Plan.

The 2022–23 Budget includes \$1.3 billion in additional investment across a wide range of industries and economic infrastructure projects to create jobs and drive deeper economic diversification. This includes:

- a further \$80 million towards the Investment Attraction Fund to support industry-led diversification proposals from new and emerging businesses;
- doubling the Industrial Land Development Fund from \$50 million to \$100 million to unlock private sector investment and spark new growth opportunities in our economy;
- a \$41.2 million package to accelerate WA’s international education sector, with a range of initiatives including increased marketing and student incentives;
- \$25 million has been allocated to establish an agricultural research collaboration with the CSIRO and the university sector to leverage funding from the Commonwealth and industry;
- Tourism WA’s Destination Marketing budget will receive a \$21.1 million boost, as well as an additional \$30.7 million to secure additional blockbuster and business events, and \$17.7 million for a National Park Tourism Experiences Development Package;
- WA’s defence shipbuilding industry will be boosted with upgrades at the Australian Marine Complex to facilitate vessel transfers;
- \$17.1 million has been invested to expand Western Australia’s international trade offices for greater export and investment market opportunities for WA businesses, as well as an invest and trade global marketing campaign;
- \$28 million will be invested in diversifying WA’s resources base, capitalising on emerging opportunities and industries;
- a further \$39.1 million will be spent on a range of other diversification initiatives, including:
 - a second round of funding to attract business call centres and back office processing to WA;
 - developing our offshore oil and gas decommissioning industry;
 - growing our health and medical life sciences industry;
 - growing our fledgling space industry including autonomous and remote operations technologies; plus
 - strengthening the local capability of our small and medium sized enterprises to compete for State Government work.

This Government knows a diversified economy is a resilient economy that will generate quality WA jobs and opportunity, long into the future.

ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE

WA has always been a trading State. Which means we require the very best in port and transport infrastructure.

Our \$1.3 billion investment in economic diversification includes investments in infrastructure that are critical to expanding existing industries and facilitating the development of new ones, including:

- \$332 million for a major upgrade to expand Geraldton Port;
- \$78 million for Lumsden Point to facilitate the future development of additional cargo facilities and a logistics hub at Port Hedland port;
- \$52 million for the construction of a supply base, and a chemical processing and storage facility to support oil and gas operations in the Browse Basin;
- \$223 million for the Pinjarra Heavy Haulage Deviation;
- \$120 million for the Moorine Rock to Mount Holland Road Upgrades that will support the Covalent lithium mine; and
- \$50 million to expand capacity on the Great Northern Highway between Newman and Port Hedland.

In total, this Budget invests an additional \$2.4 billion in roads and rail infrastructure, jointly funded with the Commonwealth.

Construction of our world-class METRONET public transport system is progressing well, with three projects now delivered and a fourth, the Forrestfield Airport Link, to begin operation later this year. A further \$1 billion has been invested including additional projects in this Budget, comprising:

- additional funding for the Train Control and Signalling project to expand the capacity of our rail network;
- the new Morrison Road Level Crossing Removal and upgraded Canning Bridge Bus Interchange;
- as well as bus replacement services as we undertake a number of major upgrades along the Armadale line.

HOUSING SUPPLY AND TAX REFORM

Madam Speaker, following the massive investment in social housing in last year's Budget, this Budget delivers a range of tax reforms and incentives to further boost housing supply, particularly in the regions and for urban infill areas.

Land tax will be reduced by 50% for new build-to-rent projects, removing investment barriers and supporting the future supply of rental properties.

Off-the-plan apartment purchases in multi-storey dwellings below \$500,000 will receive a 100 per cent rebate of stamp duty until October 2023 to create a pipeline of more affordable homes into the future.

A density bonus will also be offered for multi-storey developments that include a minimum of 5% social housing.

A new Keystart loan product will be offered for medium and high density residential units in METRONET precincts and priority urban infill areas.

In addition, Keystart's income eligibility limits will be permanently increased to \$105,000 for singles and \$155,000 for couples and families, following the introduction and extension of the temporary higher limits in 2019.

Regional housing supply will be supported with \$19.1 million committed to subsidise the development of residential lots in Kalgoorlie and Karratha, while Keystart's property price limits will be increased for the Pilbara to assist households in gaining access to finance.

There is considerable demand for housing right across our State, and indeed the nation. By thinking outside the box, we can assist in boosting our housing supply and housing choice to ensure more Western Australians have an affordable roof over their heads.

ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE

Madam Speaker, last year's Budget included a massive \$750 million allocation to take action on climate change.

This Budget builds on that down-payment with a further \$500 million allocated to our Climate Action Fund.

In addition, \$59.3 million will go towards our Clean Energy Car Fund, providing \$3,500 rebates for up to 10,000 cars with a purchase price below \$70,000 to encourage greater uptake of electric vehicles in WA.

Grants of up to 50% will also be available for not-for-profits, small and medium sized businesses and local governments to install workplace recharging infrastructure, plus funding for a trial of recharging infrastructure at train stations.

After announcing the longest electric vehicle highway in last year's Budget stretching from Kununurra to Esperance, recharging stations will be added across four locations to connect our network to South Australia.

Madam Speaker, just a few months ago, WA was separated from South Australia by a hard border. Soon, you'll be able to make the trip in an electric car.

In line with some other States, a distance-based road user charge for electric vehicles will commence from 1 July 2027 as fuel excise revenues are expected to decline.

This Budget provides \$31 million to help reduce emissions across a range of sectors, including agriculture, heavy industry and transport, identifying further opportunities for carbon sequestration and carbon farming.

We will invest \$61.8 million to upgrade the ageing electrical and water infrastructure on Rottne Island, allowing us to deliver 75% of the Island's power from renewable sources of energy.

As part of our Plan for Our Parks initiative, \$19.9 million has been committed for the implementation of joint management arrangements with the Traditional Owners of the proposed Matuwa Kurrara Kurrara National Park and the Lake Carnegie Nature Reserve.

This Budget also includes an additional \$30 million to deliver the Industry and Community Development Program, as part of the Native Forest Just Transition Plan, to assist regional communities to transition to new industries when native forest logging ends in 2024.

Climate change will be one of our dramatic challenges in the years ahead. In order to guarantee our State's prosperity for future generations, we have to meet that challenge, head on.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Madam Speaker, my Government believes in providing our children with the best opportunities for a quality education. This Budget includes an additional \$505 million for Education and Training in WA, with:

- \$189.5 million towards providing WA children with 15 hours per week of preschool programs following signing of the National Preschool Reform Agreement;
- \$31.9 million to increase the Educational Adjustment allocation, providing additional funding to schools with students in the lowest 15% of the NAPLAN reading assessment, providing more support for students and schools where it is needed most;
- \$50.7 million for the construction of additional permanent accommodation for the Harrisdale, Anne Hamersley and Caversham Valley primary schools, as well as \$39.1 million for Stage 2 of Alkimos College;
- \$36.2 million to increase permanent accommodation, and provide a new education support facility for high needs students, and an off-site early childhood facility at Brabham Primary School;
- and \$2.5 million for a new Year 1 phonics initiative to assess and support the development of students' phonics skills.

My Labor Government is proud to have slashed TAFE fees by up to 72%, making training more affordable. This Budget continues this commitment with a further \$38.4 million to keep TAFE fees low.

We have also committed \$14.3 million to a range of programs being delivered by the Building and Construction Industry Training Board to encourage more workers into the sector.

SAFE, STRONG AND FAIR COMMUNITIES

Madam Speaker, my Government is committed to enabling local and regional communities to thrive. This is why in this Budget we are proud to deliver:

- \$114 million for a Child Protection Reform Package and supporting services, to support vulnerable children and their families and steer at-risk children away from the justice system, including 36 additional child protection workers, increased spending on early intervention and Aboriginal family support services, and expanding Target 120 across nine additional locations;
- \$94.8 million to index funding for services delivered by community service organisations such as for homelessness, mental health, family and domestic violence, and care for children at risk of harm;
- \$78.5 million to support growth in the number of participants in the National Disability Insurance Scheme;
- \$63.9 million to the Department of Communities to meet its commissioning plan priorities for delivery of out-of-home care, homelessness, and family and domestic violence services;
- \$40.4 million for a package of Kimberley Youth and Community Justice initiatives. The cross-agency package includes a \$15 million provision for an on-country residential youth diversionary facility, initiatives to better engage youth and improve school attendance, and expanding the Target 120 family support program across the region;
- \$25.1 million to address critical safety and security issues at the Banksia Hill Detention Centre;
- \$34.4 million to build and operate a Family and Domestic Violence Hub in Armadale, establish an Enhanced FDV Response Team capability and continue the Kimberley FDV grants program for local community service providers; and
- \$19.7 million will be spent to deliver the Perth Aboriginal Short Stay Accommodation facility to provide temporary housing for up to 100 Aboriginal people travelling to Perth.

This Budget also includes measures to enhance the vibrancy of the CBD with \$49 million of additional funding allocated to the ECU Inner City Campus, an additional \$16 million for the redevelopment of the Perth Cultural Centre, \$7 million to rejuvenate Yagan Square, and a further \$5 million recently announced to activate the CBD.

Our emergency services will be boosted with \$12.5 million for the Department of Fire and Emergency Services to lease and fit out new aviation and maintenance facilities at Jandakot Airport and \$11 million for a Large Air Tanker to be based in WA during the bushfire season.

INVESTING IN REGIONAL WA

Madam Speaker, my Government understands the massive contribution made by regional Western Australia to our great State.

We continue to invest in regional WA through Royalties for Regions with \$4.2 billion allocated to the program over the next four years, plus billions more invested in regional service delivery and a massive \$12 billion investment in regional infrastructure projects.

Of that remarkable regional infrastructure investment, only 8% is funded by Royalties for Regions, showing our deep commitment to improving the lives of regional Western Australians, and the economic opportunities on offer.

Madam Speaker, we are the Government for regional Western Australians.

We continue our record spend on regional roads, with \$5.6 billion committed over the next four years.

In this Budget, we have committed to in-source Main Roads' road maintenance program, bringing in-house more than 660 employees over the next four years, of which 490 will be based in the regions. This will not only generate savings to the taxpayer, but also provide an ongoing economic boost to regional towns across WA.

This Budget also includes funding of \$555 million to upgrade and seal Tanami Road and Outback Way, both of which are vital links between western and central Australia and will see total investment of \$1 billion to 2028–29, as well as delivering a further \$175 million uplift in funding for the Regional Road Safety Program that we know saves lives on our roads.

We have committed \$48.6 million to enable the State to leverage Commonwealth and industry co-funding for the expansion of mobile broadband and other digital connectivity solutions in regional, rural and remote areas.

\$30.4 million will be invested in a new District Support Facility to accommodate additional police officers in Broome, with a further \$3.4 million to expand leased police facilities in Kununurra.

This is in addition to the hundreds of millions of dollars already mentioned in regional health, community services and economic diversification.

REMOTE COMMUNITIES

Madam Speaker, in this Budget, my Government has allocated \$350 million to establish a new Remote Communities Fund, for the regularisation and upgrade of water and electricity services, and new and refurbished housing in remote Aboriginal communities.

While the current Commonwealth Government talks about Closing the Gap Initiatives for Aboriginal people, it cut hundreds of millions of dollars in key services, widening the gap in living standards.

All Australians deserve these fundamental services and we call on the next Federal Government to match this important commitment.

ADDITIONAL MEASURES

Madam Speaker, this Budget also includes funding for a range of essential and moral imperatives:

- an additional \$400 million committed to the Digital Capability Fund to improve digital service delivery across government and mitigate operational risks with 23 ICT projects funded in this Budget;
- a further \$185 million has been allocated to the National Redress Scheme and Civil Litigation for Survivors of Institutional Child Sexual Abuse Account to meet forecast payments;
- \$130 million has been allocated to remediate aluminium composite panel cladding across government buildings; and
- \$97.9 million has been committed for increased payments under the Criminal Injuries Compensation Act, given a concerted effort by the Department of Justice to reduce processing times and clear the backlog of claims.

CONCLUSION

Madam Speaker, I think it's fair to say, there's a lot in this Budget.

That's the result of strong financial management, for six consecutive Budgets.

At its core, our Budget ensures that Western Australians, who have given so much over the past two years, see the fruits of their labours.

People who despite facing the uncertainty, challenges and heartbreak of a once in a century pandemic, ensured WA had the best health, social, economic and financial outcomes in the world.

In this Budget, we deliver:

- genuine cost of living relief;
- record investment in our public health system;
- concrete action in addressing climate change;
- a substantial reduction in State debt;
- and targeted tax relief.

Not to mention genuine progress in the ongoing endeavor of diversifying the WA economy.

This WA Labor Budget helps families, workers and small businesses,

Through the challenges of today.

And sets up WA for tomorrow.

For an even stronger future, beyond the pandemic.

Madam Speaker, I'm proud to commend this Budget to the House.

[Applause.]

Mr M. McGOWAN: To continue —

I would now like to proceed with the formalities.

Appropriation (Recurrent 2022–23) Bill 2022 is for recurrent services, which comprise the delivery of services and administered grants, subsidies and other transfer payments.

Recurrent service estimates of \$27,587,351,000 include a sum of \$2,428,570,000 permanently appropriated under Special Acts, leaving an amount of \$25,158,781,000 that is to be appropriated in the manner shown in the Schedule to Appropriation (Recurrent 2022–23) Bill 2022.

Madam Speaker, I commend the Bill to the House.

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

APPROPRIATION (CAPITAL 2022–23) BILL 2022

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by **Mr M. McGowan (Treasurer)**, and read a first time.

Explanatory memorandum presented by the Treasurer.

Second Reading

MR M. McGOWAN (Rockingham — Treasurer) [2.41 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

The bill seeks supply and appropriation from the consolidated account for capital purposes during the 2022–23 financial year, as expressed in the schedule to the bill and as detailed in “Agency Information in Support of the Estimates” in the 2022–23 *Budget statements*. Included in the capital expenditure and financing transactions estimates of \$6 775 429 000 is an amount of \$1 605 010 000 authorised by other statutes, leaving an amount of \$5 170 419 000 that is to be appropriated in the manner shown in the schedule to the Appropriation (Capital 2022–23) Bill 2022.

I commend the bill to the house and I now table the budget speech, budget paper No 1; the *Budget statements*, budget paper No 2; and the *Economic and fiscal outlook*, budget paper No 3.

[See papers [1127](#) to [1130](#).]

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

MINING AMENDMENT BILL 2021

Second Reading

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MR D.A.E. SCAIFE (Cockburn) [2.43 pm]: Before the break earlier today, I was concluding my remarks on the Mining Amendment Bill 2021. Many of the comments that I was making earlier about the way that this government is diversifying the state's economy, including through supporting our mining industry, have just been underlined by the excellent budget that the Treasurer has delivered. It includes significant investments in infrastructure and the support that is needed to grow the WA economy and to leverage our attractiveness as a state to the mining industry and to industries further up the value chain. I would like to highlight a few of those. One of the things I said just before the break was that this government does not pick winners. That can be contrasted with the

previous government, which was known for engaging in a sort of shadow budget process in order to pick winners. This government instead makes sure that the infrastructure is in place to support capital in making investments in projects that deliver jobs and opportunities for Western Australians.

Before the break, I was speaking about, for example, the work that Cashmere Iron is doing with its Cashmere Downs iron ore project in the East Murchison region in the midwest. That project will no doubt benefit from the \$332 million major upgrade to Geraldton port. At 510 kilometres away, Geraldton port is the closest port to that project. That is an example of how the investments that we are making will support local projects, including that particular project, and the government does not just pick a winner. That project is good for the economy of the region and is thanks partly to the great work of the member for Geraldton in advocating for the economic development of the midwest region.

Some other highlights from that for the mining industry is the \$120 million to upgrade the Moorine Rock–Mt Holland road that will support the Covalent Lithium Mt Holland mine. I spoke earlier in my contribution about the significant opportunities for Western Australia in the critical minerals space. Certainly, lithium is one of those critical minerals and we are well placed to be the jurisdiction of choice in the world for lithium mining and lithium refining. Again, that upgrade is not about picking winners; it is about providing infrastructure that will support good projects. Proof of that is that that road upgrade is part of Infrastructure Australia's investment program. There will be a contribution from the commonwealth government. The project will produce 215 direct and indirect jobs—that is, jobs from that upgrade, but also jobs that will support the Covalent Mt Holland lithium mine, which of course is part of an integrated facility. Last year, Covalent made the decision to take out a long-term lease over a 40-hectare site in Kwinana to develop a lithium refinery. It will be a world-class lithium refinery, based not too far from my electorate, that will provide the good, secure, well-paid jobs of the future.

There is a third development that I thought was pleasing. I reflected in my contribution on the need to support the development of our iron ore industry, particularly to support our significant hematite and magnetite reserves. The \$78.1 million investment to construct supporting infrastructure at Lumsden Point is a great announcement. That announcement will result in additional cargo facilities being built at Lumsden Point, and that will alleviate pressure on the existing public berths at Port Hedland. That was identified by Infrastructure Australia as a priority initiative in 2020 and now a Labor government is delivering the funds to progress those upgrades in 2022.

Mr K. Michel interjected.

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: The member for Pilbara advocated for this in 2017, so he was well ahead of the curve. This goes to what the Treasurer just said: the Labor Party is the party of regional Western Australia. It is the party that is making the investments that have been advocated for by the member for Geraldton, the member for Pilbara and other regional members.

A member interjected.

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: I just heard a voice pipe up from the corner of irrelevance—a voice in the wilderness. I am afraid that the Nationals WA cannot claim to be the party of the regions when members speak to only a particular narrow sectional base of the regions. They need to be broader than that. They need to be able to speak to people from Albany all the way through to Kununurra. Plainly, if we look at the chamber, it is the case that the Labor Party has done that—and done it successfully for a very long time, member for Roe. By the end of this term, the seat of Albany will have been held by the Labor Party for a quarter of a century. That is not due to the COVID pandemic or anything of the like. The same can be said for the seat of Kimberley.

Ms J.L. Hanns interjected.

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: Collie–Preston as well! I have to admit, I had a moment in 2013 when I was scrutineering the results for Collie–Preston. I think Hon Nick Goiran was scrutineering on that table with me and we were down a couple of hundred votes. We had one booth left to count, and because they were being done alphabetically, that last booth was called West Collie. I knew we were going to be safe once I realised that we were only 50 to 100 votes down with the West Collie booth still to come in, because the people of Collie have always stood by the Labor Party, and the Labor Party has always stood by the people of Collie.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: Those significant upgrades are needed to support a growing mining industry. That is evidenced by the fact that we have increases in program of works applications. The number of applications for environmental mining approvals within the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety has increased by around 80 per cent over the last six years. The number of exploration applications received has increased in recent years from 2 444 in 2018–19 to 3 322 in 2020–21, which represents a 36 per cent increase over just three years. There is a lot of interest in investing in the WA mining industry.

As I mentioned at the start of my contribution, the result of that is that there are significant pressures on the department to process those applications and approvals, which is why it is pleasing to see the Mining Amendment Bill 2021 being progressed through this chamber. This bill will streamline approval processes. It will use an innovative process to speed up approvals. It is a process that has been operated effectively by the department for a while now and it

is a process that automatically processes certain approvals using a spatial recognition tool the department has developed. It is being used effectively to speed up approvals, which means that it is a less labour-intensive and faster process for certain eligible mining activities. It is an automated assessment for low-impact activities. That can only be a good thing.

We need to make sure that mining in Western Australia is world class in terms of the standards it sets. I was at the AusIMM Minesafe International Conference just the other week; the minister was there as well. One thing that that conference really brought home to me was how Australia is a world leader when it comes to safety standards in mining. Of course, this government has continued to keep safety standards high by introducing a range of new measures, including the new work health and safety legislation and codes of practice around harassment and FIFO mental health. These all set the standard. Western Australia is leading the way in setting standards in our mining industry from a health and safety perspective. We also set the standard when it comes to environmental approvals and the protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage, which of course was on full display when we passed the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2021. We set the standard when it comes to economic development and the development of infrastructure to support our mining industry.

If we set the standard like that, we will continue to attract investment in Western Australia, we will continue to attract the secure, well-paid jobs that have made this state so successful, and we will continue to build the industries that can grow from those things—the industries of the future, like lithium refineries and the innovative projects I talked about further down the value chain of green steel manufacturing. Although this bill is technical in nature, it supports the government’s many good investments in supporting our mining industry, and I commend it to the house.

MR S.A. MILLMAN (Mount Lawley — Parliamentary Secretary) [2.55 pm]: Acting Speaker (Ms C.M. Collins), thank you very much, and congratulations on your elevation to the position of Acting Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to rise to speak in support of the Mining Amendment Bill 2021 because we have just had the benefit of hearing the Premier; Treasurer outline to the house and the state of Western Australia just how important our Western Australian mining industry is.

I was amazed and astounded when, in the course of delivering the budget, the Premier said —

The WA Government’s actions in dealing with COVID allowed the mining sector to operate uninterrupted, while our competitors were significantly impacted.

The value of sales achieved by Western Australia’s resources sector was a record \$230 billion in 2021, up a massive 30% from the year prior.

I stand to speak in support of this bill. I follow the members for Kalgoorlie and Collie–Preston, both of whom have mines in their electorates. There are no mines in the electorate of Mount Lawley, but the people of Mount Lawley benefit immeasurably from the contribution that the mining and resources sector makes to the state of Western Australia. However, the mining and resources sector needs to be supported by a well-run government that has its interests at heart. The McGowan government tackled the COVID pandemic—a global pandemic the likes of which we had not seen for more than 100 years—in a way that allowed the mining and resources sector to continue to operate. The dividend from that safe and sensible management of the COVID pandemic by the McGowan government was not only paid to the people of Western Australia; it also supported the whole Australian economy.

It really is desperately sad and desperately unfortunate to hear eastern states commentators and politicians and the federal Liberal–National government criticising us for the way in which we handled the COVID pandemic. They are supported in that endeavour by people like Clive Palmer. Without the work that the McGowan government did to keep the money and resources sector functioning during the COVID pandemic, we would not be in the situation we are in today. That is just the latest example of the way in which this government supports the mining and resources sector.

I will come back to the importance of the mining and resources sector providing jobs. Another thing the Premier mentioned in his budget speech was the significant growth in the number of people employed in Western Australia. It is incredible that we have three per cent unemployment at the same time as we have a participation rate of more than 70 per cent. We have more people working in Western Australia now than at any time in history, but sometimes that achievement can be lost. That is an extraordinary achievement, and it reflects the focus of the McGowan Labor government.

When we were first elected in 2017, as the Premier reiterated today, our number one focus was WA jobs. We have seen growth in jobs across all sectors, but particularly in the mining and resources sector. I want to pick up on two things that the Minister for Mines and Petroleum highlighted in terms of resources and exploration. I refer to a media release from shortly after the 2021 state election, Thursday 1 April 2021, headed “Resources jobs and sales continue to break records in WA”. It states —

- WA’s mineral and petroleum industry reported record sales of \$174 billion in 2020
- Results driven by iron ore, gold and nickel
- A record 140,940 people working in WA’s mining sector

That is not to mention all the ancillary and associated work that is generated by the mining sector, be it professional services, legal services, technology information, training and education, and all the rest of it. The press release continues —

Western Australia's resources sector continued to break records in 2020 with sales of \$174 billion.

Statistics released today by the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety show iron ore lead the way with record sales of \$116 billion on the back of the highest prices since 2011.

Gold was another strong performer with more than \$17 billion in sales, an all-time high, as was the average price of around \$2,500 per ounce.

Nickel sales increased to \$3.3 billion, which is the highest value in six years.

Employment in the resources sector was a star performer, with an average of 140,940 people representing yet another record.

More than \$20 billion was invested in the WA mining and petroleum sector, up from \$17 billion in 2019. This represents the highest level since 2017.

What we are consistently seeing over the time of the McGowan Labor government is the ability of the Western Australian mining sector to attract capital investment to keep it going and keep it turning over.

Minister Johnston said —

“Western Australia and its resources sector have successfully navigated the pandemic to deliver these impressive figures.

“Creating and supporting jobs is one of the McGowan Government's top priorities, so it's great to see mining employment grow for the fourth year in a row.

“It was especially pleasing to see exploration expenditure and employment continue to strengthen given the important role the sector plays in finding the next big resource discovery.

“With around \$140 billion of resource projects in the pipeline, Western Australia's future continues to look promising.”

Part of the riddle, part of the magic, part of the skill in shepherding and stewarding a well-functioning mining and resources sector is to recognise that there are lots of parts along the chain and along the way that need the attention and dedication of government. One of those parts is exploration, and so just a couple of weeks ago, on Thursday, 28 April 2022, I was very pleased to see the following media release from Minister Johnston. It states —

WA's exploration sector continues to prosper

- Second-highest number of drilling applicants since Exploration Incentive Scheme began in 2009
- \$6.74 million offered to 47 drilling projects, including six prospecting projects
- Strong focus on battery minerals such as nickel and rare earth elements

This is something that has come up in earlier contributions today. It continues —

A surge in applicants for the latest round of the Exploration Incentive Scheme's co-funded drilling program reflects the immense strength of Western Australia's resources sector.

107 applicants submitted proposals for Round 25 of the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety's scheme, the second-highest round since it began in 2009.

A total of \$6.74 million in grants is being offered to 47 companies and prospectors.

22 of the successful explorers are searching for battery metals such as nickel or nickel-cobalt, lithium and rare earth elements.

The co-funded drilling program, which provides incentives to drill in under-explored areas, has resulted in significant scientific and economic results for the State's resources industry.

Recent successes include Halls Creek Mining's Mary River project where drilling uncovered encouraging gold results, and Kalgoorlie Nickel's Emu Lake target, which found nickel-sulphide mineralisation in a zone that was not thought to be prospective.

Series 3 of the co-funded Energy Analysis Program (EAP) provided funding to a project undertaking a chemostratigraphic study in the North Perth Basin.

The EAP encourages exploration of petroleum and geothermal resources using existing State resources, such as drill core, sidewall core, and cuttings, or to re-analyse existing data.

This is what Minister Johnston said —

“The surge in exploration shows how confident mining companies are in the future of WA's resources sector.

“This interest comes on the back of an exceptional 2021, which saw WA achieve record resource sales of \$230 billion, and exploration is the bedrock of this success.

This commercial, mining and exploration activity needs to be underpinned by a sensible regulatory regime and a government that is prepared to do the hard work necessary to encourage activity in this sector. Ever since the McGowan government was elected in 2017 that is precisely what this minister and this government have been doing. As well as focusing on those core tasks of making sure that the system in place supports mining and resources companies, we are also out there on the cutting edge.

We recognise the impacts of climate change. We recognise that action needs to be taken on climate change. We recognise that Western Australia has a critical role to play in supporting global efforts to reduce our carbon impact. That is why I was very pleased to see the media release three weeks ago, on 19 April 2022, when Minister Johnston said that WA researchers had developed new technologies for finding commodities. This was fascinating. I do not know whether anyone heard the program on ABC NewsRadio yesterday about the seismic array, which is an innovative new way of identifying prospective mineral deposits. Using sensors, it maps huge areas of land in previously unexplored areas, and I was thinking about that program when I was reading this press release from the minister. It states —

- WA researchers identify new method for seismic sensing
- Technology makes it cheaper and easier for exploration companies to detect mineralised structures beneath the surface

Curtin University researchers, supported by the State Government through the Minerals Research Institute of Western Australia, have developed a new technology for detecting seismic energy as it passes through rocks and soil beneath the surface.

Originally developed to identify locations to drill for gold, the seismic detection system can be used for any commodity using salt-tolerant fibre optic cable.

By using laser light to measure the distortion of a buried glass fibre, this technology can record seismic waves more cheaply and effectively than existing approaches, delivering cost savings in mineral exploration.

One of the things that this minister talks about frequently is that a world-class, world-leading resources sector is about not only extracting the wealth, modifying it and then shipping it off, but also taking advantage of the strategic position that we in the Western Australian market find ourselves. We are world leaders in innovation and technology. Other developing markets are now looking to Western Australia to provide the leadership, innovation, expertise and skill to try to develop their mining and resources sector. It is not just the technology but also the regulatory regime that we have. Our Mining Act is frequently held up as one of the best mining acts in the world due to the regulatory regime that is in place to encourage prospective deposits.

In addition to the government’s support and encouragement, material and resources need to be put in to support the sector. One of the things that the McGowan government has done is release *A world-leading resources sector: Western Australia’s mineral and petroleum resources development strategy*, and I will turn to that document now. It is from September 2021, and I commend it to members. Whereas the previous government was complacent and ambivalent and let the mining and resources sector just bumble along, this government is an active participant. Essentially, it is a partner with the resources sector in making sure that the environment is right for it to maximise its potential and deliver the best possible benefits for the state of Western Australia. This is what the Premier had to say about our strategy —

Western Australia is internationally recognised as having one of the world’s most successful resource sectors.

This is due to many factors, particularly the diversity and abundance of our natural resources, and history of effectively promoting Western Australia’s prospectivity and development opportunities.

In addition to that, I would say that with the capability of our human resources, through the incredible educational institutions that we have, like the University of Western Australia and Curtin University, we are taking and skilling up people who are passionate about making a contribution to the resources sector in a way—sorry, minister; yes?

Mr W.J. Johnston: Curtin’s WASM —

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: Yes, the Western Australian School of Mines?

Mr W.J. Johnston: — is rated number 2 in the world.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: Yes! Therefore, that academic excellence picks up the capability of outstanding Western Australian students, plus research leadership, in order to have a pipeline of experts going into an industry that remains one of the best in the world. This is what the Premier further said —

The State’s resources sector has grown to become not only the driving force behind Western Australia’s economy, but the national economy.

We have seen that just now in the budget speech that the Premier has presented. It continues —

Never has the importance of the sector's economic contribution been so clearly demonstrated than in its response to COVID-19. The mining and petroleum industries' success in trading uninterrupted through the critical early stages of the pandemic has allowed us to manage as well as we have the impact of the pandemic by continuing to provide needed jobs and revenue to support the community and keep us safe.

This is what the minister said —

Western Australia's mineral and petroleum resources development strategy demonstrates the McGowan Government's policy priorities that are designed to uphold our reputation as one of the world's most advanced and successful resources sectors.

In an uncertain world, one thing that can be counted upon is the continuing demand for Western Australia's resources.

That was in September 2021. Nothing has changed to make the world less uncertain. If anything, circumstances have become more uncertain and more unpredictable, so the stability and the success of Western Australia's mining sector becomes increasingly important. Very simple, basic and straightforward strategies can be put in place. The Warden's Court is the tribunal that hears and determines many of the applications in connection with the Mining Act. With one Mining Warden sitting in the Warden's Court, there is necessarily a delay in matters being brought before the court for adjudication, so I was very pleased to hear the minister announce on 1 February this year that a second Perth Mining Warden had been appointed. This is in stark contrast to the situation that we inherited when we came to office in 2017. I was reminded of a couple of questions that I asked of the Minister for Mines and Petroleum, one in August 2018 and one in October 2017. I refer members to the question I asked in 2018 —

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's continued efforts to fix the mess inherited from the previous Liberal–National government. Can the minister outline to the house any issues that were left over from the previous government that the minister has needed to address, particularly in relation to the Mining Warden's Court and the handling of the mines portfolio?

The Liberal Party and the Nationals WA like to portray themselves as friends of the mining and resources sector. I will come to a scurrilous attack that was made on this minister early in our first term, but in answer to my question, the minister made it clear that the management of the mining and resources portfolio by the previous Liberal–National government, in particular the last minister under that government, was a mess. It was a disaster. In answer to my question, the minister said that four Warden's Court matters had been left for him to decide on. One was received by the former minister's office in December 2016 and not actioned until the change of government. One was received in July 2016 and was not actioned. It was left sitting in the in-tray in the minister's office. One was received in March 2016—a full year before the state election—and no action had been taken. This was the disdain with which the previous Liberal–National government dealt with the Warden's Court and the Mining Act. The change in government in 2017 delivered a new government that was passionate about supporting our mining and resources sector. Further to that, showing the way in which financial management was being carried out by the previous government, it left the mines safety and inspection levy account with a \$10 million deficit. In October 2017, I asked the minister —

I refer to the mines safety and inspection levy. Why upon coming to government was the mines safety and inspection levy account \$10 million in deficit; and, how has the minister listened to industry's concerns, addressed the mismanagement of the account and corrected the abominable situation?

In his reply, the minister made clear that the state's finances in general had been left in a disastrous state by the Liberal–National government. This was a government that, on one hand, liked to parade its financial, economic and budget management credentials and left us in the worst possible debt situation, and, on the other hand, liked to parade its support for the mining and resources sector, and has left the levy \$10 million in debt.

It is great to see that this Labor government is supportive of the mining and resources sector. We get on well with the sector, working collaboratively and constructively with it. We recognise the importance of mining and resources jobs to the economy.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: One of the reasons that is important is the situation the member for Collie–Preston just spoke about. She spoke about her father's experience in moving from the timber industry into the mining industry. We were criticised yesterday for our policy to end the logging of native forest, but now is the most opportune time for those workers to change industries. The Greenbushes Talison lithium mine in the electorate of the member for Warren–Blackwood provides a perfect opportunity for workers to transition from the mill to the mine. There is no better opportunity than right now for a well-resourced and well-supported mining sector to take advantage of that labour supply and provide new opportunities for those people. Considering how important the mining and resources sector is to Western Australia, it is imperative to have a government that recognises that and provides support and encouragement. We get on well with the peak organisations. I acknowledge Claire Wilkinson from the Australian

Petroleum Production and Exploration Association who has done a fantastic job as the head of that organisation, and Ron Pearson who made a press release in support of the legislation. I also take this opportunity to congratulate Rebecca Tomkinson. As the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health, I had the opportunity to work with Rebecca Tomkinson as the chief executive officer of the Royal Flying Doctor Service, and I think she will make an excellent appointment as the new CEO of the Chamber of Minerals and Energy. Together with the current president of the Chamber of Minerals and Energy, she joins a formidable all-female team. When I reflect on the minister's contribution during question time on the importance of employing women in the resources sector, I think this stands us in good stead for tackling some of the systemic issues in the mining and resources sector.

With those comments, I commend the work of the McGowan government in supporting the mining and resources industry, in stark contrast to the negligence of the previous government. I commend the minister for bringing this bill before the house to provide for efficiency and effectiveness within the mining and resources sector, and I commend the bill to the house.

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

HEALTH AND DISABILITY SERVICES (COMPLAINTS) AMENDMENT BILL 2021

Third Reading

MS A. SANDERSON (Morley — Minister for Health) [3.16 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a third time.

MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) [3.17 pm]: I rise to make a few brief comments as part of the third reading debate on the Health and Disability Services (Complaints) Amendment Bill 2021. The bill amends the Health and Disability Services (Complaints) Act 1995 to introduce the national code for healthcare workers, protecting those using unregulated health practitioner services and addressing what has been recognised as a regulatory gap for healthcare workers who are not registered under the 15 health services provided for under the Medical Register of Australia. As was raised in the second reading debate by a number of members, the community has a lot of trust in health service workers—and rightly so. We see the significant contribution they make in our community. Overwhelmingly, they do an outstanding job, and, for that reason, we place a lot of faith in those who provide health services to us. At the same time, it is essential that important protections are in place for those using unregulated health practitioners, and that has been recognised through the national code of conduct for healthcare workers.

Although it is important to have these measures in place empowering the complaints office, it is essential that the complaints office is adequately resourced and that there is some transparency around the reporting process to ensure that there are no unintended consequences, and that when complaints are followed up, they are undertaken in a fair and equitable manner.

There were certainly a range of different contributions to this debate. I take the opportunity to thank the member for Scarborough for his valuable contribution. He sought the support of the house by sharing a bit of his own personal experience. It was certainly a commendable contribution to this debate. I also thank the minister for bringing this bill to the house. I particularly thank the minister's staff and advisers, who provided timely information through the consideration in detail process. With those very few words, I commend the bill to the house.

MS A. SANDERSON (Morley — Minister for Health) [3.21 pm] — in reply: I thank the opposition and members of this chamber for their contributions to the debate on the Health and Disability Services (Complaints) Amendment Bill 2021, and in particular the members for Nedlands, Cockburn, Riverton, Mount Lawley and Scarborough for their contributions to the second reading debate. I also thank the Health and Disability Services Complaints Office, in particular its CEO, Sarah Cowie, for all their hard work on this bill. As the opposition rightly pointed out, the bill will address regulatory gaps in relation to healthcare workers who are not currently registered under the 15 professions registered under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme, or NRAS as we have referred to it in this debate. It will also create a mechanism whereby consumers will be able to make complaints against unregistered health practitioners and empower the regulator to investigate and issue prohibition orders when appropriate. The bill will provide some rigour and comfort for the community for services that provide legitimate services to the community and genuinely improve the quality of people's lives. The bill will also protect the community against providers who make false claims that they can cure illnesses, financially exploit clients, or engage in sexual misconduct or improper personal relationships with clients. This will fulfil a commitment from Labor at the last election. The bill will now move to the upper house for consideration. I thank the opposition in this chamber for its support and hope opposition members in the Legislative Council also see fit to support the bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

House adjourned at 3.23 pm

