



Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

FORTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 20 March 2024

Legislative Assembly

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

HON MIKE BARNETT, AM

Condolence Motion

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Premier) [12.01 pm] — without notice: I move —

That this house expresses its deep regret at the death of Hon Mike Barnett, AM, a former member of the Legislative Assembly for the electorate of Rockingham. It places on record its appreciation for his long public service and extends deep condolences to his friends and family in their bereavement.

I begin by paying my respects and acknowledging Mike Barnett's family and friends, some of whom have joined us today. However, my thoughts are with Ros and their family at this time and I know they will read the comments that we make today when they are in a position to do so.

Hon Mike Barnett, AM, was an archetypal local member. He was a man of diverse experiences, including hardships. He was deeply connected and dedicated to his community. He was a businessman with business acumen, transferred here from a career outside of politics, but, most importantly, he was a good man who was deeply respected in his electorate.

Mike Barnett was born in 1946 in Derbyshire, England. He came to Australia as a child migrant when he was 12 years old, and went to Fairbridge Farm Primary School. He did not speak a lot publicly about his experiences as a child migrant, nor his time at Fairbridge Farm. However, in his final year as a parliamentarian, he chaired the Select Committee into Child Migration. His latter school years were spent at Pinjarra Senior High School, and in 1967 when he was aged only 21 years, he became the proprietor of a caravan park in Rockingham.

After joining the Labor Party in 1970, Mike was elected as the inaugural member for Rockingham in 1974 at the age of 27. He is one of only three members to serve the Rockingham electorate in its 54-year existence. He went on to serve the Rockingham electorate for 23 years, until 1996. In that time, he served under six Premiers and contested seven elections. He was appointed shadow Minister for Lands and Forests; Conservation and Environment following the 1977 state election. He later added fisheries and wildlife from 1980 to 1983. Mike was elected Speaker of the Legislative Assembly in 1986, serving until 1993 when he retired from that role.

Mike Barnett was a strong advocate for public education. He campaigned for funding for Rockingham Senior High School from early in his term, and used his first speech—usually a time to hold back from contentious issues—to call out the then Liberal government for backing out of a commitment from the previous Labor government to fund upgrades. In 2006, Mike was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for service to the Parliament of Western Australia and to the community of Rockingham. In recognition of Mike's contribution to Rockingham, the Mike Barnett Sports Complex was named in his honour—an important resource for the local community and one of the most used sports centres in the state.

He battled dementia for many years. However, he still managed to get out and vote in the Rockingham by-election last year and lent his support to current member, Magenta Marshall. His dedication to the Labor Party was absolute. Mike passed away peacefully, too soon, in December. He was aged only 77. He is survived by his wife, Ros, and his children and step-children, Sue, Rob, Julie and Tony.

Mike was a much-loved member of the Rockingham Labor family and of the wider Rockingham community. I met Mike on only a handful of occasions, but I heard very quickly of his passing and people's sadness about it, because the Rockingham family moved swiftly to acknowledge and grieve his passing and pay their respects. Our thoughts are with Ros and the family, who miss him deeply and are still very much grieving the loss of such a great man. Mike Barnett was a champion for Rockingham—and that he truly was. He will be missed.

Vale, Mike Barnett.

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Leader of the Opposition) [12.06 pm]: I rise on behalf of the Parliamentary National Party to pay my respects and reflect on the contribution that Hon Michael Barnett, AM, made to this Parliament and public life. I note the presence in the chamber today of family and friends.

Mike was born on 24 January 1946 in Belper, Derbyshire, England, and arrived in Western Australia 12 years later in 1958. He was educated in Falmouth, England, but also in Western Australia at Fairbridge Farm Primary School, Pinjarra, and Pinjarra High School. He went on to become a caravan park proprietor and the director of the Palm Beach Caravan Park.

He was first elected to the electorate of Rockingham in 1974, shortly after joining the Australian Labor Party in 1970. While in Parliament, he served as the Chair of Committees and was an active member of the Joint House Committee, Parliamentary Standards Committee and Standing Orders Committee. He went on to serve as a shadow minister, and his portfolios were largely focused on lands and forests; conservation and environment; and fisheries and wildlife. Mike's service was recognised and extended when he was elected as Speaker on 10 January 1986. He went on to serve for seven years before retiring. Mike was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia on Australia Day 2006 for service to this Parliament and to the community of Rockingham. He was awarded the Centenary of Federation Medal in 2003 and the Jubilee Medal from Her Majesty the late Queen in 1977.

In his 1996 valedictory speech, after 23 years in Parliament, he mentioned a man by the name of Mark McGowan who was the Labor Party's candidate selected to replace him for the seat of Rockingham. As a matter of fact, he said, "I hope he will go on to provide a service to this state from a high office. In fact, I am sure he will." Mike was quite correct in his prediction.

Vale, Hon Michael Barnett, AM.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Leader of the House) [12.08 pm]: Although many of us do not always know a lot about the person who may have served in this place and who we are acknowledging through a condolence motion, condolence motions are very important. They are reflections on stories of this place.

In 1974, when Mike Barnett was elected to the seat of Rockingham, Rockingham was a very different place from what it is now. It had a population of around 9 000 people, many of whom had come to Rockingham from the United Kingdom as migrants and had settled there. That part of the Perth metropolitan area abounded with stories. When Mike Barnett decided to put himself forward in 1974 to represent the people of that area, it was a remarkable thing to do. He entered Parliament in 1974 and served until 1996. During his time in this place, his electorate, like Western Australia, changed. As the member for Rockingham, he contributed to the enduring story of the place where he lived and represented people. Of course, he brought the issues of the day to this place on their behalf.

When acknowledging people who served in this place and have passed away, it is important for all of us to recognise that, although we possibly did not know them—many of us might not have known Mike Barnett personally—the contribution they made as members of Parliament and of this place is significant. Reading his inaugural and valedictory speeches, the thing that comes through very strongly is his great warmth and his great love for the place and people he represented and the place where he lived.

I met Mike Barnett on a number of occasions. He came to my electorate office in the early 2000s. He had developed a love of photography, and I am very proud to have a framed photograph he took of an osprey. Mike loved the natural environment. He loved the beauty of Western Australia. He loved the fact that this place had provided him with a joyous livelihood. As the Premier highlighted, he came here as a child migrant and his initial years were spent living in Pinjarra, attending Fairbridge Farm School and then Pinjarra High School. He later moved to Rockingham and was a successful businessman and proprietor of a caravan park.

He was an interesting fellow. I remember him, as the member for the adjoining electorate, coming to Mandurah on a couple of occasions. I was not a member of Parliament then, but he came to Mandurah on a number of occasions. If we read his speeches, we see that he had interesting thoughts about Mandurah; he thought that Mandurah was being pork barrelled by the Liberal Party at the time, and he thought it was unfair that his electorate was being overlooked by the pork barrelling. Of interest here—this is one reason I was such a strong supporter of one vote, one value—is that Mandurah at that time was protected by the lack of one vote, one value, and I can see why he felt that his people were unfairly looked on.

I spoke to Ros, his wife, last week. I send our sincerest condolences to Ros. I know that she loved Mike with all the beauty of her heart. I also send condolences to Mike's stepchildren and family—Sue, Rob, Julie and Tony—and to his many admirers. I know that people who served in this place while he was a member held him in great regard and respect as a local member and character and for the positions he held, including as Speaker of this place. I really hope that people like Mike Barnett are remembered for the contribution they make to the story of this place. They are people, and they bring personal stories to a place like this, and this place is all the richer for it.

I send our sincerest condolences to Ros. Most importantly, may we remember Hon Mike Barnett, AM.

MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Leader of the Liberal Party) [12.14 pm]: I rise on behalf of the Parliamentary Liberal Party to acknowledge the distinguished service of Mike Barnett.

Mike Barnett earned the distinction of serving as the inaugural member for the electorate of Rockingham. He also served as Speaker of the Legislative Assembly for seven years and as a consistent community leader within the City of Rockingham.

Born in Derbyshire in the United Kingdom in 1946, Mike Barnett attended school in Falmouth, Cornwall, before migrating with his family to Pinjarra in 1958. He completed his education at Fairbridge Farm School and at Pinjarra High School. He went into business and, at the age of 21, was a caravan park proprietor in Rockingham.

He joined the Australian Labor Party in 1970. The electoral district of Rockingham was first created in a redistribution in 1972, and then comprised the Shire of Rockingham and Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale. Officially, it was a country electorate. Mike Barnett was endorsed as the Labor candidate in a notionally Liberal seat, but at the March 1974 general election, he polled 46.8 per cent in Rockingham, with a final majority of 137 votes or 50.9 per cent.

In his inaugural speech in August 1974, he dedicated himself to his electorate and quoted a colleague in saying that although “There have been many great people in this Parliament, and some small ones too,” no-one had been so big “that his feet did not touch the ground”. He went on to express his concern at possible delays in expanding Rockingham High School and the need to protect what was then a pristine foreshore at Warnbro. At the 1977 election, when a further redistribution had contracted his electorate to the boundaries of the Shire of Rockingham, he was re-elected by a margin of 718 votes or 54 per cent, despite being opposed by a popular local general practitioner and contending with an overall swing to the Court government. Subsequently, in the next three elections, he polled between 63 per cent and 69.7 per cent of the vote.

Notwithstanding demographic change in Rockingham after 1974, Mike Barnett was clearly a popular and effective local member. Between 1977 and 1983, Mike Barnett served as an opposition shadow minister in the portfolios of lands and forests, conservation and environment, and fisheries and wildlife. After the election of the Burke government, he served as Chairman of Committees until 1986, when he was nominated as Speaker, and he served as Speaker until the 1993 election. In more difficult political climates in 1989 and 1993, he retained Rockingham with final margins of 54.4 per cent and 55.5 per cent. He retired in December 1996, after nearly 23 years of parliamentary service.

Maintaining his extensive community involvement, Mike Barnett served as chair of the Fire and Emergency Services Authority between 2004 and 2008. In 2006, he was awarded a membership of the Order of Australia for his contribution to the Parliament of Western Australia and the Rockingham community. At the opening last year of the Mike Barnett Sports Complex in Rockingham, his dedicated service to the area was widely acknowledged and celebrated.

Our condolences go his partner, Ros, and to his children and stepchildren, Sue, Rob, Julie and Tony.

Vale, Mike Barnett.

MRS M.R. MARSHALL (Rockingham) [12.18 pm]: Today I rise to contribute to the condolence motion on the passing of the former member for Rockingham, Hon Mike Barnett, AM. As we reflect on Mike’s life and remarkable journey, I extend my deepest condolences to his family and loved ones on behalf of the Rockingham community.

Mike joined the Labor Party in 1970 and remained a valued member of the labour movement since then. In 1974, he became the first member for Rockingham at the state election held that year, and he continued to serve our community for the next 22 years. Mike was more than a politician; he was a tireless advocate for the people he served, and he shared a deep love for the community he represented. This was evident from day one with his inaugural speech to Parliament. Mike used his speech to advocate for the needs and views of the community he represented, especially to push for upgrades to Rockingham Senior High School, highlight the financial pressure facing recently migrated home owners as a result of interest rate rises, and advocate for strong protection of our magnificent beaches along the Warnbro Sound. In Mike’s inaugural speech, he said —

I can assure my constituents that they have a member of Parliament who is at all times available to give his undivided attention for the benefit of the electorate.

Until his retirement from politics, Mike remained the accessible member of Parliament that he promised his constituents he would be. Following his retirement, he continued to be a passionate advocate for our community. As other members have highlighted, Mike served our electorate during a period of significant growth for Rockingham. When he was elected, Rockingham was constituted as a local shire, and there were no traffic lights within the electorate. However, during his time in office, Mike transformed our community. He developed our second public high school at Safety Bay and opened many local primary schools. He advocated for the extension of the Kwinana Freeway to Safety Bay Road and the train line to Rockingham. He improved the local road network and bus connectivity, and he opened the Rockingham Kwinana District Hospital. He was also the first patient in the hospital’s operating theatre after he was injured playing rugby that very same weekend.

Over my time as a candidate and now as a member, I have had countless Rockingham locals share stories and memories with me that are a testament to Mike’s character and speak to how valued he was. I had the privilege of first meeting Mike on the first election campaign I ever worked on, which was Hon Madeleine King’s campaign for Brand in 2016. I was a young phone banker and booth captain during that election, and I cannot recall ever going to the campaign office without seeing Mike there, working hard putting together booth kits, building yard signs, stuffing envelopes, or just providing sage campaign advice and guidance to the newbies like me.

Since his passing, long-time local Labor Party members like Esther Grogan and Andrew and Margaret Mitchell have recounted Mike’s gentle manner and that he was a man who genuinely cared for the community. He always put the needs of others first. He always listened, he was always available, and he was always up for a chat.

Many Rockingham locals would know of Mike's favourite bench on Warnbro Beach Road, where he loved to sit and watch the sun go down over the Warnbro dunes, and he never turned down the opportunity to have a chat with anyone passing by. As we mourn the loss of Mike, may we also celebrate his life and the profound impact he has had on our community. His legacy will live on in the hearts and minds of all who knew him, and his contributions will continue to inspire us for years to come. Of course, his legacy as a champion of local sport will live on, with the Mike Barnett Sports Complex, our local basketball and netball indoor sport stadium, named in his honour.

Mike leaves a legacy that all of us here in this place aspire to achieve—to be an accessible, effective and approachable advocate for the communities that we represent. May Mike Barnett rest in peace, and may Ros and his family find solace in knowing that his work and contributions to Rockingham will be remembered and are appreciated by the community that he built. On behalf of Rockingham, thank you, Mike.

Members: Hear, hear!

MR T.J. HEALY (Southern River — Parliamentary Secretary) [12.22 pm]: I also rise to honour the service of Mike Barnett to his community, Western Australia and this Parliament. I thank Ros, his wife, for sharing him with us, and we thank his family for all that they did.

As many have said, I was not able to share this chamber with him; he was serving here before I was born. However, many of his former colleagues—Ian Taylor, Norm Marlborough and more—speak of a caring and respectful man, respected by all sides of Parliament and all sides of the local community. His journey in life and to this Parliament was not easy. Mike arrived in this Parliament having carried many experiences that others have not, but I understand that this made him a better advocate and a better member of the Legislative Assembly for others who had also endured and overcome adversity. I commend Mike for his role as the Chair of the Select Committee on Child Migration in 1996. I will not say that I believe that gave him great closure, but it was a great contribution to make to this place.

I will share two standards of public infrastructure that we can thank Mike Barnett for—the Rockingham railway and what we now know as the Kwinana Freeway. Not too long ago, there was no rail line to Rockingham, and the freeway still ended at South Street. I can still remember that. As I understand it, in the 1980s and 1990s, the then director general of Main Roads stated publicly that the freeway would never be extended beyond South Street in his lifetime. Enter Mike Barnett, and Norm Marlborough and Bill Thomas, the members for Peel and Cockburn in the Legislative Assembly. They fought for the freeway to be extended and widened and they fought for the railway. I found in *Hansard* about a week after Mike's first speech a reference to his first push for the freeway to be extended. Then, it was only in South Perth, and he was pushing to get it to South Street and beyond. We know that that now connects all the way to Bunbury. In 1979, there was the first mention in *Hansard* of a Rockingham railway. As I have said, that freeway now extends not only past Rockingham in my electorate, but all the way to Bunbury, and the railway extends through Rockingham into Mandurah. It is the living, breathing, daily artery of public freeway infrastructure for the entire southern suburbs and makes housing and jobs possible south of the river.

I understand that Mike Barnett, Norm Marlborough and their families had many adventures that we all benefit from today, but I will quote two reflections from Mike's former colleagues. They said that Mike Barnett was a "good-looking sporting hero", which was very useful at the polls, and that "you didn't argue with Mike Barnett."

The Premier has already mentioned in the first speech Mike's push for Rockingham Senior High School to have an extension. Back then, it only went to year 10, and they needed more classrooms. I know that he would be very proud that Mark McGowan has funded and Magenta Marshall will build that Rockingham extension and rebuild of the school that he fought for.

My main experiences with Mike were not actually as an MP but as a marriage celebrant. In his post-MLA life he became a marriage celebrant; he and I were both civil marriage celebrants. I was working for Norm when I wanted to become a celebrant, and he suggested that I meet with Mike and learn from him. Mike and Ros invited me into their beautiful home and Mike convinced me to become a marriage celebrant. He also showed me, as only an MLA with a bedside manner who cared genuinely for his constituents could, how I could support families through the legal, cultural and sometimes political family hurdles and logistics for significant family events. After his MLA life, I understand that he worked with hundreds of families as their marriage celebrant and for other life events, and I was honoured to be one of his celebrant students. Speaker, if you were happy when I was a civil marriage celebrant for your daughter, it is because I learnt from Mike Barnett. Being a celebrant also allowed me to help marry Hon Stephen Dawson and Dennis Liddelow at the Canberra Parliament and here in Perth. I reconnected with my wife when she was a bridesmaid at a wedding that I was performing, so I also give Mike some credit and thank him for helping me reconnect with my wife.

I have worked on campaigns in Warnbro, Kwinana and federal Brand, and it was wonderful to be back in Rockingham for Magenta Marshall's by-election. I have to say that I concur with what Magenta said. The respect for, and memories of, Mike Barnett and his service amongst the community and Labor branch members remains strong.

I will read some of Mike’s final words from his valedictory speech. He said about Ros and his family —

The most important person in my life is actually in the Public Gallery tonight and I want members to know who it is. So that members can pick her out ... I point to the young lady who is on my left.

...

Members know that without a particularly good partner they could not properly serve their electorates.

I feel that Mike was also a very humble man. He said —

I have been the most fortunate person with all the people around me and all the opportunities that have been afforded to me.

...

I have contested seven elections, and my constituents have treated me extraordinarily well. I do not believe a member of Parliament has been treated any better in any electorate than I have been treated.

We say thank you to Mike and we all hope to make you proud, Mike, as we all now carry on the work that you began and showed us how to follow. Thank you.

Members: Hear, hear!

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [12.28 pm]: Members, it will not surprise you to know that I knew Mike Barnett rather well, having been elected to this house in 1994, and Mike served with us through to the December 1996 election. I knew Mike before that in his role as Speaker, and many times sat in the Speaker’s gallery when I worked for the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, so I had the opportunity to see Mike preside over this chamber—something that he did in a very accomplished way. There were a couple of people who said he was not so good in the first year or so, but I think he really came into his own to be one of the most accomplished Speakers this Parliament has had.

What I want to say about Michael is that he was a genuinely fantastic person. He was so sincere; he was so popular. He was loved in his community. He was the ideal member of Parliament. At the time of my election, I had a three-year-old and a five-year-old daughter. When they would come up here, Mike would sit them down and tell them about his dog, TJ, what he was up to, and he would play games with them. He was just the kind of knockabout likeable person who really related so well one-on-one with people of all ages.

When I reflect on Michael’s life—I talked to him on a number of occasions about his life events, particularly when he decided to put forward to have the select committee on child migrants—Mike, like a lot of child migrants, was very reluctant to talk about his past. If you reflect on that era, it is almost incomprehensible to us now that Britain sent thousands and thousands of children on their own to migrate here to Australia and put them in institutions here. Mike came from the most difficult of circumstances. He effectively started life in an orphanage in the UK. It was a tough experience there. A lot of child migrants do not like to talk about their treatment in those institutions. I can certainly assure members that the treatment of Michael and other children in the institution that he was in in the UK was not a good one. They were treated very badly. When he was about 11 years old, a kind of inspector or someone in authority came to that orphanage to talk to them about their treatment because there had been some reports of concern. As part of that, that person of authority said to all the children there, “Would any of you like to go to Australia? Who would like to go to Australia?”. Mike said, “He may as well have said to us, ‘Who wants to go to the zoo?’, because we had no idea what Australia was.” Mike said he said, “Yes! I’ll go to Australia!”. He said, “And then we went on a boat. It was fantastic!” And after a day or two or three, he thought, “When will this all end?” It was a very long trip on the boat, and when they got here to the promised land of Australia and the great opportunities that they thought they were about to have, he was taken to Fairbridge. His treatment at Fairbridge was not particularly much better than it had been in the institution that he came from. It was very much more of the same. I also note people who shared that time at Fairbridge with Michael, including Hon Cheryl Davenport, who was a member of our upper house. I cannot remember Cheryl’s maiden name, but, from memory, it was a very difficult one to pronounce. Those people who were at Fairbridge with Michael all commented on his strength as a leader and the fact that he would stand up to authority and was the one who showed some leadership and protected those children who he felt were being especially picked on or victimised.

Now to the little bit of the story in between Pinjarra High School and suddenly having a caravan park in Rockingham. From my recollections of what Michael told me, I understand that he went to Kalgoorlie, where he needed to be 18 years old to go into underground mining. Michael was about 16 years old. He was a fit, strong and tall person, and, as such, he was sent down into the mines and worked in incredibly bad conditions in underground mining where safety procedures are nothing like they are today, and he lived in pretty poor circumstances as well. But he worked hard, saved some money and eventually made his way to Rockingham and had that further future. Like a lot of people, he drew a line under those experiences and tried to get on with life, to work hard and move along. It was not until many years later that he reflected on what had happened to the child migrants and the people who came here, and he started to be a lot more open about those horrific experiences that so many of them had. I would

describe Michael Barnett's life as a truly remarkable life. He came from circumstances of such incredible adversity, both in the UK and then here, and found himself being considered by the Labor Party as a candidate. As the member for Southern River commented, without doubt, those experiences and hardships that Michael suffered made him so much more empathetic with his constituents and the people he engaged with.

I may have said earlier that Michael had a great sense of humour and he liked a practical joke. I can see Norm Marlborough sitting at the back. Seeing the two of them at afternoon teatime in my early years here was quite amusing. Someone asked me yesterday, "Why didn't we have vanilla slices on the menu? Why couldn't we bring back the vanilla slice". Well, I have to tell you, they were Norm's favourite. As the member for Southern River has described, Michael was a very handsome, very good looking and incredibly fit person. He went swimming every day in the ocean. He took his personal appearance and his fitness very, very seriously. He thought he could help Norm, which most of us found fairly amusing. He would counsel Norm about not eating the vanilla slices—

Mr R.H. Cook: Clearly that didn't work!

The SPEAKER: Well, you would see Norm walking out of the dining room holding a vanilla slice above his mouth and just dropping it in and then looking across at Michael—"Cop that". You cannot help those people who do not want to be helped. It did not help Mike from trying though.

As the current member for Rockingham has said, her constituents could recount hundreds and hundreds of entertaining stories about Michael. Most members who served with Michael could recount hundreds and hundreds of stories as well. He was one of the most collegiate and entertaining members you could hope to serve with. I think starting that inquiry into child migrants opened up more than what he thought it would at the time. I think that set in train within Western Australia, and more broadly in Australia, the thought that lots more inquiry and exposure of what occurred there could happen. Ultimately, there were calls for compensation. Michael did a number of really worthwhile things as a member, some of which have been alluded to. It was actually me, as the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, who appointed him back in 2004 to chair the Fire and Emergency Services Authority board, which the Leader of the Liberal Party has referred to. He continued in that role under the subsequent minister for emergency services. I thought it would be a role that he would be really suited to because it is a role in which you need to engage with volunteers, and his experience as a member of Parliament, from a community sense, his knowledge of legislation and the requirements of a board chair stood him in good stead for that. He served with distinction in that role as well.

I would like to also wish Ros and all of his family and his close friends all the very best, and I express my sympathy for them. They were touched by someone truly remarkable. I too want to add my condolences to the condolences that have been given here today. I note that those condolences are definitely also on behalf of every member of Parliament who ever served with Michael Barnett.

I would ask members to observe a minute's silence.

Question passed; members and officers standing as a mark of respect.

PAPERS TABLED

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

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE ANNUAL REPORT 2021–22

Correction — Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [12.39 pm]: I have received a letter from the Minister for Corrective Services requesting that an erratum be added to the Department of Justice's annual report 2021–22. The erratum corrects errors in four different sections relating to adult community corrections, disclosures and legal compliance, the summary of employee numbers and indicators for court and tribunal services. Under the provisions of standing order 156, I authorise the corrections to be attached as an erratum to the tabled paper.

[See paper [2708](#).]

MT HOLLAND LITHIUM MINE

Statement by Minister for State and Industry Development, Jobs and Trade

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Minister for State and Industry Development, Jobs and Trade) [12.40 pm]: It is with great pleasure that I stand to congratulate the Covalent Lithium joint venture consisting of Western Australian company Wesfarmers and Chilean company SQM on their successful opening on 7 March 2024 of the Mt Holland lithium mine and concentrator project. I had the opportunity to attend the opening, along with the Deputy Premier, Rita Saffioti, and the Minister for Mines and Petroleum, David Michael. The Mt Holland lithium project consists of an open-cut mine and concentrator located 110 kilometres south-east of Southern Cross in the wheatbelt, and a refinery currently being constructed in the Kwinana industrial area. The refinery will be one of only three large-scale lithium hydroxide producers in the state.

Mt Holland will produce 380 000 tonnes of spodumene concentrate a year, which will be refined into 50 000 tonnes of battery-quality lithium hydroxide. This is enough to power around one million electric vehicles. The project holds significant economic value to Western Australia, including \$2.6 billion in investment and creating over 1 000 jobs during construction and 350 jobs once fully operational. Additionally, the Cook government has helped enable this project by delivering critical upgrades to the Moorine Rock to Mt Holland road. This \$60 million commitment has improved road safety and freight efficiency, supporting the future growth of the Mt Holland project and other future mines in the Yilgarn region. The project is a material example of Western Australia consolidating its position in the global critical minerals supply chain. On top of that, it is another material example of major companies putting their faith in Western Australia as a great place to do business. WA is powering the global shift to net zero, and the opening of Mt Holland is a vote of confidence in the long-term future of our battery and critical minerals industries, diversifying our economy and creating local jobs for the future. Midstream battery chemical manufacturing continues to be a focus for my government, with the Covalent Kwinana refinery expected to deliver its first lithium hydroxide in early 2025. Covalent's Mt Holland and Kwinana projects will further boost WA's reputation as a major lithium hub and one of the most significant battery chemical producers outside China.

SKILLED MIGRANT SETTLEMENT SERVICES

Statement by Minister for Training and Workforce Development

MS S.F. McGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Training and Workforce Development) [12.42 pm]: I rise to inform the house of the Cook government's recent announcement that specialist settlement services under the \$4.25 million skilled migrant job connect program will be expanded to the regions. Four providers have been appointed for two years to provide these services: East Kimberley Chamber of Commerce and Industry for the Kimberley; Regional Development Australia for the Pilbara; Centacare Family Services for the midwest; and Rainbow Coast Neighbourhood Centre for the great southern. These new services will be in addition to the existing free walk-in services available to skilled migrants in Perth. The expansion of specialist settlement services will support more newly arrived migrants to secure employment and to participate in WA's strong economy, especially in the regions. Launched in July last year, the skilled migrant job connect program includes financial support of up to \$7 500 for WA skilled migrants to offset the costs associated with undertaking skills assessments and gap training, and to meet occupational licensing requirements. Many skilled migrants need to meet those costs to gain employment in occupations that are commensurate with their formal overseas qualifications, skills and experience. To date, more than 300 requests for support under this program have been received from skilled migrants. I was pleased to see the front page of the *Albany Advertiser* yesterday welcoming the additional funding and describing how it has enabled the Rainbow Coast Neighbourhood Centre to employ two new full-time staff to support migrants to settle in Albany and Katanning. We know that supporting primary visa holders to find and retain employment, and the integration of primary and secondary visa holders, are key for the successful settlement of skilled migrants. The expansion of these settlement services and the successful settlement of skilled migrants will support WA's regional employers to build their local workforce to meet skills demands.

NATIONAL PLAYGROUP WEEK

Statement by Minister for Early Childhood Education

MS S.E. WINTON (Wanneroo — Minister for Early Childhood Education) [12.45 pm]: This week is National Playgroup Week, which runs from 18 to 24 March. National Playgroup Week is an opportunity to celebrate and promote the benefits of playgroups for children, families and communities. This morning my colleague and mother-to-be, the member for Rockingham, and I attended Playgroup WA's Waikiki Playgroup in the Park event at Fantasy Park. It was brilliant to see so many families enjoying today's activities. The first playgroups in Western Australia were established in the 1960s by mothers who wanted to connect with other families with young children in their communities. Playgroups offer many benefits to children, parents and carers. They are a safe, inclusive and friendly place to meet and have fun together and develop a sense of community. They provide opportunities to play, share stories and connect with others.

The Cook Labor government proudly supports Playgroups WA. Funding is provided through the Department of Education's enhanced transition to school program. This statewide project allows schools throughout the state to host playgroups on their school site. These playgroups are family and parent led and provide opportunities for families to become familiar with their local school environment and build relationships with school staff. They also provide families, parents and carers with peer support and social networks with other families and their young children. We know that parents and carers play a critical role in their child's life as their first and lifelong teacher. Most importantly, playgroups provide opportunities for children to learn through play and develop their social, emotional, cognitive and physical skills. Playgroups support the diverse needs of families, including specialised support guided playgroups for families of children with special needs, grandparent carer playgroups and intergenerational playgroups for the whole family. Multicultural playgroups and mother and nature playgroups provide postnatal support for mothers and babies from birth to six months. Congratulations to Playgroup WA for putting on today's fantastic event in our southern suburbs, one of three events to be held in Perth to acknowledge the importance of playgroups in our community.

BON SCOTT MEMORIAL GATE

Statement by Minister for Local Government

MS H.M. BEAZLEY (Victoria Park — Minister for Local Government) [12.47 pm]: I am delighted to rise today to inform the house that the Bon Scott memorial gate at Fremantle Cemetery has been reinstated! Bon Scott, the frontman of iconic rock band AC/DC, is a Western Australian legend. Formed in 1973, AC/DC is renowned for being one of the most influential Australian music acts of all time. The band has left an indelible mark on the music scene in Australia and overseas. Many notable musicians cite AC/DC as an influence, including Josh Homme of Queens of the Stone Age, Dave Grohl of Nirvana and Foo Fighters, and bands such as Metallica, Slayer, Exodus and The Living End. Bon was born and died overseas, but grew up in Fremantle, attending North Fremantle Primary School and later John Curtin College of the Arts. Each year, thousands of visitors pass through a memorial gate near the corner of Leach Highway and Carrington Street to pay their respects to the idolised musician. The memorial is a drawcard for Fremantle. In 2006, in recognition of Bon's remarkable contribution to the field of music, the site was deemed a place of cultural significance by the National Trust of Australia.

Sadly, the Bon Scott memorial gate fell on *Hard Times* when it was *Shot in the Dark* by a car on the *Highway to Hell* earlier this year. I can imagine some members of the community exclaiming "Hells Bells" when they heard the news of the gate's demise. So, I stepped the team at the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board to repair and reinstate the memorial gate. On Friday, 15 March I had the pleasure of fastening the final bolt onto the repaired gate in the company of Hon Simone McGurk, MLA, in her capacity as the hardworking and hard rocking member for Fremantle. To quote the honourable member for Fremantle, she was "*Thunderstruck* by how solid the repairs to the Bon Scott memorial gate are." I am pleased the Bon Scott memorial gate is *Back in Black* and that many thousands of people are able to enjoy the Bon Scott memorial for years to come.

ECONOMICS AND INDUSTRY STANDING COMMITTEE

Membership Change — Motion

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

That the member for Cockburn be discharged from the Economics and Industry Standing Committee and the member for Cannington be appointed in his place.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE — PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Standing Orders Suspension — Withdrawal of Notice

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Leader of the House) [12.50 pm]: I withdraw notice of motion 2, business of the Assembly, standing in my name. Am I able to make a quick explanation?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: There has been discussions with the opposition about the bill that is currently before the place, in consideration in detail. I thank the members for their sitting late last night. I understand that an agreement has been made that we will not need to have a dinner break tonight, and that the business of the consideration in detail should be able to be dealt with. If it goes a little while after 7.00 pm, then we will sit after 7.00 pm to conclude that consideration in detail.

SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT TRUST BILL 2024

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by **Mr D.A. Templeman (Minister for Sport and Recreation)**, and read a first time.

Explanatory memorandum presented by the minister.

Second Reading

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Sport and Recreation) [12.52 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the Sports and Entertainment Trust Bill 2024. In doing so, I acknowledge the work of the Standing Committee on Legislation in the other place for its inquiry into the Sports and Entertainment Trust Bill 2023, and I thank the committee for its work. The committee considered the bill and found that none of its clauses unjustly offend against fundamental legislative principles. It noted, however, that for constitutional reasons, the bill ought to have been introduced in the Legislative Assembly because clause 56 would enable the Treasurer to provide a guarantee in relation to the financial obligations of the trust. I thank the committee for bringing this oversight to my attention and now rectify it.

The Western Australian Sports Centre Trust, which trades as VenuesWest, manages Western Australia's most significant sport and entertainment venues and precincts, including the iconic Optus Stadium and flagship RAC Arena, plus 12 other important venues. The Western Australian Sports Centre Trust has performed this role for many years, directly supporting both high-performance sport and the general public. However, VenuesWest

has been hindered by the limitations of its act. The WASCT act was introduced in 1986 to provide governance and oversight of Western Australia's major state-owned facilities. Since then, the portfolio has undergone significant growth and diversification, expanding from a single facility to now encompassing 14 venues that operate under various management models, such as being directly managed by VenuesWest, partner managed with professional private sector venue operators, co-managed in conjunction with specialised sporting associations and managed under lease arrangements. Although the act has done what it was supposed to do, it has not been updated since it was first passed over 35 years ago, and this has hampered VenuesWest's potential to deliver on its strategic priorities. The time has come to move to contemporary legislation that will allow VenuesWest greater responsibilities, increased clarity, broader powers and greater flexibility to carry out its duties.

Over the years, the Cook government has initiated a number of reforms to ensure that the public sector is modern and high performing and maintains its ability to deliver future services to the community and satisfy the government's agenda. Following the appointment of VenuesWest in 2013 as the governance agency for the Perth Stadium and sports precinct, the government of the day noted that a review of the WASCT act was required to bring it in line with the requirements of modern legislation. Key areas that were noted for review included the need to clearly articulate management of a portfolio of venues rather than one venue; to clarify and include financial and other provisions to ensure VenuesWest's ability to flexibly undertake business activities, implement its strategic plan and manage continued growth, including the capacity to operate in a commercial manner; for clear and improved reporting provisions and governance through board reform; to provide an ability to better manage venue and public safety, including the power to ban people; and to provide legal certainty in relation to exemptions from parking levies and council rates.

Extensive stakeholder consultation has occurred over a broad range of proposed amendments. This bill will provide for the creation of a new, modern trust. The trust will continue to be the government agency responsible for asset management of the portfolio of venues and supporting high-performance sports training and competition needs. The trust will be managed by a board that will have the legal powers needed to carry out its duties. It will be accountable to the Minister for Sport and Recreation, the government and the Parliament. However, the new trust will also have many clearly articulated and important differences, the most important of which relates to the trust's functions. The trust will have the ability to conduct commercial, retail and promotional activities and be able to "turn to account" advertising opportunities. The broader definition of "venues" will allow for a broad portfolio of assets, as well as the ability for the minister to declare places and leased venues as venues, to accommodate continued growth and flexibility.

Many reforms in the bill relate to the board that will manage the trust. The new trust's board will consist of seven members, compared with nine members on the current WASCT board. The bill will require board members to have specific and relevant skills and experience that relate to the trust's operations. These changes are reflective of contemporary practice towards smaller, skills-based boards. Board members will also be protected from liability when they act in good faith in carrying out their duties.

The bill also contains provisions that will enhance the trust's accountability, including clarity and transparency in the management of conflicts of interest and the use of information. The bill will provide for enhanced public safety and the protection of venues through powers to ban people from one or all VenuesWest venues via temporary and permanent exclusion orders. This will significantly enhance the trust's ability to manage the safety of the millions of patrons who attend events each year and who expect to enjoy those experiences and then go home safely.

The bill will allow the Governor to make regulations on various operational matters regarding trust property, including the management of venues, the admission of people to trust property, the behaviour of people who visit trust property, the consumption of liquor at trust venues, the imposition of fees by the trust and parking management on trust land. These regulations will provide the trust with a greater ability to manage and protect the assets it is responsible for. As a statutory authority and part of the public sector, the new trust will be accountable to the minister, the government and the Parliament, and will be required to comply with all legislation governing the public sector.

In conclusion, this bill will provide significant and long-overdue reform of the management of major sports and entertainment assets in this state, in recognition of the value of sports and entertainment to our society and the part that these assets play in making Western Australia a great place to live, work and invest in, and to visit.

I also advise that, in recognition of the legislation committee's other recommendation, the explanatory memorandum I just tabled has been amended to include more information about the term "material personal interest". I commend this bill to the house.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr P.J. Rundle (Deputy Leader of the Opposition)**.

FIREARMS BILL 2024

Consideration in Detail

Resumed from 19 March.

Clause 150: General matters for consideration —

Debate was adjourned after the clause had been partly considered.

Mr R.S. LOVE: We were discussing clause 150 last night when we were rudely interrupted. I thought we could have kept going for a few more hours, but the Leader of the House decided it was time to go home, so we did not get to the end of clause 150. Members were raising interest about some of the language used in this clause and the meaning of the some of the terms. Clause 150(b) refers to “the person’s physical and mental health”.

I bring the minister back to discussion last night. When we were talking about these matters, he referred to the fact that in an earlier clause, he had discussed how he had provided information around the health assessments and the various health industry stakeholders that had formed a group. If we go back to that clause, my recollection is that the minister said that he had tabled some detailed information in the Legislative Council on the health assessment working group briefing note that is essentially a guide for the clinicians that they would have to complete for assessment. The minister noted that in his response to a question in the Legislative Council, he tabled that guide, which will be available to the police. He said he could not remember the name of the document but that he had tabled it in the other house.

We had discussions today with the other place, but we could find no tabled document that fits the description given by the minister. Hon Nick Goiran asked a question of the Minister for Police about the working group, and the five parts to that question were answered in four dot points—but nothing had been tabled. Where is this briefing note and that extra information that yesterday the minister claimed had been tabled? If it has not been tabled, as the minister said, which I take to be an honest mistake on the minister’s part, can he provide that information?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I probably used the wrong terminology. I answered a question from Hon Nick Goiran of which one element was: can the minister provide a document? As far as I know, that was provided to Hon Nick Goiran as part of the answer to his question. If that was not the case, that is what I was referring to, noting that a fair bit was going on yesterday. I do not get one question from the upper house, but numerous questions, and that had to fit between being present at our own question time and our processes in this house. The document that I was referring to was a briefing note from police, which is what Hon Nick Goiran requested. I thought that was attached to the response provided to Hon Nick Goiran.

Mr R.S. Love: Would you table that?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I can. It is basically a briefing note from police entitled, “Firearms Act Reform — Mandatory Health Assessment”. It is a briefing note on the work that has been done on the mandatory health assessment. The document to which I referred was an attachment titled, “WA Firearms Licence Health Assessment”. It is a self-assessment form for the health assessment element of the intended health check. I assumed that had been passed to Hon Nick Goiran. I can table it here.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Will the minister table that official document in this house now?

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister, would you like to table that paper?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes.

[See paper [2709](#).]

Mr P. PAPALIA: This is a working document that was advice at that time about the process that is underway and continues with the health assessment working group. More work could be done on that form, and it may not be the final composition of the self-assessment form. One point I noted in the response to Hon Nick Goiran and in giving him that document—I thought I had given it to him—was that the contents of the self-assessment form remain with the clinician and are not provided to police. The intention is that the final assessment will be minimal assessment from the clinician, and the personal details, the likes of which maybe on that type of self-assessment form, will not be handed to police.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I can confirm from my inquiries with Hon Nick Goiran this morning that he has not received that information.

Mr P. Papalia: Sorry.

Mr R.S. LOVE: But I am sure he will have it very shortly now that it has been tabled.

Getting back to this clause, “General matters for consideration”, various members have raised a number of concerns around some of the language that is used in this clause and the broad nature of the topics that could be considered without there being much indication as to the extent of the inquiries that might be made. If this bill had been allowed to go to the Standing Committee on Legislation, as we requested, before consideration in detail got underway, that sort of matter could have been explored to see whether it is a balanced type of clause or whether it goes too far and is too open to further interpretation by the Commissioner of Police. I understand the need for public safety, but there is also a need for the normal rules of a civil society and protection of some of those values as well. In trying to balance those issues, it is a matter that perhaps a committee could have assisted with. We have the view of the Western Australia Police Force, and I am not disregarding or disrespecting its view, but other groups may have different views on this. The Law Reform Commission of Western Australia, for instance, may have a different view from what the government has come up with at the moment.

On that note, because this bill has not been allowed to go to a committee for wider discussion, I am on the verge of opposing this matter, not because I think a person should not be a fit and proper person, but I am worried about the lack of clarity on how far reaching some of these matters will be. The members for Roe and Central Wheatbelt have expressed their concern on these issues. We are also concerned about the effect it might have on people seeking help and assistance when under stress. I remember the member for Central Wheatbelt talking about the environmental stress on a community at times when, for instance, there has been a major fire event, a wideranging drought or some other cataclysmic events. Some people in the sheep industry are feeling that at the moment with the impending ban on their industry. They are deeply concerned about the future of their family farming operations. These are really stressful times for people. We do not want to see that lead to unnecessary unexpected consequences for them.

I will conclude my discussion on that point. Had this gone to a committee for wider consideration, this might not have been the path that I chose. However, because minister has consistently said that he will not allow it to go to a committee to look at the underlying policy settings and some of the premises around which the legislation has been written, I will most likely oppose the clause itself.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I thank the member for repeating what he said last night. I will do the same. I clearly understand why he is doing this. Not many people were watching at 1.15 in the morning. He potentially wants to convey the message that he is going to do what he said he would within hours of the bill being read into Parliament, that is, he is going to oppose this element of the bill. I understand that. I get that he is retrospectively justifying why he is doing that.

That aside, as I pointed out in the early hours of the morning, the powers that we are including in the act are already afforded right now to the Commissioner of Police under the current act. We have expanded the description of the nature of the assessment by the Commissioner of Police. Right now, the Commissioner of Police can deem someone not a fit and proper person. I guarantee the member that there are some challenges to that determination before the State Administrative Tribunal right now because under the current act, the commissioner can do that. In this new bill, we have more expansively laid out the process and considerations by the commissioner. That is a good thing.

As the member said regarding unintended consequences, we went through and discussed the mental health check component earlier in the morning, or possibly late last night. That was arrived at and is still continuing to be deliberated by the health check working group. It consists of representatives from the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, the Mental Health Commission, the Department of Health, the office of the Minister for Health, the Australian Medical Association and the Western Australia Police Force. It is not Western Australian police doing that; specialist knowledgeable professionals are advising how this particular part of the analysis was arrived at. That work will continue. I tabled a briefing note with an attachment that is part of it. It is an indication of where it is at this moment as it works towards refining that process.

Regarding the other assessments of general matters for consideration, as I said, the commissioner already has these powers. It is not some new power. We are expanding and laying down the nature of those deliberations by the commissioner.

Ms L. METTAM: I will similarly flag that the shadow minister in the other place will put an amendment to this clause on the notice paper about the mental health assessments. We support the principle of what has been put forward and support the fact that this is a recommendation of the Law Reform Commission. Further to that, I have a question that I flagged earlier about the resourcing of the mental health checks in regional WA. This is not just an issue for those who are obligated to get a mental health check for this purpose; it is an issue across regional WA as well. Will there be any additional resourcing for this purpose? Last night, I flagged some other issues about ensuring that this approach does not dissuade lawful firearm owners from speaking up when they need mental health support, as well as the challenges that we have in regional WA given the lower numbers of medical or health workers. That is just a question on resourcing and it also underlines the importance of getting the communication right so that there are no unintended consequences.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Regarding that last element and the member's concerns around the provision of access to assessments, it is intended that the process will be deliverable via telehealth. It will be commensurate with other like tests. On a number of occasions, we have given indications of the types of like tests, such as the dangerous goods licence and recreational pilots licence tests and their associated health checks. Those are the sorts of tests that might currently be required of people, as well as for a heavy rigid licence. We have to make the observation that the likelihood of people already having done one of these comparable tests is going to be higher in the regions. I assume that a lot of primary producers and people who work in the regions are already in possession of some of these licences that require those types of tests.

I will read out a bit of the information to give a more fulsome answer. Health assessments are not a novelty as part of applications to obtain a licence. Many other licences require health assessments that cover both physical and mental health such as commercial, private and recreational pilots' licences. Aviation licences require health assessments for both mental and physical health. The standards of the assessment vary according to the type of licence sought. Class 1 is the most stringent, lasts for just one year and only applies to commercial pilots, while class 2 is

more relaxed and applies to recreational pilots. A commercial medical declaration is needed to report any medication or the presence of any permanent long-term mental or physical condition, including diabetes, epilepsy and drug or alcohol dependence, that may impair the applicant.

Dangerous goods licences are under the Department of Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety and are very specialised, such as the dangerous goods driver licence or explosive manufacture licence. For a dangerous goods driver licence, for instance, an applicant must pass a medical assessment against the standards in *Assessing fitness to drive: For commercial and private vehicle drivers 2022* not more than six months before the date the application is lodged. For on-demand transport driving services like Uber, mandatory health assessments for drivers are in accordance with regulation 82(a)(ii) of the Transport (Road Passenger Services) Regulations 2020.

A number of existing licensing regimes also use the language “medical standards”, described as the commercial standards in assessing the fitness to drive for commercial and private vehicle drivers. The Dangerous Goods Safety (Explosives) Regulations 2007 require medical evidence and the Road Traffic (Vehicles) Regulations 2014 require similar information. The new firearms regulatory regime will therefore incorporate health assessments that align this purpose with other licensing processes already occurring in the state. As I said, it is quite possible that in the regions there might be a higher ratio of people who already have a compatible check. We have indicated that our intent is to enable those checks to be employed for the purposes amending the requirements of the firearm licence application or renewal if they are within the time frame arrived at. I will finish with the last observation I made last night in reference to people concerned about mental health and the implications of an obligation to have a test. We have had direct approaches from veterans who suffer from PTSD who are concerned about the potential impact on their ability to enjoy shooting as an activity they can do. Some of them might be physically injured as well, so they are incapacitated in more than one way. We are at pains to reassure them that that is not the intent. If someone is being treated and cared for in a well-managed regime, that is a good thing, and this might be the thing that gets them to seek assistance when they might not otherwise do that. That, too, is a good thing.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I have one further question. Last night the minister said that if someone was not happy with the commissioner’s decision, they had the right to appeal to the State Administrative Tribunal. If, for argument’s sake, their licence was taken off them under these guidelines, is there, say, a three or five-year period after which they could then reapply, or is it all over?

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is really difficult to answer that because every case will be about an individual. By definition, it is individuals being impacted by an assessment that will determine that they are not a fit and proper person. It will be variable depending upon the situation.

Division

Clause put and a division taken, the Acting Speaker (Ms A.E. Kent) casting her vote with the ayes, with the following result —

Ayes (47)

Mr S.N. Aubrey	Ms M.J. Hammat	Ms L. Mettam	Ms A. Sanderson
Mr G. Baker	Mr T.J. Healy	Mr D.R. Michael	Ms R.S. Stephens
Ms L.L. Baker	Mr M. Hughes	Mr K.J.J. Michel	Mrs J.M.C. Stojkovski
Ms H.M. Beazley	Mr W.J. Johnston	Mr S.A. Millman	Dr K. Stratton
Dr A.D. Buti	Mr H.T. Jones	Mr Y. Mubarakai	Mr C.J. Tallentire
Mr J.N. Carey	Mr D.J. Kelly	Ms L.A. Munday	Mr D.A. Templeman
Ms C.M. Collins	Ms E.J. Kelsbie	Mrs L.M. O’Malley	Mr P.C. Tinley
Mr R.H. Cook	Ms A.E. Kent	Mr P. Papalia	Ms C.M. Tonkin
Ms L. Dalton	Dr J. Krishnan	Mr S.J. Price	Mr R.R. Whitby
Ms D.G. D’Anna	Mr P. Lilburne	Mr D.T. Punch	Ms S.E. Winton
Ms K.E. Giddens	Mrs M.R. Marshall	Ms M.M. Quirk	Ms C.M. Rowe (<i>Teller</i>)
Ms E.L. Hamilton	Ms S.F. McGurk	Ms R. Saffioti	

Noes (4)

Ms M. Beard	Mr R.S. Love	Mr P.J. Rundle	Ms M.J. Davies (<i>Teller</i>)
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Clause thus passed.

Clauses 151 and 152 put and passed.

Clause 153: Firearm authority health standards —

Ms L. METTAM: Under what circumstances could the commissioner form the opinion that someone is not a fit and proper person on the basis that the commissioner is satisfied that the person does not meet firearm authority health standards?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The Commissioner of Police will ultimately determine a person’s fit and proper status based on numerous factors, including the health assessment, so it will not be the sole determining factor. He or she will take into account all the considerations around fit and proper status. The health assessment is part of that, but they

all lead to a determination about a person's suitability to hold a firearm authority and to minimise the risk to public safety. Health practitioners cannot be held responsible for any determination made throughout the assessment. Their role is to provide evidence about a person's physical and mental health status, which will then be considered alongside other evidence. A health practitioner is not expected to provide any private health details that the applicant does not wish to share, simply an assessment of whether a person meets the health standards.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 154 put and passed.

Clause 155: Risk of firearm misuse —

Ms L. METTAM: I would like to make it clear that I support the purpose and intent of this clause, but I just want an understanding of how the commissioner will satisfy himself —

... that the person poses any of the following risks —

- (a) a risk of the person using a firearm for an unlawful purpose;
- (b) a risk of the person using a firearm to harm themselves;
- (c) a risk of the person causing injury or harm to another by the use or threatened use of a firearm;
- (d) a risk of the person failing to exercise responsible control over a firearm.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Some of the things that might be considered are a person's criminal history, their physical and mental health, their conduct and behaviour, close associates and any reasonable suspicion a person may misuse the firearm, amongst others. This is to demonstrate that the commissioner must take necessary steps to satisfy whether a person has the privilege of possessing or using a firearm. In the end, the commissioner looks at their past behaviour, their current behaviour and intelligence. It may be something that the commissioner has been advised of by family members even, which happens now. This will be more clearly stated here.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 156 to 158 put and passed.

Clause 159: Citizenship and residency —

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: This clause states that an individual must not be granted a licence unless they are an Australian citizen or a permanent resident. However, clause 159(2) states —

The regulations may prescribe circumstances in which a licence or approval as an authorised person or responsible person can (despite subsection (1)) be granted to an individual who does not reside in the State.

I want to bring up an example. In my area there are a lot of South African farm workers or workers who come across, but it can take them years to get their permanent residency or citizenship. If someone has been working on a farm for several years but they still do not have their residency due to visa issues or problems with getting the approval or the like, could the farmer, their employer, as the responsible person give that approval to that worker?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am not really sure what the member is getting at. The intent here is that if they do not live in Western Australia, they will not get access to a firearms licence. Is the member talking about a seasonal worker or someone of that nature?

Mr P.J. Rundle: They could be a permanent worker who is not an Australian citizen.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I will give the member this answer. Seasonal workers can be authorised for the use of a primary producer or business licence or any other licence allowing authorised persons firearms if they are Australian citizens or permanent residents. It is also intended for the regulations to prescribe people with certain visas, such as those held by long-term international seasonal workers, to become authorised for a licence. The details of which visas will be eligible remains under consideration. I am assuming that the situation to which the member is referring would be covered.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Even though they may have worked on the farm for a couple of years, they could be regarded, potentially, as a long-term seasonal worker I suppose we could call it.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 160 to 165 put and passed.

Clause 166: Completion of firearm safety training course —

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Who will be responsible for conducting the approved firearm safety courses, and how will these trainers or organisations be selected and approved by the relevant authorities?

Mr P. PAPALIA: This work is still being done because it will be encompassed in regulations. It is likely that approved persons will operate via a club or range licence or the firearms trainer business licence. Work is being done with TAFE and established clubs on what the framework will look like.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: How frequently must an individual undergo firearms safety training or will the fact that they are already a licence holder do the job? Will this cover only new licence holders?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I confirm what we have said is that existing licence firearms owners will not be required to undertake this training. It will be for all future applications once the law becomes the law.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 167: Certificate as to serviceability and safety of firearm or major firearm part —

Ms M. BEARD: This may be exactly the same as the previous one, but I am wondering about the frequency of the serviceability certificate and whether that is for new licences. Will people have to provide a serviceability certificate, and will a fee be involved?

Mr P. PAPALIA: This is essentially the status quo. In the event that someone wants to licence a firearm or further firearms, they have to be certified. That is the case right now so that will be the case in the new legislation.

Ms M. BEARD: There will not be a need to get one every three years. Will they have to get regular serviceability certificates to ensure that they comply or is that a one-off?

Mr P. PAPALIA: In the event that the firearm is being licensed to a new individual and is changing hands, a certificate of serviceability will be needed. That would be the case if it is between two individuals or a dealer and an individual.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: The minister was talking about a dealer. Are they going to have to provide a serviceability certificate with every firearm?

Mr P. PAPALIA: They do now when someone licences a firearm. If someone is licensing the firearm for the first time—someone else might have been in possession of it, but a new person is licensing it—they must have a certificate of serviceability, yes.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 168 to 174 put and passed.

Clause 175: Register of firearm authorities —

Mr R.S. LOVE: This clause reads —

- (1) The Commissioner must compile and maintain a register ... in such form as the Commissioner determines, of the firearm authorities granted or renewed under this Act.
- (2) The Commissioner must enter in the Firearm Authority Register the particulars determined by the Commissioner for each firearm authority granted or renewed under this Act.

I take it that we will be moving to a digital system, so the register will be a digital register that will be somewhere on the internet. Will people other than the police have access to the information on the firearm authority register; and, if so, who will they be?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The police currently retain that information on a register. It is on the police system. This will be a new system and the information will reside within that system. An individual will be able to access their own information via the portal but no-one else's personal information.

Mr R.S. LOVE: If a person stores someone else's firearm in their gun storage cabinet in compliance with the regulations, will they have access to the register to determine whether the firearm has a valid licence? The gun owner might have left it there for a considerable time and the licence renewal might not have been paid. The dealer or trader who was holding the firearm in storage would technically be in possession of an illegal firearm. Will they be able to access the system to see whether a gun that was kept in one of the cabinets for a year or two was still legal?

Mr P. PAPALIA: In the member's example, in the event that someone was holding someone else's firearm and the firearm became unlicensed, the police would be made aware of that because the new system will be much more responsive and useful for the police. Beyond that, in the event that the person storing the firearm sought that type of information, they could approach the police to access the register, but the person storing it will not get access to that information.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Is the minister saying that the police would know whether or not the firearm licence was still valid but would not necessarily know that it was in a storage facility, or would they know that because that would have to be reported?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes, that will be reported.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Will that be reported as soon as it goes in?

Mr P. Papalia: Yes.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Will there be a process whereby the person who stored the firearm would be alerted by the police?

Mr P. Papalia: As to what?

Mr R.S. LOVE: That they are storing another person's firearm that is no longer compliant with the law.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Essentially, if a licence expires, the police will come and get the firearm, wherever it is, even if the police have not been notified about what happened to that firearm. It would become an unlicensed firearm and they would know the last known location and they would recover it.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Thank you. A person living in a house in Brown Street, Cervantes, may have complied with the regulations and put a gun in storage. They may then take it to a storage facility in Midland before going overseas with the intention of coming back in three months but stay for a couple of years and forget about licensing the firearm. Therefore, the firearm licence would expire. They may be unaware of that while living in London or wherever they were. The firearm that was licensed would no longer be licensed. Technically, it would be an illegal firearm. Will there be a system to alert the police to where that firearm is?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Broadly, the system is that if a person wants to store a firearm in a place other than the place for which it is licensed, the police must be notified. That person would have done that, being the law-abiding individual they were prior to going overseas. The police would have been notified that the gun was in an authorised location. At the expiration of the licence, the police would become interested in the gun and they would go and recover it.

Mr R.S. LOVE: After the police took it from that facility, would a penalty apply to the person who had taken the firearm in the first place? The concern is that they would have stored what subsequently became an illegal firearm. I think we saw reports of a gun shop that was raided and a number of illegal guns were found. Those guns could have been stored for someone else and the licences could have expired. The problem would not have been caused deliberately. A dealer raised that issue with me because they thought that it needed to be addressed.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The person would have a reasonable excuse that they were in possession of a firearm that was lawful initially and stored in a lawful fashion but then the licence expired. That person would not be responsible for that and would not suffer any consequences. I do not know about the example the member referred to, but in this case the person would have a reasonable excuse.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 176 to 185 put and passed.

Clause 186: Conditions of firearm authority —

Mr R.S. LOVE: Division 6 imposes a number of conditions on a firearm authority. They are —

- (1) The conditions to which a firearm authority is subject may —
 - (a) impose limitations or restrictions on the authority conferred by the firearm authority ...

That must be when it is first granted, I would imagine —

- (b) impose obligations and restrictions on the holder of the firearm authority ...

That obligation is on the individual, not on the firearm authority —

- (c) impose obligations and restrictions on any person acting under the authority of the firearm authority ...

That is when someone has a licensed firearm and someone else's authority to possess it, use it, repair it or whatever else it might be —

- (d) impose obligations and restrictions on the holder of the firearm authority in connection with the carrying on of any business or other activity to which the firearm authority relates.

Given that a series of regulations will be built around the normal conduct of all the different licensed categories and authorities, why is this power needed to make extra conditions on a case-by-case basis?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am informed that this replicates a current power under section 21 of the 1973 act. The reasoning is that individual circumstances may require this power so that a condition to issue a licence can be made. It replicates the current powers.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 187 and 188 put and passed.

Clause 189: Amendment to add, replace or remove firearm —

Mr R.S. LOVE: I think at one point in the discussion on these matters—it might have been in private members' business when we discussed some aspects of the upcoming legislation—the minister mentioned that the legislation would provide for an assessment of gun storage et cetera and that a firearm could be replaced more easily than can be done at the moment. For instance, if someone has a worn-out .22, they can trade it in for a new one. Presumably, that would be safer than the gun they had before, which is becoming dangerous and unserviceable. Do police intend that they would simply be able to do that if they hold a firearm of a particular calibre for a particular purpose and

simply want to replace it with a similar—not identical but similar—gun with the same calibre and perhaps same action? I want to know what sort of restrictions and limitations would be around that. For instance, would it be a problem if someone has a bolt-action .22 with a five-shot magazine and they want to get a lever-action gun with a six-shot magazine and the same basic capacity? Can the minister explain what the like-for-like considerations might be so we have an understanding of what will be entailed?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Essentially, it will be like for like, as the Leader of the Opposition referred to at the end. The nature of the action, the calibre and the magazine capacity should be similar or very much like for like, if not identical. That is what is intended to be captured by subclause (3) of the bill, which states —

A licence or permit must not be amended to add or replace a firearm unless the Commissioner is satisfied that the licence or permit could be granted to apply to the additional or replacement firearm.

Essentially, it is supposed to be like for like. If people change the action, the magazine and the calibre, they might be breaching this subclause and have to relicence a new firearm.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Will guidance be provided in regulations, or will there be some sort of a policy? How far can people go? They cannot always replace something that was made in 1943 with something today because the exact equivalent might not be available. How flexible will this be, given that technology changes and what was a standard type of firearm 40 years ago might not be exactly the same as one today?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes, I acknowledge that some types of firearms may become obsolete but, essentially, the considerations will be calibre, function, action and magazine capacity, and if they change dramatically, the licence will not be considered under this part of the act.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Presumably, when people approach the commissioner for permission of any sort, all the authorities will have fee structures. Will the fee structures reflect the complexity of the task? For instance, applying for a first licence, a new use, or a new hunting licence on a property will require a degree of investigation and cost for the police force to go through the matters, and I imagine that would be reflected in the fee structure. Simply replacing or removing a firearm from a licence would seem to be a fairly straightforward matter, so will that be reflected in the fee structure, and when will that be known?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am informed that there will be a time-and-motion study once the legislation is established. Essentially the Leader of the Opposition is right: there is a cost-recovery system. We got to 100 per cent cost recovery in the last financial year, and that would be the normal practice. However, I would say that there is a caveat. We will go to a new system. Ideally, if it operates as intended, it will be a lot less intensive in human resources and manual activity than the current system.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I am curious about the explanation for subclause (4), which states —

A licence or permit must not be amended to remove a firearm ... to which the licence or permit applies ...

Why does that not apply to a club licence or range licence?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am informed, and this sounds reasonable, that a club or range licence is for clubs or ranges and not necessarily for firearms attached to them. It may not include firearms. They have to be able to do it.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Sorry, minister. I misunderstood. I thought it meant the club, which is able to hold a licence for firearms in its capacity as a firearm licence holder. It is not that licence; it is the licence of the club itself.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes—to be a certified club.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 190 to 192 put and passed.

Clause 193: Discretionary cancellation or refusal to renew —

Mr R.S. LOVE: This is the commissioner's discretionary cancellation or refusal to renewal power. I want to know what rights of review there will be for a person who has had a cancellation or refusal to renew under clause 193.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Any decision the commissioner makes is subject to review by the State Administrative Tribunal.

Mr R.S. LOVE: In that regard, is this no different from what we have at the moment or will it be different? Perhaps the minister could explain the differences.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The powers are essentially the same. It is a different clause, but that power is afforded to the commissioner right now and is subject to appeal to the SAT.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 194 to 204 put and passed.

Clause 205: Issue of licence card —

Ms L. METTAM: I refer to the proposed licence card. Has consideration been given to including the relevant information on a driver's licence for those who have one, rather than issuing a licence card?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Consideration has been given. The move towards that process will potentially be impeded by other parts of government not having the capacity to have a shared system. The cards that will be produced will be the same card stock as licences, so one day it could potentially transition to that sort of process, but at the moment it would not be possible because of legacy licensing systems and a lack of integration.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 1161.]

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

OMBUDSMAN — CORRUPTION AND CRIME COMMISSION INQUIRY — PREMIER'S OFFICE

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

It was revealed on Monday that jetsetting WA Ombudsman Chris Field was required to seek ministerial approval for leave as per his appointment terms for his round-the-world trips. Given that a Corruption and Crime Commission hearing had to be adjourned as Mr Field travelled to Uzbekistan just a few weeks ago, and the Premier's chief of staff had been made aware of the issue of his travel in October 2023, will the Premier please advise who is the responsible minister to whom Mr Field must seek approval, and why was this most recent leave allowed?

Point of Order

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I seek clarification on the appropriateness of the question. The officer the member is speaking of is accountable to the Parliament, and there is also currently a CCC investigation underway and we would not want any answers to unintentionally interfere with that investigation. I seek your advice, Madam Speaker.

Ruling by Speaker

The SPEAKER: When a question was raised previously on a matter in connection with the Ombudsman, I took some advice about the current CCC hearing. The CCC is not a court of law and Mr Field has not been charged with anything. It is just an investigative body; it is not sub judice as such so it is not precluded by our standing orders. I think the words I used previously were that people should use some caution with their language. The question itself does not fit the sub judice ruling.

The next question is whether it pertains to the Premier's portfolio areas because ministers can be asked questions about only their portfolios. Leaders of parties, as the Premier is, can be asked slightly broader questions. I will take further advice. I will see whether the Deputy Clerk wants to add anything.

As I was commenting, the matter is not sub judice as such, so that does not disallow the question. As I previously commented, ministers can be asked about their portfolio. Standing order 75 in chapter 12 states that questions to ministers and members may be asked of—

- (1) Ministers regarding matters under the Minister's administrative responsibility;
- (2) the Leader of a party in government regarding that party's policies;

The first footnote states —

Questions to Ministers should relate to public affairs with which they are connected, to proceedings pending in Parliament, and to matters of administration for which they are responsible, but not to matters arising from a Minister's actions as a private citizen ...

The Leader of the House is right: the Ombudsman is responsible to this Parliament. However, I think it is also arguable that it relates to public affairs that are connected with the Premier's role. I reiterate that my philosophy from having dealt with the police portfolio for many years is that, by and large, people should not prejudge things. The potential always exists for legal action of some form to be taken in a court of law at a later stage. Being mindful of that, I ask the Premier to respond to the question in the way he sees fit.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I thank the member for the question. Obviously, the Ombudsman is an independent officer of the Parliament. He is not accountable to the government and the government has no ability to direct the Ombudsman. I have no responsibility to investigate the actions of public authorities. We are aware of concerns that have been raised in relation to the Ombudsman and these matters are being referred to the CCC, and no doubt there will be some clarity in relation to those matters. As a result, it would be inappropriate for me to comment on the Ombudsman's actions. Indeed, we will see clarity brought forward on whether it is appropriate for the Ombudsman to seek leave or have authority to travel or otherwise. We expect all public officials to act with the highest integrity and in the best interests of Western Australians; that goes for anyone. We would like everyone who is in the service of the Western Australian public to behave in that manner.

OMBUDSMAN — CORRUPTION AND CRIME COMMISSION INQUIRY — PREMIER'S OFFICE

175. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. The question was that evidence had been given that Mr Field had to seek ministerial approval for leave. Who is the minister from whom he must seek that approval, and why was that approval given?

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

The SPEAKER: Deputy Premier, we do not need your interjections. These are matters currently under investigation by the CCC about which questions are being asked. I expect that, ultimately, the CCC will come to some findings and will give some recommendations that may well clarify things further. Again, Premier, I invite you to respond should you wish to do so.

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

We expect all public officials in Western Australia to conduct themselves with absolute integrity and in the best interests of Western Australia.

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr R.H. COOK: Madam Speaker, I can hear the ongoing interjections from the member opposite, so I want to make it very clear that the Ombudsman did not believe that he was required to seek my permission or permission from my office for leave for travel arrangements or other matters. These are the issues the Corruption and Crime Commission is clarifying.

HEALTH — INVESTMENT

176. Ms C.M. COLLINS to the Premier:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's commitment to provide high-quality accessible health services for Western Australians.

- (1) Can the Premier outline to the house how the Cook Labor government is creating quality healthcare facilities for future generations?
- (2) Can the Premier advise how the northern suburbs will benefit from this government's reforms and investment in our health system?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for the question. It is a great question, and it was terrific to have the member with us for an important announcement the other day. The WA Labor government has ensured that our health system is the best funded in the country. We have the highest per capita spending on hospitals of any state—15 per cent above the national average. Since 2017, we have boosted that annual funding by 33 per cent. At the same time, we have grown the health workforce by 30 per cent, including 4 000 additional nurses and 1 600 additional doctors. A significant proportion of our investment in health is in the growing northern suburbs of the metropolitan area.

I was pleased to be in Joondalup yesterday with my colleagues, in particular the Minister for Health, to mark another milestone towards improved health care in the northern suburbs. Yesterday, we confirmed that we will be extending the Ramsey Health Care contract at Joondalup Health Campus to continue running services until June 2043. The new agreement has been some time in the making, but it extends the Ramsey contract by a further 15 years, providing long-term stability for that healthcare service. We know that the right settings—that is, the appropriate mix of public and private health care—significantly improve the way that we provide health care in the community. The extension of the Ramsey contract will provide it with certainty into the future. It has enabled Ramsey, in turn, to make a \$190 million commitment to the upgrades to the private hospital, creating a new state-of-the-art operating theatre complex and a 55 per cent increase in bed capacity. This is in addition to the \$269 million investment that my government and the federal government have made in Joondalup hospital to continue to upgrade its services. That investment includes a new 112-bed public ward block, on which construction began in December last year. It will also link to the recently completed 102-bed mental health unit in Joondalup, which opened in August last year. Combined, these works will transition Joondalup Health Campus into one of the biggest health campuses in the state. It is a significant investment to make sure that our growing northern suburbs have access to world-class health care.

Joondalup is one snapshot of a much broader investment in our hospital system, which is more than just infrastructure and staffing. We have had major clinical reforms, including the WA virtual emergency department, the State Health Operations Centre and the patient transport coordination hub. Last year,

ambulance ramping reduced by 20 per cent compared with 2022, and it was down 44 per cent in December 2023 alone compared with December 2022. We are continuing to make the investments, to make the decisions and to grow our health system to make sure it continues to provide great health care, in this case, to the mums and dads and older Western Australians in the northern suburbs. We know that the population there will continue to grow and because of our investment and the great partnership with Ramsey Health Care, we will continue to make sure that health care in the northern suburbs is world-class for many years to come.

METHAMPHETAMINE — USE

177. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Police:

I refer to the comment by the minister's government that —

“Hardworking Western Australian families should not have to put up with crime linked to meth use and hard drugs. That's why we are not just talking tough—we are taking action which will make it tougher than ever for the drug dealers and pushers.”

If the minister is taking tough action, the number of drug-related offences should be going down. Why has drug dealing increased by 38 per cent over the past year?

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

I thank the member for her question. In the last financial year, so since July last year, the Western Australia Police Force has seized 314 kilograms of methylamphetamine and \$22 million of cash from organised criminals. The police are employing the powers that we gave them at the time of that media release to which the member referred, which includes the anti-consorting legislation; the subsequent fire and prohibition order, part of the amendment to the Firearms Act; the amendment to the Misuse of Drugs Act, which created permanent search areas; and other police powers that are far more extensive than at any time before now. The police are employing those powers to full effect. It is a challenge that does not just disappear. Organised criminals, by their nature, will be relentless in endeavouring to bring illicit drugs to this state, and methylamphetamine is the preferred drug in Western Australia, but the Western Australia Police Force is doing an exceptional job and it has been afforded all the resources necessary to undertake that task.

DRUG OFFENCES

178. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Police:

I have a supplementary question. Does the minister believe that a 16 per cent increase in total drug offences in 2023 is an acceptable outcome for the community?

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

The SPEAKER: Just before you answer, I am going to ask the member for Landsdale not to interject every time the Leader of the Liberal Party asks a question.

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please! I refer to the old saying: two wrongs do not make a right.

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

I thank the member. It is a fact that the threat of organised crime will not go away in a hurry. We are driven to provide the police with every power, resource and capability necessary to do their job as effectively as they can. It is undeniable that they are doing a pretty good job when they have seized 314 kilograms of meth in the last seven or eight months and \$22 million in cash, but that does not mean that the problem is solved or it is the end of the effort. We must focus at all times on whatever we can do to intercept the flow of drugs and disrupt the purveyors of harm on the community, who are, essentially, in Western Australia, outlaw motorcycle gangs. The drugs that are brought into the nation from overseas by triads, cartels and mafias are distributed in our state by predominantly those organised criminals or outlaw motorcycle gangs. The member and everyone else knows that we are focused on delivering as many powers to the police as necessary for them to disrupt that activity. They are doing a great job.

STATE ECONOMY — MANAGEMENT

179. Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE to the Treasurer:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's efforts over many years to grow and strengthen the Western Australian economy.

- (1) Can the Treasurer outline to the house how recent economic data demonstrates that Western Australia continues to be the powerhouse of the nation's economy?
- (2) Can the Treasurer advise the house whether she is aware of any recent commentary on this government's approach to economic management, including in relation to cost-of-living initiatives?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

(1)–(2) I thank the member for Thornlie for that question. As we know, the Western Australian economy continues to defy expectations and national trends by growing strongly across all the indicators on jobs growth, state final demand and exports. Nearly 50 per cent of all national exports come from Western Australia. Again, despite the many headwinds, in particular the interest rate increases, we still see consumption in WA continuing to grow and surpass the figures from the other states. Of course, business investment is another figure that continues to be much stronger than in other states. WA's state final demand grew by 4.7 per cent in annual average terms last year and is one of the strongest of all the states. Members, as we know, through COVID and since COVID, it has been the hardworking Western Australians who have been supporting the national economy and the national finances. The hardworking Western Australians in our resources sector and all industries are contributing to national economic growth and supporting the state, the national economy and, of course, the national bottom line.

We are investing across the state to support new developments, whether it be Covalent's Mt Holland mine that opened just two weeks ago or the new Bellevue Gold goldmine that opened just last week. In the north, initiatives like the Lumsden Point development will facilitate the expansion and diversification of the resources sector in the north west. These projects are underway in Western Australia to support the economic effort in not only WA, but nationally.

Members, we know that the other states, in particular South Australia, do not like the fact that we secured a better GST deal. I say this to some other states but in particular some national newspapers that continue to have a go at the fact that Western Australia's GST deal means that we will now be getting 75 per cent of our per capita share—not 100 per cent, but 75 per cent! That means we continue to contribute \$2.4 billion to the other states. In *The Australian Financial Review* this morning, we saw an attack on our cost-of-living payments to hardworking Western Australians, and the idea that somehow we should not be supporting Western Australians who are out there not only doing it tough, but also continually contributing to the national economy. The whole idea is that somehow just because we have a 75 per cent floor, we should not be subsidising Western Australians' cost of living. I want to say to other states and some national media that Western Australia continues to do more than its fair share to help support the national economy. Our GST floor of 75 per cent still sees us contributing \$2.5 billion to the other states. For the other states to say that they should not be supporting Western Australians' cost of living shows us how bad the Federation is getting if the other states and the national media cannot recognise the heavy lifting that Western Australia is doing.

We will continue to support economic development in this state. Western Australians continue to work hard to drive our national economy. We will continue to make sure that WA pays its way in the Federation. We more than pay our way; we subsidise the other states. When we want to support Western Australians with their cost of living, it is because Western Australians deserve it and they contribute to the state economy and the national economy. We will continue to support Western Australians in whatever way we can.

POLICE PROSECUTORS

180. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Minister for Police:

Last week the minister provided the response to one of my questions on notice, which indicated that Western Australia is currently operating with a deficit of over 28 full-time equivalent police prosecutors. In the midst of a crime crisis, is it in the interests of public safety to have police prosecutors operating with only 80 per cent of their staffing capacity?

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

I thank the Leader of the Opposition. The bottom line is that where individual police officers go, where they are assigned and the tasks they undertake is entirely the responsibility and at the behest of the Commissioner of Police. I do not get to tell the commissioner where to put his officers or what tasks they should be undertaking; that would be completely wrong. Whether there is a certain number or another number in police prosecutions, if the member has some concern with the way the commissioner is operating police prosecutions, that is up to him. It is his decision to criticise the commissioner for doing that, but I will not do that.

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

The SPEAKER: Minister, before you continue, the interjections are unruly and what you are interjecting is not an appropriate question because you are effectively asking the minister for an opinion, which is not allowed.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I would not pretend to be as knowledgeable as the police commissioner about where his officers should be posted and what tasks they should be given; I will leave that to him.

POLICE PROSECUTORS

181. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Minister for Police:

I have a supplementary question. Will the minister raise with the police commissioner the fact that there is understaffing in the police prosecutors role in his department at a time when we know the courts and crime situation are in crisis?

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

I will let the commissioner know that the Leader of the Opposition has undertaken this attack on him in the Parliament. Should he wish to read it in *Hansard*, he will be able to do that, and perhaps he can respond to him.

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS — INITIATIVES

182. Ms K.E. GIDDENS to the Minister for Housing:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's record \$2.6 billion investment in housing and homelessness initiatives.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house how this government is leveraging new innovative delivery methods to accelerate the delivery of new housing?
- (2) Can the minister update the house on the progress of this government's commitment to deliver 4 000 additional social homes?

Mr J.N. CAREY replied:

- (1)–(2) I want to thank the member for her question. Today I was out in Spearwood with Summit Homes Group. We were visiting the delivery of four tiny homes—very high-quality homes; one bedroom, one bathroom—that will provide secure housing for seniors. These were built offsite. They took 12 weeks to build. It demonstrates one of the ways that we are accelerating the delivery of social housing in Western Australia. There has been a lot of interest. Our reforms to cut red tape for granny flats will mean that this type of product is simply not just eligible for social housing, but will be embraced by Western Australians.

Of course, as the member said, it is part of our record investment—\$2.6 billion over four years to deliver 4 000 homes. I am pleased to report to Parliament that we reached an important milestone today. We have now delivered 2 014 social homes for Western Australians since our record investment. We have done that through a huge number of reforms. As I have said, we have created alternative delivery programs like modular, prefab, timber and spot purchasing. We have established statewide builders panels to pre-approve builders for work. We have created an \$80 million infrastructure development fund to support the cost of headworks and connections. We are unlocking lazy government land for community housing providers. We have provided around \$200 million for ongoing grants to the community housing sector and we are working on major renewal projects like North Beach, Subi East and Smith Street, which the previous government failed to do. We launched the unique supportive landlord model, which has already delivered 87 homes to assist 122 people sleeping rough to get off the street. We have passed nation-leading planning reforms. We are boosting homelessness services and funding 130 across Western Australia. We have introduced tax incentives for apartments and build-to-rent, including up-front 100 per cent stamp duty concessions for apartments, and we are regulating stronger short-term rental and incentivising more Airbnb back to the market.

I think I need a cigarette after that, and I do not smoke! That was a joke.

The point I am making is this: people are seeing our government taking unprecedented effort to boost housing supply, and it has been reflected in the results. There has been a 34 per cent increase in the last financial year in the number of people on the public housing waiting list being housed. On average, about 125 homes each month are being added or returned to the public housing system. So people are seeing that our record investment is delivering a clear boost to social housing in Western Australia.

YOUTH SUICIDE — UNIT 18, CASUARINA PRISON

183. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Minister for Corrective Services:

I refer to reports of a complaint made against a custodial officer at unit 18 for allegedly making ghost noises at the cell where 16-year-old Cleveland Dodd died, and additional reports that a probe has been launched into a separate incident of a prison guard joking about this tragedy. Can the minister confirm whether investigations are underway into both of these incidents and what disciplinary action, if any, has been taken against the officers in question?

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

Leader of the Opposition, any allegations of this type are always investigated.

YOUTH SUICIDE — UNIT 18, CASUARINA PRISON

184. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Minister for Corrective Services:

That is a very quick answer from the minister, so I have a supplementary question. It is clear that the culture in unit 18 is spiralling out of control. When will the minister take action to correct this toxic culture?

The SPEAKER: Minister, you can respond.

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

Thank you, Speaker.

Leader of the Opposition, that is an extraordinary link from referring to a couple of unsubstantiated third-party hearsay allegations that have been reported in one media outlet to a claim about unit 18 and some ongoing problem

with culture. I would suggest to the Leader of the Opposition that he should refrain from inserting himself into criticism of people based on hearsay allegations that have not yet been investigated. All allegations of the type to which the member refers are referred and will be investigated in the normal course of events.

INFANT, CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH TASKFORCE — RECOMMENDATIONS

185. Mr P. LILBURNE to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's commitment to improving mental health services for young people.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house how the \$46.6 million expansion of acute care and response teams, announced today, will support children and young people who are experiencing a mental health crisis?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house how this initiative will support the implementation of the recommendations from the infant, child and adolescent mental health taskforce report?

Ms A. SANDERSON replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for Carine for his question. As a former teacher, he will understand that there is significant pressure from young people and teenagers in particular on our mental health system. There has been a global increase in the experiencing of mental health issues by our young people. The infant, child and adolescent taskforce was established under the former health minister and current Premier. That group of very focused advocates, clinicians, people with lived experience and young people looked at how we could better deliver mental health services for children and adolescents. The report provided really clear guidance on a contemporary model of service and models of care for young people requiring mental health services. A key pillar of that report, and the strong message from families, parents and young people, is that families need more support in the community, they need more support to avoid hospital admission and they need more support at home and at school for their young person. Over the last two budgets, we have built the foundational supports of that reform. It is a 10-year reform program. Over the last two budgets, there has been around \$80 million of investment to support the growth of the workforce and development of the new models of care and to prepare the landscape for those new models of care.

I am very pleased to announce that, as part of this budget, \$46.6 million will be committed to expand the acute care resolution teams for children and young people across the entire metropolitan area as well as the great southern. This is a huge investment and reform that I am immensely proud of. This model of care will support children, young people and families when they are in crisis in a way that meets their needs. It will mean that if a family or young person is experiencing a crisis and calls a call line, presents to an emergency department, are at school or are an inpatient, this team will be mobile and can go to them. It can go to their family home. It will work extended hours—later on weekdays and on weekends. It will provide multidisciplinary support to help support young people experiencing suicidal ideation or thoughts of self-harm. It will give parents the supports that they need to have in place to support them and keep them safe. It is a safe model of care that has a huge amount of evidence around it. The last budget provided funding for a trial in the east metro area. We are going further in this budget by providing funding for the entire metropolitan area and the great southern. Some of the most pointed feedback from parents and young people about the child and adolescent mental health service was the hours of service. A nine-to-five service for community-based mental health does not meet the needs of those in crisis. Crises do not happen just in work hours; they happen at all hours. This will allow that service to expand its out-of-hours service and to be mobile as well. When a young person experiences a serious episode, the whole family is required to participate in the therapy. We treat the whole family unit. Parents have to work. Some have multiple jobs. Having a nine-to-five service is a serious barrier to access. This reform will remove that barrier. I am very proud to be part of a government that is supporting that.

We are also continuing the investment in CAMHS Crisis Connect, which was established a number of years ago under the current Premier. That phone crisis service supports families. Consultant psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers operate that phone service 24 hours a day. Parents can call that service if they are concerned about their young person and be provided with support, including through admission to an emergency department if required. This will avoid emergency department presentations. CAMHS Crisis Connect alone has reduced emergency presentations for mental health by 10 per cent by providing ongoing support. Inpatient mental health treatment in hospital should always be a last resort for children—always—as it familiarises them with that experience and is very traumatic for families. We need to do everything we can to prevent inpatient episodes, and that is exactly what these teams will do.

HAKEA PRISON — FIRES

186. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Minister for Corrective Services:

A fortnight ago, a 27-year-old man died in custody following a fire at Hakea Prison, one of nine fires over the last six months.

- (1) Can the minister confirm that Hakea Prison was 40 per cent understaffed at the time?

- (2) Is this understaffing ongoing; and, if so, to what level?
- (3) Did the understaffing impact on the timing of the response to the incident?

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

The member knows that a death in custody is subject to coronial inquiry. It would be just wrong to comment on the sort of questions that the member posed in that environment, so I am not going to.

HAKEA PRISON — FIRES

187. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Minister for Corrective Services:

I have a supplementary question. Does the minister consider that nine fires over six months is an acceptable situation at Hakea Prison?

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

What I can tell the member is that a lot of fires in prisons are lit by prisoners. That is a regular occurrence. It is not an unusual event. Is it acceptable? No; it is actually against the law. It is an offence to carry out that sort of act. They damage property and they can potentially harm themselves and other people. The practice is to always respond in accordance with the procedures that are employed in the prisons. However, it is not an unusual event. Prison officers train for this type of activity, by necessity, because it happens a lot.

COMMUNITY SPORTING AND RECREATION FACILITIES FUND

188. Mr H.T. JONES to the Minister for Sport and Recreation:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's support for community sport and recreation organisations across Western Australia.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house how this government's record investment in sporting infrastructure is transforming community facilities across the state?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house what these important projects mean for Western Australians?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN replied:

I thank the member for the question. I begin by wishing our Sheffield Shield team the very best as it commences defending its title, for the second year running, against Tasmania tomorrow. I wish the team the very best for that.

- (1)–(2) There has been a record amount of investment by this government in sport and recreation. The hugely enhanced community sporting and recreation facilities fund scheme has seen tremendous interest in continuing the Cook government's legacy of ensuring that we address the growing demand for sporting facilities by uplifting existing facilities and providing new change rooms and new lighting to cater for the continued increase in participation, including by lots and lots more girls and young women in sport. The member's question is very timely. I am very proud that only recently we delivered \$24.2 million to facilities infrastructure and lighting through the Club Night Lights program. What does this mean for communities? As members of this place know, when we invest in infrastructure—it can be a small amount or a large amount—we continue to validate the tremendous work of volunteers across the sporting sector and the tremendous effort they go to, week in and week out, to ensure that children and young people are able to take to the court and the field and be engaged in physical activity through sport.

The recent CSRFF outcomes have been great for all areas of Western Australia. Half of the 24 funded projects in the round that I just announced are in the regions. Regional Western Australia continues to be a great beneficiary of the CSRFF. I am proud of that. I am very proud of our members of Parliament, who continue to advocate strongly for their communities, community sporting organisations and community associations to make sure that those projects are funded. I want to highlight a couple of them because I think it is important that we understand what this money will do, and that was the aspect of the member's question. When we invest in club nightlights, for example, it means that they have greater capacity for training and greater capacity for games to be played under lights. It means that we can cater for increases, like the one we have seen of a 20 to 30 per cent increase in girls' and young women's participation, for example. We invest in change rooms so we can make sure there is absolute equity for girls and young women when they are playing AFL, soccer, hockey or whatever the code might be; that is, they have equal access to the provision of the facilities they need in order to participate.

I will very quickly run through them so members are aware of the scope of projects that have been funded. In the Shire of Murray, member for Murray–Wellington, there was over \$400 000 for the construction of a bowling green canopy at one of its bowling clubs. In the Shire of Chapman Valley, there is the Nebawa Recreation Centre redevelopment at nearly \$1 million. In the Shire of Denmark—I know that the member for Warren–Blackwood is a very strong advocate, one of the strongest advocates in this place—there is nearly \$700 000 for stage 1 of the skate park and multipurpose court. I know that will make a difference because the member for Warren–Blackwood has been telling me how important it will be for

the children and young people of her region. Well done, member for Warren–Blackwood, you have done a brilliant job in advocating for that. I turn to the Shire of Dumbleyung. We have this rubbish from the Nationals WA and the Liberal Party about nothing going to the regions. What a crock of rubbish, I might tell members. We recognise that all regions of Western Australia—all of them—deserve attention, and we have got them. An amount of \$1.6 million will go to the Shire of Dumbleyung for the reconstruction of its swimming pool. An amount of \$384 000 will go to the Shire of Kondinin for its sports pavilion. There will be \$1.2 million for the Shire of Katanning.

I tell you what, member for Roe, when you come out here next time, next time we have one of these debates, and you start saying nothing goes to the regions, mate, I am going to fling that back in your face, because you keep up the hollow words! But wait, there is more, and I will tell you about it, because I tell you what, these things are making and will make a huge difference.

There is \$1.3 million going to the City of Kalamunda for the Scott Pavilion Reserve. The City of Melville will get \$300 000 for the Southside BMX Club. An amount of \$1.2 million will go to the City of Melville for the Len Shearer Reserve. There will be over \$1 million for the City of Rockingham for new change rooms at Anniversary Park. At the City of Swan, the Baskerville Pavilion will get \$600 000. The City of Vincent will get \$861 000. The Shire of Beverley is another regional area; it is a great place and I know it well. It will get \$667 000 for the upgrade of its pool. The Shire of Bridgetown–Greenbushes will get \$700 000 for its golf clubhouse, which will be a community-purpose facility. Again, that dynamo, the member for Warren–Blackwood, from down there in the shire, is remarkable. But there is more! I know I am running out of time. I have mentioned that the Shire of Chapman Valley will get nearly \$1 million. The Town of Cambridge will get \$655 000. The Town of Victoria Park will get nearly \$1 million for the skate park and pump track at McCallum Park. Last night, we had the Parliamentary Friends of the AFL here, and I highlight that \$1 million will go to the West Australian Football Commission to partner in 52 change room projects across the Perth metropolitan area for AFL. We are doing this because we believe in sport and recreation, we believe in supporting children and young people, and we believe in supporting those many community organisations, those sporting organisations, both small and larger, because we know it makes a difference to the children and young people in the communities in which those projects are delivered. We will keep doing it. We have made record investments in the community sport and recreation facilities fund and we will keep doing it. We will keep making sure that those facilities are needed. I encourage members to celebrate what they have already achieved in their own communities and to keep the projects coming, because we know how important they are to their communities.

The SPEAKER: I believe we have had some very brief answers today, but no-one looks happier than the Minister for Education. Yesterday, he told me that he had the record for the longest answer this year. One day—that is how long his record lasted! The member for North West Central with the last question.

METHAMPHETAMINE — TREATMENT

189. Ms M. BEARD to the Premier:

I refer to calls for more investment in rehabilitation after another national wastewater drug monitoring report found that people in regional WA are the most prolific users of methamphetamine nationally. Does the Premier believe that an investment of \$377 million since 2017, including funding for treatment beds and community alcohol and drug services, is adequate to address the meth issues in Western Australia?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

Obviously, we always seek to assist those who are at risk of entering habitual drug-based lifestyles and assisting those who need assistance with their recovery. That is important right across the state, which is of course the reason that we have invested so heavily right across regional Western Australia and in the city for services that support people looking to get out of the insidious grip of drug addiction. It does not matter what drug it is, whether it is alcohol addiction or any illicit drug, we need to make sure that we continue to invest, and we do. We make sure that we get those services on the ground. It is not always easy, particularly in regional areas, where it is harder to engage organisations to make sure that we provide those opportunities, but we are up to that task and we continue to make the investments.

METHAMPHETAMINE — TREATMENT

190. Ms M. BEARD to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. Why does the government continue to under-provide services across regional WA? I refer to meth treatment and support, and ageing hospital facilities.

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

The fact of the matter is that there is almost one-third less meth presence in our community than when the Liberal–National government was in office. That is because we have done such a good job with our policing and our

social services to make sure that we do everything we can to educate the community about this stuff. Even though we had the peak of meth use in Western Australia back in 2016–17, when the Liberal–National government was in office, we have worked hard, including during the COVID period, to make sure that we have —

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please.

Mr R.H. COOK: It is one-third less than when the Liberal–National government was in office. That is the fact of the matter.

In addition, we have seen significant amounts of drug confiscations take place, as the Minister for Police said. We have had a significant reduction in the number of drug offences in Western Australia. There were almost 36 000 offences in the Liberal–National government’s last year in office and today that number is just over 24 000, so we continue to make improvements. But I do not resile or step away from the fact that there are difficulties associated with dealing with illicit drugs, particularly when addiction is involved. That is why we need to continue our proud record of investing in health services that assist people with rehabilitation.

The SPEAKER: Members, that concludes question time.

FIREARMS BILL 2024

Consideration in Detail

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

Clause 205: Issue of licence card —

Debate was interrupted after the clause had been partly considered.

Ms L. METTAM: Further to that question regarding the licence card, I asked about the driver’s licence and the minister said, “Not at this time”. Has consideration been given to an electronic licence card for use on a smartphone, for example?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes, it will be both. People will have the option of a digital card and licence and the option of a hard copy version as an alternative. But our licence will be digital.

Mr R.S. LOVE: To be clear, what will be the difference between the classic card that is already issued to licensed gun owners and the new licence?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The difference between the current system and the anticipated one is that they currently carry around a card and an extract of their licence with a receipt confirming that it has been paid for—they carry both those things—and the new hard copy card will have a QR code that will allow access to the new system. It will be a contemporary system with new technology on it.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I think the card at the moment carries similar authority to that of a driver’s licence in terms of the 100-point check.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes. I am informed that it will be commensurate, so the same level of points.

Ms M. BEARD: I want to clarify, if they have a digital licence, will that be through an app?

Mr P. PAPALIA: It will be embedded within the ServiceWA app. It is one of the functions of ServiceWA. As ServiceWA expands, there will be more and more licence types or authorities and things of that nature in the system, but it will be part of ServiceWA.

Ms M. BEARD: Will that app have live tracking capabilities?

Mr P. PAPALIA: No, it cannot; it is not a tracking application. It is digital licence. Other states have it. Many people in the firearms community here have been calling for one. It is not an extraordinary change. To get our system established and enabled is a big change.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 206 to 208 put and passed.

Clause 209: Surrender of physical licence card —

Ms L. METTAM: Under this clause —

- (2) A person who ceases to be a licensed person because of the expiry of the term of or cancellation of a relevant licence must as soon as practicable surrender a physical licence card issued to the person for the relevant licence to a police officer.

Penalty for this subsection: a fine of \$2 000.

Can the minister advise how the penalty was devised? Is it based on the 1973 act or similar penalties under that act or is it relevant to just this act?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Member for Vasse, I am informed that the penalty in the current act is \$1 000 and it will be \$2 000 under the new legislation. That is part of the graduated penalty regime of the legislation, so it fits into an appropriate penalty in that new regime.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 210 put and passed.

Clause 211: Offence of unlawful possession —

Mr R.S. LOVE: I was going to defer to the member for Vasse, but it does not matter. We were talking about graduated penalties in the legislation. We have come to the offences area. There is a whole bunch of offences and I am not going to go through every one of them, but of interest is the scaling of the penalties. For instance, in this clause, the penalty for a person who unlawfully possesses a firearm or firearm part is potentially “imprisonment for 5 years and a fine of \$60 000”. The summary conviction penalty is “imprisonment for 2 years and a fine of \$24 000”. I am again wondering about the mathematics of all this and where the modelling came from. It seems to be that we equate about every month of a person’s penalty with a fine of \$1 000. That seems to be the way it works—five years, 60 months, \$60 000; two years, 24 months, \$24 000. What caused this sort of correlation and why was this considered to be the appropriate penalty?

Mr P. PAPALIA: It aligns with provisions of the Sentencing Act, which is essentially \$1 000 for every month.

Mr R.S. LOVE: That is an excellent answer from the minister. It clears that one up. Can the minister explain whether these offences are roughly parallel to existing offences and whether there will be a significant increase in the fines or the imprisonment terms for like offences between the 1973 act and the 2024 act?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The Leader of the Opposition will be aware that a couple of years ago we did the last amendment that will ever happen with the Firearms Act and at that time we significantly increased penalties for a range of offences, including stealing a firearm, illegal discharge, 3D manufacturing and technology related penalties. The rest of the penalties are addressed in this legislation and the Leader of the Opposition will see that they are significant penalties, and with good reason. This addresses concerns that have been aired by a range of people that illegal firearms and unlicensed firearms represent a threat. We have increased the penalties to recognise that, and that was done across the board. It was done two years ago and it is continuing. We are focused on deterring illegal possession of firearms and unlicensed and inappropriate use of firearms, thereby addressing public safety concerns.

Mr R.S. LOVE: This provision relates to a discussion we had earlier about storage and someone who had possession of a firearm that became illegal, unbeknownst to them. In circumstances in which someone possesses a firearm that, for whatever reason, they have not renewed but it is an honest mistake, is there any defence for that or will they be summarily convicted and face a prison sentence of two years because they forgot to pay their rifle licence on time?

Mr P. PAPALIA: There is a range of defences in the Criminal Code, but police also exercise discretion with regard to whether they charge someone, subject to the circumstances and whether it is in the public interest to do so. As I indicated when we talked about that scenario earlier, the hypothetical person the Leader of the Opposition suggested might be in possession of a firearm but is not aware that it is unlawful will have a reasonable excuse. Essentially, what I said earlier was that if such an individual found themselves in that situation, they would be able to offer a reasonable excuse.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 212 put and passed.

Clause 213: Offence involving 3 or more firearms or major firearm parts —

Mr R.S. LOVE: I want to get an understanding of what this offence provision is really about. It refers to three or more firearms or major firearm parts. Clause 213 states —

A person commits a crime if the person unlawfully possesses 3 or more of any of the following things —

- (a) firearms;
- (b) major firearm parts for different firearms.

There is a very severe penalty of 10 years’ imprisonment. Can the minister give me an understanding of how we differentiate between possession of multiple firearm parts for different firearms versus parts for the same firearm? Why is there a specific provision for parts for a different firearm which, put together, actually would not make a firearm, whereas someone could have parts that, put together, could make a firearm? That would seem to me to be more of a serious matter.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Essentially, this refers to the offence of trafficking firearms. If you have parts —

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Trafficking. The member knows how, with drug-related offences, there is an amount above which someone is deemed to be trafficking as opposed to using. This is essentially that sort of provision. If there are firearm parts from different firearms, there is potentially the capacity to manufacture or put together three different firearms. That is the number at which this trafficking offence is set.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I think clause 248 deals with ammunition, so I will deal with that there, but going back to the three major firearm parts: are we saying that if someone has three parts for different firearms, the inference is that they have somewhere three firearms? Is that where we are coming from for that?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes, that is essentially it. If they have a part, they might have the other parts somewhere else and they can put a firearm together.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Why was the number three decided upon as being the trafficable number of guns, instead of two or 10?

Mr P. PAPALIA: That is the nationally agreed number.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 214 to 216 put and passed.

Clause 217: Unlawful use of firearm —

Ms L. METTAM: Clauses 217 to 298 detail offences under this legislation for various reasons. I am hoping the minister can advise how these penalties were arrived at, whether they are based on the 1973 act or are similar to other laws, or if they are new penalties; and, if so, what the basis is for them. I am not sure if the minister can do that in consideration of one clause, but can he capture the penalties that are outlined?

Mr P. PAPALIA: These penalties are part of a graduated scheme. They escalate commensurate with the nature of the offence and the threat to public safety. The previous ones related to possession; these relate to use, so the penalty is stepped up.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 218 to 247 put and passed.

Clause 248: Unauthorised possession of ammunition component for purpose of manufacturing ammunition —

Mr R.S. LOVE: I have to pick this up because, like the Minister for Police, my eyes are getting a bit tired. Clause 248 reads —

A person who possesses any component of ammunition for the purpose of manufacturing ammunition commits an offence unless the person is authorised by a licence to manufacture the ammunition.

The mere possession of a component of ammunition is not an infringement in this clause; therefore, how will this be judged? If a person goes to a range and picks up a handful of spent cartridge shells and takes them home, is that something that will lead to them potentially committing an offence—or do they need to show that they had a purpose in mind of manufacturing?

Mr P. PAPALIA: In answer to the last part, police will have to determine the purpose for which the person had those components.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I know a lot of clay target shooters reload their own ammunition and so forth. Do they need to have a licence for this?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Their licence will authorise them to do that. Providing they are acting in accordance with their licence authority, that is fine.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 249 to 253 put and passed.

Clause 254: Unauthorised possession of unassembled components of ammunition —

Mr R.S. LOVE: They are obviously very unpopular clauses! Clause 254 states —

A person who possesses the unassembled components of ammunition commits an offence unless the person is authorised by a licence to manufacture the ammunition.

In a previous clause we discussed the provision about possessing ammunition. In that case, a person needed to have an intent to manufacture ammunition. On this matter, there does not seem to be any intent provision; therefore, the mere possession of unassembled components of ammunition appears to commit an offence. That raises the view that if I have a bunch of used shotgun shells or whatever in my possession, that could lead to an offence being committed. Can the minister give me clarity on that matter?

Mr P. PAPALIA: This refers to ammunition that is not for the firearm for which a person is licensed. The authority to manufacture ammunition—a licence that authorises the use of a firearm by the licensee or an authorised person

for the licence—also authorises the licensee or authorised person to manufacture ammunition for use in that firearm. In this case the Leader of the Opposition is talking about ammunition that is not for his firearm. He is in possession of something that he will have to provide an explanation for—that is, why he is in possession of ammunition that is not for his licensed firearm.

Mr R.S. LOVE: For clarity, we have not got the ammunition; we have components of the ammunition. Basically, there are several components to ammunition. Some are common to various types of ammunition and some are specific to a calibre. How is that judged? If someone does not have a licence, they will not be able to have any explosive propellant in their possession at all. Is that a fact? Would they be able to possess any component of ammunition at all? Is that the situation?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am trying to get a grip on exactly where the Leader of the Opposition's concern resides. If he is talking about an unlicensed person being in possession of the components for the manufacture of ammunition—is that of concern? Yes; because, someone could potentially put together ammunition and employ that for use in an unlicensed firearm or provide it to a third party. That is of concern and a threat to public safety. It will not necessarily mean that someone will immediately be charged by police; they will investigate whether that person has justification for the possession of the items. If it can be demonstrated that the intended use is not unlawful, the police will have the capacity to exercise discretion.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I am trying to understand why there does not seem to be the same requirement to show that there is an intent to manufacture the ammunition, which is part of the earlier provision about possession of ammunition.

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is a slightly different focus. This is unauthorised possession of unassembled components of ammunition and a definition in clause 247, which we have gone past, states —

unassembled components of ammunition means sufficient of the components of ammunition to enable ammunition to be manufactured from those components.

In this case, it is talking about someone being in possession of a sufficient number of components of ammunition to enable ammunition to be manufactured from components in their possession. It is not a single element or a single component, but sufficient components to manufacture ammunition.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Does that mean the entirety of the components in an unassembled bundle?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 255: Unauthorised possession of unassembled components of prohibited ammunition —

Mr R.S. LOVE: This is the same type of situation; however, it deals with prohibited ammunition. We have gone past the clause dealing with the simple possession of a component of ammunition, which was a component of a round of ammunition. Let us examine a situation that was to put to me. A number of people possess ammunition components for memorabilia reasons; for example, a cannon of some sort or a very large ballistic shell that was found at the old bombing range et cetera is on a mantelpiece. I know they are not going to be unassembled components of prohibited ammunition because they need all of them. I missed the opportunity on an earlier clause, but I would like an answer for people who have asked me this question. Will it be illegal under the bill as it stands for people to possess a foot-long cannon shell—obviously empty—that they have displayed in their garage?

Mr P. PAPALIA: It would only be if there were sufficient of the unassembled components to manufacture ammunition. If all a person had was a cartridge from World War I or similar that had no other components that would enable them to compile a piece of ammunition, then, no.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 256 to 268 put and passed.

Clause 269: Prohibited alteration to firearm or major firearm part —

Mr R.S. LOVE: I have déjà vu; we spoke about this a couple of years ago. Clause 269(1) states —

For the purposes of this Division, an alteration to a firearm or major firearm part is a *prohibited alteration* if it is an alteration made without lawful excuse that alters any of the following features or parts of the firearm ...

What lawful excuse may there be if one were to alter any of the factors listed in paragraphs (a) to (g)? In particular, it has been raised with me that the stock length is an issue for some people because the length of people's arms varies. According to this clause, if one were to shorten the stock by a smaller amount so that it was more comfortable to use, or lengthen it with an additional pad, for example, that could be seen to be infringing this provision. We do not want someone to saw off the whole stock, but is a minor alteration to the length to make it more comfortable to the user allowed?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The firearm must go to a licensed repairer or manufacturer to effect a change of that nature. The member is right: if people do it themselves, they will breach the provision.

Mr R.S. LOVE: When licensing the firearm initially, is there a full description of the firearm to which that firearm must forever comply—for instance, that it has a barrel of X length and a stock of X length? Is that recorded somewhere? At any point, is there an inspection to see whether there could have been an alteration?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am informed that the identification of serviceability certificate that I referred to earlier that is necessary for the transfer of a firearm has that detail.

Mr R.S. LOVE: What about if someone changes the firearm by adding to it a shoulder strap? That might require the insertion of a pin in the stock or barrel to hang the strap. Would that be considered a prohibited alteration?

Mr P. PAPALIA: If someone could attach a strap without altering the physical structure of the firearm and did not drill into part of the firearm or attach a further component via a screw or something of that nature—if they just tied it on—that would be fine. Obviously, if they physically alter the firearm, that is something a licensed repairer or manufacturer should be called upon to do.

Mr R.S. LOVE: What about the alteration or replacement of a sight with a telescopic sight or anything of that nature—is that a prohibited alteration? If there is a telescope on the firearm when it is first licensed, does it have to remain with that particular scope forever?

Mr P. PAPALIA: No, member, one does not need to do the physical alteration I was referring to when replacing or attaching a scope; it either attaches or detaches.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Would the removal of an existing sight and the addition of a scope be allowed?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The Leader of the Opposition has just added a third word, sight, as opposed to putting on or removing a scope. If people want to physically alter a firearm through a mechanical process, they will be required to go to a licensed manufacturer or repairer for their own safety, apart from anything else, to ensure they comply with regulations.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 270 to 277 put and passed.

Clause 278: Unauthorised manufacture —

Mr R.S. LOVE: Division 10, “Other activities”, includes a host of things around repairs and manufacture. Clause 278(1) states —

A person who manufactures a firearm or related thing commits a crime unless the person is authorised to do so by a licence.

In the context of this clause, what would constitute a “related thing”? I know that related thing is defined; however, can the minister give me more definition of what that related thing might be under this provision?

Mr P. PAPALIA: “Related thing” means the following things —

- (a) a major firearm part;
- (b) ammunition;
- (c) a prohibited accessory.

Mr R.S. LOVE: What is a prohibited accessory defined as? The penalty for the manufacture of a firearm or related thing is a term of imprisonment of 14 years. Would the length of the imprisonment term that someone would face have any correlation to the nature of the related thing? It could be more closely aligned to producing a firearm than not? Can the minister give me an idea of what the expectation is in terms of the severity of some of the things he just read out if they are found to be in the manufacture of the firearm?

Mr P. PAPALIA: This is a response to the oft-cited need to focus on illegal firearms, the illegal use of firearms and those people who are outside the law doing harmful things and threatening the safety of the public. The court will be afforded that penalty and make a determination for each individual case.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 279 to 281 put and passed.

Clause 282: Terms used —

Mr R.S. LOVE: This clause relates to firearm technology and its dissemination. Under the term “disseminate” it states, in part —

- (b) make firearm technology available for access by electronic or other means by another person; or
- (c) enter into an arrangement with another person to do anything referred to in paragraph (a) or (b);

This is about sending firearm technology. Will this apply only in the state of Western Australia? If somebody sends technology to someone in Singapore or South Australia, will that be considered an offence, or will it only be an offence if Bill from Balga sends it to Betty in Beacon?

Mr P. PAPALIA: If an element of the offence occurs in Western Australia, a person will be prosecuted in Western Australia.

Mr R.S. LOVE: According to paragraph (c), it will be an offence if I —

enter into an arrangement with another person to do anything referred to in paragraph (a) or (b);

Does the minister mean that it will be an offence if I enter into an arrangement to receive that information?

Mr P. Papalia: Yes.

Mr R.S. LOVE: If I receive the information or even if I have entered into the arrangement, I am said to be disseminating rather than receiving the information, but I am a part of that network or arrangement. Is that right?

Mr P. PAPALIA: It will depend on whether a person is authorised to do that. If a person is not authorised to do it and they enter into an arrangement, it will be an offence.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I assume that this offence will prevent someone from producing a handmade firearm in the backyard or a workshop, or from using a programmed firearm manufacturing device to make a firearm. What is of concern is that some people will have an interest in the technology but do not intend to use it to make a firearm. Will it still be acceptable in some circumstances to transmit that information? For example, a student might be studying ballistics for an unrelated reason, but it will include the dissemination of some of that firearm technology referred to in this provision.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am informed that a person will be able to seek a licence or permit to authorise them to conduct that activity if it is a lawful activity. I am trying to find the provision under which authority can be sought, but I am told that that is the case. Clearly, the intent of this part of the bill is to focus on people who are acting unlawfully and the types of people who have, as I said, an oft-cited need to focus on unlicensed firearms and illegal and criminal behaviour. This provision and this act focuses on that by making more robust provisions around the licensing, possession and use of firearms.

Clause 100, “Approval for creation of firearm technology for repairer or manufacturer”, states —

- (1) The Commissioner may approve of a person nominated by the licensee under a Firearm Repair Licence or Firearm Manufacture Licence providing firearm technology to the licensee.
- (2) The approval results in the licence concerned authorising the approved person —
 - (a) to create and develop firearm technology on behalf of the licensee; and
 - (b) to be in possession of firearm technology so created or developed; and
 - (c) to disseminate to the licensee firearm technology so created or developed.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Thank you for that explanation. I now refer to obsolete technology. If a person is sent drawings of a cannon from a Spanish galleon that dates back to the 1500s, will that be considered to be firearm technology under this bill or will it be considered to be historical memorabilia?

Mr P. PAPALIA: It will depend upon whether that technology is sufficient for a person to manufacture and operate the cannon as a firearm. Essentially, it is firearm technology that a person could potentially use to create a firearm. However, as we have indicated, that person will have an opportunity to seek a licence or a permit to authorise them to be in possession of that material or to carry out a task if it is lawful.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Will the clause 18 provisions around antique firearms not necessarily exempt that technology from the clause 282 provisions?

Mr P. PAPALIA: It will depend on the cannon in question, because cannons are not necessarily antiques. I am informed that the police licence cannons to this day for yacht clubs, for instance.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I refer to the definition of the terms used, which states, in part —

programmed firearm manufacturing device means any machine, equipment or other device that is programmed, configured or otherwise enabled to manufacture or repair, or to carry out a step in the manufacture or repair of, a firearm or related thing or a component of a firearm or related thing.

For instance, I am thinking of the production of a wooden stock for a rifle. Plenty of cabinet-making machinery and other things could probably easily be programmed to produce that stock; one could just put in a plan and off it goes. I know we spoke about 3D being a specific thing, but there is also the situation of someone who has metalworking equipment—a lathe and other equipment—that could easily be used to make firearm components.

How do we determine that something can be used in that way as opposed to something that is enabled? The device has to be enabled to manufacture or repair; it does not have to do it. I suggest that a lot of equipment is able to be involved in manufacture and repair, but there is probably no intention to ever do so. We cannot really rule out people possessing half the manufacturing equipment in the state.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Leader of the Opposition, it is about being enabled to manufacture. Clearly, if the device is programmed to manufacture a firearm component, it will be in breach of this part of the bill. It is not whether it is capable; it is whether it is attached to a device or part of the device is programmed and is clearly capable of producing that component.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 283: Unauthorised possession of firearm technology —

Mr R.S. LOVE: Clause 283, “Unauthorised possession of firearm technology”, states —

A person who possesses firearm technology commits a crime unless the person —

- (a) is authorised to do so by a licence or permit; or
- (b) does so for a lawful purpose.

We have just had a discussion about the dissemination of technology and who may or may not be able to get it, and people may need a permit to disseminate it. If people hold that technology for a lawful purpose and they do not commit a crime, does this clause relate to only those people who are registered as manufacturers or repairers of firearms or are there other lawful purposes for which people could hold that information?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Essentially, this clause refers to the unauthorised possession of firearm technology. It would not apply to a manufacturer or repairer who is licensed and authorised to conduct that task and possess that technology. It obviously does not mean that someone who is in possession of a normal operator’s manual on how to operate that firearm would be in breach of the law. That is not what this clause relates to. It relates to the unauthorised possession of firearm technology. Someone would commit a crime if they breach that offence.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I am not sure I got to the basis of the other lawful purposes. People have a manual for their —

Mr P. Papalia: That is not what I said. I very clearly said that that is not related to this.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Yes, that is lawful but it does not come under the definition of “firearm technology”. “Firearm technology” means that someone can actually use it to develop a firearm.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I will give examples of what it is referring to. Someone might be conducting research, which they are authorised to conduct. Therefore, they will be in lawful possession of that technology, but if they are not authorised, it is unlawful.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I am not sure that gets to the nub of what I am asking. The minister is saying that someone has to be authorised by a licence or a permit, but the bill states “or does so for a lawful purpose”. What is the lawful purpose?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I gave the member the example of conducting research. I am also informed that the DPP or prosecutors might be in possession of that technology for an authorised reason, being conducting a prosecution or something of that nature.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 284 to 299 put and passed.

Clause 300: Approval of storage places by Commissioner —

Mr R.S. LOVE: This clause relates to security and security arrangements. We have been told many times that storage is a problem because some of the containers are not up to the mark, but I understand that all the ones that are sold in Western Australia are police approved. Is the minister aware that that is the case? If we go to Bunnings and buy a Chinese-made gun safe, will it comply with the current storage requirements of the WA Police Force?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Obviously, if someone is using a safe that does not comply with the current regulations, they are committing an offence. Depending upon which cabinet the member is referring to, it either complies or it does not. At the moment, the storage obligations are not that onerous. A range of people have recommended that they be made more demanding in the interests of public safety.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I refer to this new regime for security and storage. Clause 300, “Approval of storage places by Commissioner”, states —

- (1) The Commissioner may approve a place as an approved storage place for a firearm or related thing.
- (2) The Commissioner may approve a place as an approved storage place under subsection (1) without the need for an application for that approval.

How could something be approved without there being an application unless this clause simply refers to transferring existing approvals over to the new act? Is that what it refers to?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Essentially, yes. We will ensure that current powers available to the commissioner are in this new act.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Could I get an idea of the approval process that will be undertaken under this new regime compared with what happens at the moment? I understand that at the moment someone takes a photograph of the storage cabinet and the bolts that retain it. They then take a photograph of it in situ from further away to show where it is placed in the house, cupboard, shed or wherever it might be. Can the minister explain what the process will be under this regime for the approval of that storage thing? Will there be an inspection on site by an officer? What will happen?

Mr P. PAPALIA: This is not the place to talk about that subject. That would be in debate on clause 304. This clause is about a location, and the Leader of the Opposition is talking about the type of cabinet.

Mr R.S. Love: That is what I am talking about.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The Leader of the Opposition is talking about cabinet and storage requirements as opposed to a location. I think where the Leader of the Opposition's interest lies and the sort of question he is asking is more appropriately dealt with in debate on clause 304.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I thank the minister for the instruction, but if he goes through what I said, he will see that I said a photograph is taken of the cabinet, but then a photograph of its position in the building or the premises is taken, so we are talking about a location. How will the location be assessed? For instance, will a farm shed, a garage, a home office or a factory warehouse be an acceptable location? I am trying to get an understanding of where the components of the storage will be.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Under this clause, evidence of suitable compliance of the location will be required. That may result in a request for information about geolocation and potentially photographs or other information as required to give the police comfort that that place is suitable. The storage is dealt with later in the legislation.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I am trying to get to the bottom of the issue of location. What will the parameters be for the decision of whether a location is suitable? I gave the minister the idea that he could perhaps talk about farm sheds, but I will ask directly. Would a farm shed, for instance, ever be acceptable as a storage location? Would an unoccupied building be acceptable as a storage location? Would a suburban home be acceptable as a storage location? Would a garage be acceptable as a storage location? Would a back verandah be acceptable? Can the minister give me some idea about what is considered an acceptable location for storage?

Mr P. PAPALIA: All that is done is that a range of further questions is elicited. Whether the location is a shed, house or other type of building is the manner of questions generated. There will be questions about the nature of the construction of the walls. What is the floor? Is it a concrete floor? Questions will deal with access and proximity to other buildings. There could possibly be a never-ending list of different types of questions generated. Without knowing the specific location being referred to, it is difficult to speculate about exactly the type of questions that will be generated.

The process for storage regulations will be worked on as part of the collaboration and consultation with different peak bodies and individuals. That will happen in the same way I referred to last night about how regulations governing minimum practice requirements should be developed in conjunction with a pistol association for the pistol community, a rifle association for the rifle community or a clay target shooters association for clay target club members. Those sorts of details can be worked on and developed in conjunction with police as we develop the regulations.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Will the government talk to groups that represent licence holders such as the Sporting Shooters' Association, the Western Australian Firearms Community Alliance et cetera? Will they be included, or will it only be with groups that minister just mentioned? This is beyond simple discussion about the type of storage unit. I am trying to understand what location will be considered suitable. It might perhaps be of value if the minister were to explain whether suitable locations will be radically different from the current situation and what changes there will be to the current location requirements.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes, it will be different than the current regime because it has been deemed unsuitable by all the people to whom the member referred. Just for information, the pistol, clay target shooters and rifle associations are part of WAFCA, so WAFCA is more than the Sporting Shooters' Association. The WA Firearms Traders Association is also part of that organisation. Those organisations meet with police. As I have indicated throughout our discussion, they have been meeting almost weekly for probably the better half of the last 18 months. They brought to police an example of a safe type that they advocate should be employed as a standard. There will be different requirements, depending upon whether a building is occupied, unoccupied, and it will be subject to security systems in place. Those things will impact on the suitability of a location and the nature of the security that might be required. The number and type of firearms in a location will also influence the requirements.

Regarding the nature of the regulation for storage, the South Australian law was the most recently rewritten, and it established a regime that many in the firearms community are familiar with. That will give a steer on the type of regulations we will end up going with. It may not have the same specific tiering or requirements around numbers, for instance, or types of firearms and locations, but the cascading demands for additional security subject to the number and type of firearms, their location and whether the building is occupied—the things in the South Australian

system—are probably a steer on where we will head. Of course, the people the Leader of the Opposition is concerned about will all be, and have been, part of consultation since the outset. They will continue to be part of consultations, particularly when developing regulations for storage.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 1190.]

METHAMPHETAMINE — USE

Motion

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

That this house condemns the Cook Labor government for failing to stem the tide of methamphetamine use in Western Australia, which is made worse by its dangerous inability to manage policing and public health systems.

There is considerable community concern about the effects and impact of methamphetamine use in Western Australia. It is astounding that, in 2024, drug use continues to soar despite claims by the Cook Labor government that it is tackling this issue head-on. After seven Labor budgets and the methamphetamine action plan, with \$377 million allocated to combat methamphetamine usage, WA still experiences the highest average regional consumption of meth in Australia. Our meth consumption rate has surged by 40 per cent over the past 12 months. It is the biggest increase in the country over that period. The latest results from the national wastewater drug monitoring program have revealed that 1.3 tonnes of the drug were consumed in WA in 2022–23, which is up from 944 kilograms the previous year. That is a clear indication that the Cook government has its head in the sand on this issue or that this government does not know what it is doing.

I think it is important to remind members of this place that in 2017 this government apparently had a plan. But before it was a government with a plan, it was an opposition that had expressed outrage over the extent of the meth problem in Western Australia. You may remember, Acting Speaker (Mrs M.R. Marshall), even though you were not a member of Parliament at that time, that the former shadow Minister for Police in this place expressed total outrage at an Australian Institute of Criminology study that had found that 21 per cent of detainees in the East Perth lock-up had tested positive for meth use. I quote the shadow Minister for Police at that time. The shadow for police stated the figure is huge and, further, stated —

Wakey-wakey! Where has this government been for the last eight years? Where has it been and what has it done?

That is a former Labor shadow minister. The Australian Institute of Criminology repeated that study in 2021, four years after this government had come to power, and the figure was 48 per cent, when apparently 21 per cent was huge.

In 2017, in response to the pressing issue of methamphetamine use—that was when one in five detainees in the East Perth lock-up was testing positive to meth, as opposed to now, when nearly one in two is testing positive—WA Labor carried on about a comprehensive methamphetamine plan spanning 10 detailed pages. The Premier, with firm conviction, declared that this plan was the most exhaustive and most far-reaching strategy ever unveiled in Western Australia to tackle methamphetamine abuse. Labor told anyone who would listen that this action plan stated that reducing the level of methamphetamine use in the community would be one of the KPIs that the new government would be measured on. It raises the question about how that KPI is going. I think the Australian Institute of Criminology's figures answer that fairly succinctly.

Let us look at some of the comments from the government about what it believes it has accomplished, as it is quite different from what the media and the community are saying. I refer to the comments of the Premier on 13 March 2024, when he said —

... overall, we have seen a dramatic reduction. Sure, meth usage continues to grow as a result of the fact that we continue to have the fastest growing population in the country. Of course, as we move into a post-COVID period we can see an uptick, but we can also see WA Labor's—my government's—laws in action, putting significant downward pressure on meth usage, which has always been lower than when you were in government. As a result of that, Western Australians are much safer.

The former Minister for Police in November 2020 stated —

The fact of the matter is that on 29 October the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission released its national wastewater results. As people may know, the ACIC takes results from seven sites in Western Australia, three metropolitan and four regional. I can say to the house that based on those wastewater results, the consumption of methamphetamine in our community is the lowest on record. The reduction in meth consumption equates to over 290 000 fewer doses per day since the peak in 2016. That is around 93 000 fewer doses per day than there were in December 2019.

That last quote is interesting as it clearly demonstrates that the government has claimed that the reduction in meth usage came from one factor that was completely out of their control. That was the outbreak of the COVID pandemic in 2020, which brought about unprecedented changes to the way in which we live our lives. The implementation of some strict COVID restrictions had an obvious and significant impact. The closures of national and interstate borders led to a decrease in the supply of drugs, particularly those that are imported from other countries. With restrictions in place, obviously, it became increasingly challenging for drug traffickers to smuggle illegal substances across our borders. Was it the work of great policy from government that delivered such a positive outcome? No, it was simply a positive effect that occurred in dealing with the pandemic. It is essential to acknowledge that, although the reduction in methamphetamine usage during this period was a welcome development, it is not indicative of a comprehensive solution to the underlying issues of addiction and substance abuse, which are very concerning across the WA community. Unsurprisingly, given that the government had not done anything to deal with meth usage, a significant increase over the last 12 months in particular in meth and drug consumption has occurred since the state's borders have reopened at the end of the pandemic.

Let us now run through a few of the headlines since that time to get an accurate understanding of the extent of the problems and how the media has viewed them. An article in *WAtoday* of 30 June 2022 with the headline "The west reigns for meth as testing unveils states' drugs of choice" states —

Australia has topped a list of 25 countries for methamphetamine use uncovered through wastewater testing, with Western Australia leading the nation for the highest average capital city consumption of the drug.

An article in *The West Australian* of 12 July 2023 with the headline "WA using more meth than anywhere in Australia—with the regions hitting the pipe hardest" reads —

Western Australia is consuming more meth than any other part of the country—with addicts in the state's regions the biggest users of all.

An article in *The West Australian* of 12 March 2024 with the headline "ACIC report reveals West Aussies among the biggest meth users in the nation" states —

Meth consumption in regional WA is among the highest in the nation. The alarming find, contained in a new report from the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission, has prompted fears the State is being flooded with high levels of the drug not seen since before the COVID pandemic.

At this point, it is important to note that the national wastewater drug monitoring program is an essential tool for authorities in Australia to understand drug-use patterns in different regions. The program takes samples from unidentified wastewater plants across the country to determine which drugs are being consumed and how much is being taken and where. The most recent report from the program reveals a significant surge in methamphetamine use here in Western Australia, marking the largest increase among all states and territories in Australia. This increase in methamphetamine consumption has been attributed to the previous slowdown in its importation caused by the pandemic-induced border closures. Over the past year alone, methamphetamine use has surged by an alarming 40 per cent, while cocaine consumption has seen a staggering 55 per cent rise.

What is more concerning, however, is that the unveiling of these latest statistics follows the implementation of 22 new permanent search areas by the Western Australian government. These areas are strategically placed around airports, ports and various road and rail border crossings into the state and were introduced by drawing inspiration from the successful COVID-19 border closures. The objective of these measures was to intensify efforts against drug trafficking and make it increasingly difficult for organised crime syndicates to smuggle drugs into Western Australia. Our former Premier Mark McGowan emphasised the necessity of these measures, stating that they would heighten the barriers against the illicit drug trade in the region. However, despite proactive steps taken by the government, the newly released data paints a concerning picture. Methamphetamine use in Western Australia has reached its highest point in four years, indicating a persistent challenge despite enforcement efforts. This is coupled with a troubling trend of increased cocaine usage; it has tripled since the initiation of data collection in 2016. Answers to parliamentary questions also indicate that laws to give police power to conduct regular drug searches at these 22 entry points into our state have failed to make any dent at all in consumption.

At the time of the introduction of these measures, the former Premier stated —

We know there is a direct link between meth and violent crime in our community. That's why my Government has put more police on the streets than ever before, and why we continue to give our hard-working officers what they need to keep our community safe. This new law is going to make it tougher than ever for organised crime to bring drugs into Western Australia. Hardworking Western Australian families should not have to put up with crime linked to meth use and hard drugs. That's why we are not just talking tough—we are taking action which will make it tougher than ever for the drug dealers and pushers.

I referred to that quote in question time today. The government had to admit last week that only five grams of cannabis had been found after 70 border search area, BSA, searches over the eight months covered by the wastewater monitoring program—just five grams of cannabis.

The ramifications of this upsurge in drug use are profound and far reaching. Methamphetamine, often referred to as “meth” or “ice”, exacts a heavy toll on individuals, both physically and mentally. It is highly addictive as a substance and ravages lives. We have heard much from our frontline officers about what they have to deal with when it comes to those affected by meth. Beyond the individual level, it is quite clear that the effects are significant and extend to increased crime rates, strained health systems and a burden on law enforcement resources. It is a significant burden on our frontline officers as well. The impact of methamphetamine abuse extends beyond statistics; it manifests in human suffering, shattered families and communities grappling with addiction fallout.

We know that behind every statistic is a tragic story of pain, loss, hopelessness and neglect. This is highlighted in stories of violent crime that result from meth usage in our community. These include Manning Lee Fahey, who was only 19 years old when he and other alleged accomplices broke into four separate homes in the middle of the night and subjected occupants to terrifying attacks—holding guns, tomahawks and an axe to threaten them while demanding cash, electronics and jewellery. The now 21-year-old admitted his involvement and told police some of the assaults were carried out with his drug dealer to repay a drug debt he had accrued after a several-month meth binge.

Glen Miller is another example. He was having a “rest” from his regular multi-day drug binging in 2021 when he went to his best friend’s house and murdered him in a meth-fuelled psychosis, believing the victim was selling illicit substances to teenagers and had “lost his moral compass”. In fact, members, 22 986 drug-related offences were recorded last year, an increase of 16 per cent on the year before.

Addressing the scourge of methamphetamine abuse requires a multifaceted approach—one that encompasses prevention, treatment and enforcement. We must invest in education and outreach programs aimed at preventing substance abuse before it takes root. Equally important is ensuring access to quality treatment and rehabilitation services for those who are battling addiction. Offering them a pathway to recovery is absolutely essential. The earlier that that can be provided, the better; it is vitally important.

The absence of any substantive action by this government to address methamphetamine usage underscores the need for a holistic approach that encompasses prevention, treatment and rehabilitation efforts. Merely relying on external factors or temporary disruptions to curb drug consumption is insufficient for effecting lasting change. The devastating effects of drug addiction are felt by countless families around WA. Every day we hear heart-wrenching stories of parents, siblings and spouses who are desperately seeking help to deal with loved ones who have fallen prey to this insidious drug.

We know that addiction is a complex disease that affects not only individuals but also their family and friends. It can tear families apart, leaving them feeling helpless and hopeless as they watch their loved ones spiral out of control. The toll that addiction takes on families is immeasurable, with many experiencing financial strain, emotional distress and even physical harm. Despite the challenges, families continue to reach out for help, determined to support their loved ones on their journey to recovery. They seek out treatment programs, support programs and counselling services. Like many members of this house, I have heard from desperate families seeking help on behalf of their loved ones.

This includes parents like Murray Kinnane, who has given a voice to the suffering of many parents in this state—the suffering and frustration of the many Western Australians who wrestle with the trauma of having a child addicted to methamphetamine. In 2018 Murray, stated, according to my notes —

No one cares about drug addict rehabilitation in Perth. The system is designed to handball them from one department to another and then give them back to the parents.

Murray’s son Jaxon tried voluntary rehabilitation at least 15 times; unfortunately, all attempts failed. As soon as the initial crisis was over, Jaxon, like so many addicts, left rehab to feed his habit. Tragically, Jaxon lost his battle with meth in 2020. Following this, Murray simply stated, according to my notes —

There is hope for others, like Jaxon, if the health system is adequately resourced and individual’s needs are recognised and acted upon appropriately.

But the road to recovery is never easy, and families often face many obstacles along the way. They encounter resistance from their loved ones, struggle to find the right treatment options, and often experience a number of setbacks and relapses on that path. Despite these challenges, they remain steadfast in their commitment to support their loved ones.

Unfortunately, organisations tasked with helping families are not receiving the support they deserve and need from the government. Doors Wide Open, a not-for-profit organisation based in Bunbury that supports people struggling with drugs, has called for more investment in rehabilitation. Acting manager Michelle Holzkecht said that more funding was needed to help those grappling with addiction and more beds are needed for rehab centres. A lot of people coming to Doors Wide Open are simply trying to find out how to get into rehab, but excessive wait times make this task impossible; people cannot just make an appointment and go in. Ms Holzkecht has said that it is crucial to be able to provide support to people as soon as they reach out.

She stated, according to my notes —

If you don't act, when they're ready to go to rehab, we find that a lot will just go back and hide until they're ready again.

Another mother, in what was once dubbed Western Australia's methamphetamine capital, Kalgoorlie, fears that her son and others could lose their lives to this destructive drug before they even turn 18. She is calling for more specialised youth residential services in regional areas.

The Cook Labor government's claim that meth usage has gone down under its administration is farcical. Despite the government's attempt to paint a rosy picture, the reality is that meth usage has only increased in recent years. The alarming rise of meth usage has become a cause for concern among lawmakers, health officials and the public alike. The use of methamphetamine, a highly addictive stimulant drug, is on the rise, and the significant increase in the last 12 months is deeply concerning. The drug is cheap and easily accessible, which has contributed to its widespread use. The Cook Labor government's claim that it has been able to curb meth usage is nothing but a political response to the COVID border, but since then we have seen a methamphetamine action plan that is clearly not working.

The devastating effects of meth addiction are well documented. Meth use can cause severe physical and psychological harm, and it can be incredibly difficult to overcome addiction. The government's failure to properly address the issue of meth addiction is not only putting the health and wellbeing of its citizens at risk, but also contributing to the rise of other social problems, such as crime, homelessness and issues around child protection. It is high time for the Cook Labor government to stop making false claims, take real action to combat this epidemic and take these issues seriously. We have the highest rate in regional Western Australia, and a 40 per cent rise as well. We seek a comprehensive approach that includes increased funding for addiction treatment programs, better education and prevention initiatives, and a stronger law enforcement approach to help crack down on meth production and distribution.

Only through a concerted effort can we hope to make a real difference in this fight against meth addiction. I have touched on a few families, but there are many right across Western Australia who are being rocked by addiction to this substance. It also has an impact on our frontline public sector officers. The Premier has either forgotten about the meth action plan or he simply does not care about our community, which has been so significantly impacted by what is happening on our streets. It is quite apparent his government has failed to meet its own meth reduction key performance indicators.

I appreciate that other members would like to speak to this motion, so I will leave my comments there. The Leader of the Opposition and my colleagues will now contribute to this debate. Thank you, Acting Speaker.

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Leader of the Opposition) [4.28 pm]: I congratulate you, Acting Speaker (Mrs M.R. Marshall), on your new role; I think it is the first time I have been in the chamber while you have been in control, so well done. I also thank the member for Vasse for moving this motion —

That this house condemns the Cook Labor government for failing to stem the tide of methamphetamine use in Western Australia, made worse by its dangerous inability to manage policing and public health systems.

Before I talk about the motion, I thought that the disregard that the Minister for Police has for some of the issues in his portfolios was starkly illustrated in question time. He did not want to take responsibility for the fact that we have 28 police prosecutor roles that are not filled. His response was, "Well, it is down to the police commissioner to determine the priorities." I would have thought that if resources were made available to the police commissioner, then he would have the full complement of police prosecutors. People who work in that role have told me that they are inundated with work and are under enormous pressure; they feel unsupported and they do not feel that they have the necessary number of people to get the work done.

Mr P. Papalia: When?

Mr R.S. LOVE: I am not going to tell you who I am talking to.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I asked, "When?"

Mr R.S. LOVE: In the last month or so—not very long. Not years ago, minister! I am not going to say who was talking to me because I do not think that is fair to them.

Another portfolio for which he has control was illustrated in question time, and the member for Central Wheatbelt asked a question about the situation at Hakea Prison. Again, the response was a dismissal. The response was, "There is nothing to see here; everything is fine." There was a super-short reply to my question about the shocking situation that has emerged in the youth justice system, with allegations I outlined around the tragedy of the death of Cleveland Dodd and similar situations. There was not a blip from the minister. He did not take the opportunity to come out strongly and rule out the culture that should not be in the organisation for which he has administrative responsibility. He did not take that opportunity, which I think is indicative of someone who is disconnecting from the tasks. It is clear that he has not been able to achieve his targets in police. I know the member for Cottesloe will

probably say more about that later on. We know that the recruitment targets, which we have been promised for so long, shifted before the weekend. Of course, we never saw the result get to the point that he had promised. Now, that target is gone; however, we know that the rise of crime and methamphetamine continues.

We heard in this place that the methamphetamine situation settled down somewhat during COVID, when there was less opportunity for its importation into the state. Even at that point, in May 2021, there were reports in the press around a methamphetamine surge, which was ravaging the Kimberley and regional Western Australia. That was at a time when we were still inundated with COVID. If there was a reduction in the amount coming into the state, it was not having an effect in some of our regional areas.

Now, we understand that methamphetamine is coming in in greater numbers. We know that testing is being done. Last week the annual Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission's *National wastewater drug monitoring program: Report 21* was released, which showed the levels of meth use in Western Australia were up 40 per cent from the previous year. That is a fact. That is the figure released from the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission.

Incredibly, though, we heard the Labor government try to convince the house that meth use had somehow not increased to that level; in fact, I think some had indicated that it had gone down. "Nothing to see! There is no problem!" That is not what we are hearing across the state. The member for Vasse outlined that there was great concern around meth and rising crime; there is rising violence around our hospitals and, of course, we know that there is a rising trend of shocking criminal and violent behaviour in Western Australia, in a way that we would not have expected a decade ago.

What we have seen under this government is community violence issues getting out of hand in line with a rise in the use of methamphetamine. There is no doubt that there is a link between violence and the prevalence of drugs, especially those drugs in the community. Every community feels that—I am sure. I am sure there are many city areas in which the situation is obvious, and it is also not always so obvious. I know communities in which there are people who think it is okay to use meth recreationally, but that is a one-way ticket to a very sticky end. Although, at this stage they may not be exhibiting violent behaviour, they are on a path towards that. Unfortunately, in some of the communities that I represent, that is becoming quite a common phenomenon. That is something of great concern.

We know that the often-lambasted previous government, the Liberal–National government, launched the Western Australia methamphetamine strategy, and that strategy outlined a two-pronged approach to the methamphetamine crisis. It targeted the supply chain by strengthening law-enforcement measures to reduce the production, importation and distribution of meth. It also played a part in reducing demand for the drug through early intervention programs and individual and community support.

In 2015, dedicated police meth transport teams were formed to target supply routes in Western Australia. It was part of the state government's wider enforcement plan, which the then Commissioner of Police, Karl O'Callaghan, called, "The greatest effort on one single drug we've ever had as WA Police". This led to increasing tonnages of the drug being seized, year on year. According to the Mental Health Commission website, the use of methamphetamine in Western Australia has declined from 4.2 per cent of the population in 2007, under the Carpenter Labor government, to 2.7 per cent in 2016.

That is a measurable impact and a measurable result. I wonder what the Labor party is doing about the methamphetamine action plan it introduced, and where that is at the moment. What are the performance indicators that it is measured against? Where is that reported and what is being done to correct things if the forecast targets are not met? I could ask how that plan stacks up against the background of the figures we see from the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission. It is not a good key performance indicator when we see a 40 per cent rise in the prevalence of meth through the wastewater program. We know that regional WA is particularly affected, and I am sure there are many communities where there is not a testing program because there is not a sufficient wastewater treatment system to test.

Dr D.J. Honey: Testing all the septic systems would be a bit hard!

Mr R.S. LOVE: Yes—if all the communities were tested! It is an interesting question that we will have to follow up at some point to see where there are holes in the data. I am sure there are communities, such as those highlighted in an article from 2021 in the Kimberley, that are perhaps not being tested in this way. There are probably small communities in the electorate I represent that are also not subject to that testing. I do not know whether we will ever really understand the full use of the drug in the state, but we know that the figures we have received are worrying.

I return to the methamphetamine action plan. The only time that plan appeared in the last budget was in relation to the south west alcohol and other drugs residential rehabilitation and treatment service. I do not have the final expenditure figure for the methamphetamine plan line item. I could find it in only one place in the state budget. Obviously, there is a problem tracking how that program is going. Budget paper No 2, volume 1, of the 2022–23 state budget states —

It is expected the reopening of the Western Australian border will lead to an increase in the availability of methamphetamine, including an expected increase in purity and decrease in price. In 2022, the

Government's Immediate Drug Assistance Coordination Centre election commitment will be operational and will provide immediate assistance for individuals and families experiencing social crisis related to methamphetamine and other drug use.

Here is the opportunity for the government to put on record how that immediate drug assistance coordination centre went and how it has helped in that area to address the methamphetamine scourge. The opposition would like to know how the methamphetamine plan is going, what the indicators are for its performance, and who is in charge of making sure that statewide it is being coordinated and is continuing its stated objectives.

The further away people in Western Australia are from Perth, the more difficult it is to get access to public health services, rehabilitation and a range of matters. This government has proven that it is not listening to regional communities and not ensuring it has in place mental health services, rehabilitation programs and a workforce in this field. We know from the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill 2024, which went through this place on Tuesday, that the WA Country Health Service is desperately under-resourced and had to be propped up with hundreds of millions of dollars just to keep its centres open. Oftentimes people do not get a choice of service, and the only service available in an area will be what is available at the emergency department of the local health centre or Silver Chain posts, which are now becoming WACHS centres anyway. For many in country areas, that service and support does not exist as it does for people in the city.

In many areas of the state, meth is used as a recreational drug. That has become increasingly problematic as other workplaces test for other drugs and alcohol, and workers cannot have those in their system if they want to go on site to work. Alcohol stays in the system longer than methamphetamine. An interesting situation around Dongara at the moment is that one of the local industry groups outside town used to run a bus from the camp into town once a week so that people could have a meal at the hotel, do a bit of shopping or have a swim, and have a day off from the gas plant or wherever they worked. Due to changes in the testing regime, the group has stopped doing that. It told the assemblage that they could not have so much as one can of beer on a Sunday; otherwise, they would be unable to work on the Monday. There is basically now no being let out of the pen for those people. They do not get the trip into town once a week, because they were not able to go to what is pretty much the only thing that is open in town on the weekend, the local tavern or hotel, where they would have a meal and do what other people do on a weekend. However, were they to come into town in the morning and use meth, they would show up to work the next day with most likely nothing in their system. That is the problem we face. The nature of employment in our state has made it problematic. I do not know why the government has not looked more at bespoke solutions for Western Australia and considered its unique demographic—its workforces and the fact that we know from reports over the years into people who work in fly-in fly-out industries that there are stresses on them. It is a uniquely stressful situation. Inquiries have been conducted by this place into the effect of that on the level of suicide and sexual violence and a range of other things. Our state faces these unique circumstances; however, we do not see any acceptance by the government that it needs to do something extra to ensure that we cover the issues we face.

Nobody is saying that it is easy. This is a huge state geographically and populations in the thousands fly in and out of the state every day, and populations fly within the state to their workplace every day. In some communities, there is an absence of any government service of any type. There are communities where there is no police station or health centre within the bounds of that community. It is not easy to make sure that we have a better health system and one that is tackling the methamphetamine situation, but I am not seeing anything from this government to indicate that it is looking at it afresh and it will tackle this problem. By tackling the problem, it may begin to see a solution. What we have seen from the minister with his dismissive remarks today in answers to questions is that he is not accepting that there is a problem. He is not questioning his department when there is a problem. One has to ask what he is telling the department. The government does not have a right to the operational status of an organisation, but it certainly has a right to talk about the culture of any organisation in the government to ensure there are safe workplaces—workplaces in which people strive to achieve great outcomes. For instance, we know that in the health system there is not always a safe workplace, and we know that more needs to be done. I point to the fact that people of Western Australia are crying out for help.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr R.S. LOVE: I will conclude with this comment. We talk about negative things in the community and the negative situation at unit 18, Banksia Hill and with the police. This morning I was at Langley Park with many other members of Parliament to see students come together for the Clontarf Foundation carnival. It was inspiring to see both the alumni of Clontarf and current students and to observe the positive impact of that program on people from the remote communities I have been talking about, and also communities within the metropolitan area.

I think it would be a matter of pride for any community to have within it those wonderful young men whom I was talking to this morning. I congratulate the Clontarf Foundation on the excellent work that it does in communities right across the state by making sure that people who often come from disadvantaged circumstances are given an opportunity. I commend Clontarf for that. With that, I will wind up my contribution.

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe) [4.50 pm]: We get an Acting Speaker—plus in the new position; congratulations, again, on your elevation to that role, Acting Speaker (Mrs M.R. Marshall).

I am glad that the Leader of the Liberal Party has brought this topic before the Parliament. There is broad concern about methamphetamine in the community at some level, but I do not think that concern actually reflects the problem that methamphetamine represents to our community. In fact, I think there is almost a bit of a nod to it and that people think it is a bit of fun and just a bit of recreation. When I was speaking to a group of year 12 school students, the topic of methylamphetamine and methamphetamine use came up. The students talked about the recreational use of the drug at their school. I pointed out to them that that was illegal. I said, “Surely you know that that is illegal activity.” I thought their response to me was quite profound. They said, “It can’t be illegal because no-one ever gets picked up for using it.” The Minister for Police and others sit in this place and say that it is illegal, but it is the old saying that I have used before and will probably use a few more times—the behaviour that we walk past is the standard that we accept. They were smart kids. They were not vague kids who were not otherwise engaged in the world. Their firm view on the use of methylamphetamine and its distribution amongst their mates was that it could not be illegal because nothing was ever done about it. That is really profound.

As I have said in other debates and will say again in this debate, I am not a lock-them-up-and-throw-away-the-key person; I do not promote more and more strident penalties. For the great majority of crimes, very few people actually contemplate the sentence when they commit the crime. That is one of the issues with increasing sentences. I recognise that it is a knee-jerk reaction on both sides. I am not trying to criticise the government for this; both sides go down the path of saying that there should be stronger and stronger sentences for particular crimes. However, in many cases, when people commit crimes, they do not think about that. If they do not think that there is any policing of it because that is not their experience, why would they alter their behaviour? For example, the single largest impact on road safety is the visibility of police on the roads. There is lots and lots of evidence around that. The minister will remember a trial that involved putting a cardboard cutout of a police officer on the side of the road. That modified driver behaviour, not only when drivers saw the cutout but also afterwards. It reminded people. Even a cutout of a police officer on the road was enough for people to respond. I think there is a fundamental issue with policing.

I will focus a bit on the effects of methylamphetamine. Again, I think even in this place there is a bit of a relaxed attitude to recreational drug use. We see this with a number of drugs, including methylamphetamine. Methylamphetamine is not just an ordinary drug; it is a dreadful drug. It is a scourge on our community. It is obviously an amphetamine. Methamphetamine works by increasing the level of neurotransmitters in the brain, such as dopamine—that is the one people often talk about—but to a far greater degree than any other activity or drug. The reported effects of methamphetamine—the reasons people take it—are intense pleasure, momentary clarity, enhanced confidence and energy, sexual stimulation, increased concentration, reduced appetite and feelings of general satisfaction. I can understand why someone might think they are desirable effects. The impact is profound. For equivalent dosages, the dopamine increase in the brain for methamphetamine is around three times that of cocaine. The general movie industry seems to love to popularise the use of cocaine, but methamphetamine provides three times the dopamine—the hit or buzz that people get from that drug. That is what makes it so addictive.

The problem with methamphetamine is that it is highly addictive. More particularly, regular use has profound impacts on people. That is what the police and hospitals see. Over time, the continual stimulation of dopamine production means that users get less and less of a buzz and there is more and more of a drive to use it. Prolonged regular meth consumption leaves users unable to feel normal without methamphetamine, which then leads to chronic abuse. There are health risks. As with all things, there can be a variety of responses, but the health risks and health impacts can be quite dramatic. Ongoing or heavy use leads to much more serious physical impacts, such as strokes, seizures, cardiovascular problems and kidney failure. It also has profound effects on the activity and structure of the brain. There are serious mental health consequences from heavy use of methamphetamine, including sleep disorders, psychosis, paranoid hallucinations, agitation, confusion, severe panic, anxiety and depression. Police officers and health service workers are the ones who see people experiencing psychotic behaviour, paranoid behaviour or delusions. When people experience psychotic effects, they can become extremely violent. We have genuinely seen an increase in serious and violent crime in our community. I know that the police minister has assured the house that we are winning on general crime, but I wonder whether the increase in extreme violent crime that we are seeing is a direct reflection of the increased use of methamphetamine.

I reiterate the point that methamphetamine is not an ordinary drug. It is not just another drug; it is an extraordinarily addictive drug. Chronic use and abuse of methamphetamine has the most dangerous effects on people’s behaviour. We hear from hospital emergency departments that people who are experiencing psychosis from methamphetamine either present themselves or, more typically, are brought in by desperate relatives. Those people come in and are extraordinarily violent towards staff, to the extent that emergency departments now have to employ extra staff. Doctors, nurses and security staff face a dreadful risk from these violent attacks.

Of course, addiction can lead to criminal behaviour. Obviously, there is a high probability that drug use will have a deleterious effect on a person’s life and ability to work. More particularly, people can be led into a life of crime. Drug abusers especially end up being drug dealers and getting mixed up in crime, as the minister has pointed out before. Biekie gangs are a critical part of that supply chain. Suddenly, people are moving to a life of crime. This is not being dramatic; this is the simple reality of using this drug, and why we are so concerned that there appears to be a substantial increase in the use of methamphetamine.

The minister made the point that this is a problem everywhere. That is true; it is a problem right across Australia. Australia proportionately uses more methamphetamine than almost any other country in the world. It may be that we are more distant from the source of other drugs like cocaine and heroin, and that methamphetamine is so readily manufactured from base materials. I read that a large amount of methamphetamine comes into Australia from countries to the north that perhaps have less strict controls over the precursor drugs, so drugs are manufactured there and brought into Western Australia. The minister defended, if you like, the performance of the Western Australia Police Force under his auspices by saying that, “Well, look at all these drugs we have interdicted.” The minister mentioned something like 300 kilograms of drugs, but the reality is that if we look at the estimate in *Report 21: National wastewater drug monitoring program*, from which a number of us have quoted and I am sure will quote again, 1.3 tonnes of the drug has come into the state. I did a little calculation. If members look at the amount of methamphetamine coming into the different states per million people, New South Wales has 403 kilograms per million people, Victoria has 418 kilograms, Queensland has 377 kilograms and Western Australia has 495 kilograms. Western Australia’s figure is substantially more than the other states. When we think about it, Western Australia has, effectively, a road to the north—there might be some minor roads in the middle—a road in the south, a railway line, an airport and some ports. One of the reasons we were able to do so well during COVID was that it was relatively easy to isolate the state from the rest of Australia. Yet, we are seeing this massive rise in meth use. After the COVID pandemic passed, and perhaps it was because of that isolation, we saw a massive 40 per cent rise in meth consumption from 2022 to 2023. The levels of drug coming into the state are very high.

I reinforce the point made by the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Liberal Party about the impact of that drug in regional areas in particular. I do not have firsthand knowledge of the drug issue in those remote Aboriginal communities, but I am told that during COVID, and in particular post COVID, methamphetamine was and is now the drug of choice in many remote Aboriginal communities. Its impact has been absolutely devastating and catastrophic in those communities. It has become so readily available in many remote Aboriginal communities that leaders are absolutely distraught at what the drug is doing to their community and the young people in them. Most of those Aboriginal communities have quite restricted access, so it should be possible to interdict that movement of drugs. When the Minister for Police says that the police are stepping up their efforts, and we hear about that large quantity of drugs that have been interdicted, I do not think we are seeing any effective effort, if you like—not any effective effort. I do not mean that, minister. I know there is effective effort, but I do not think there is enough effective effort to stop that drug from coming into the state.

The most recent Drug Use Monitoring in Australia analysis in 2021 reported a significant drop in drug users’ assessment of meth availability, which is in line with all the comments made. Interestingly enough, the consumption of methamphetamine during the COVID period stayed high. Yes, it was lower and it was a drop, but it was still high. Either there were significant stored amounts of the drug in the state or there was a significant supply into the state. We have a substantial issue in terms of the drug coming into the state.

There was an expectation that the new search laws that the minister has talked about would make a difference and make it harder to bring drugs into the state, but, as we have seen, under the new search laws that were brought in, we hear that five grams of cannabis has been seized. The whole point of bringing in those new stop-and-search laws at the border points was that the COVID effect, if you like, of stopping drugs from coming into the state would continue. Quite clearly, either that is not where the drugs are coming in or the efficacy of those searches is wanting. If that is not the case, we would be interdicting more drugs. That is a serious question for the minister. I know that he says he does not have operational control of the police and/or control over operational matters, but that is a question that the minister should be asking the Commissioner of Police. It is definitely the police minister’s right to say to the Commissioner of Police, “I have given you these new powers. Why am I seeing little effect?” I am not saying that the police are not using those powers as intended, but does something else have to be done? Do they need additional powers? Are we not able to detect those drugs because something is wanting?

[Member’s time extended.]

Dr D.J. HONEY: It is an embarrassment. As I have indicated, there is an enormously strong association between drugs and crime, in particular between methamphetamine use and crime. Some people might think that they can safely occasionally use methamphetamine, but I do not think that that is the case. It is an extraordinarily dangerous drug. I know that it has a clinical use for a certain part of the population, but for the great majority of the population, it is not some idle, recreational pastime; it is extremely dangerous. There is no doubt whatsoever that methamphetamine is fuelling crime so that people can fuel their habits. As I have pointed out, it is a reasonable hypothesis that the increased use of methamphetamine is fuelling violent crime, especially when people are suffering from paranoia and delusions and believe things that are not true. We hear this from families. We hear of meth-addicted children violently attacking their parents who are trying to assist them. In fact, on some occasions, it has resulted in the death of a parent or a loved one who was trying to help that person. It is a drug that affects people’s judgement. They are not subject to normal direction by police and the like.

In the government’s 2018 *Methamphetamine action plan taskforce: Final report*, disturbingly, 63 per cent of detainees tested positive for methamphetamine in the third quarter of 2018. Again, it seems like a massive over-representation for the cohort of people who are detained by the police. I do not believe that 63 per cent of the

population have methamphetamine in their system, yet in that period, 63 per cent of detainees were affected by methamphetamine. I know we have to be careful about assigning causation, but that gives a strong hint that methamphetamine plays a serious role in affecting people's behaviour. It leads them to attract the attention of the police to the extent that they are detained, and police do not detain people lightly. They only do it when people are a threat to themselves or others, or have otherwise committed a crime. There are a range of statistics on that. It would be worthwhile for the minister to look at the report. It was a good attempt at the time to try to understand this. As the minister has pointed out, there was a crisis before, and it is quite clear that we are back in a crisis now.

There is a report titled *Comparative rates of violent crime amongst methamphetamine and opioid users*, which was from the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre at the University of New South Wales. It was based on a sample of 400 regular methamphetamine and heroin users from the greater Sydney region. The prevalence of violent offending was extremely high, with 82 per cent having committed a violent crime and approximately two in five having violently offended in the past 12 months. This is perhaps labouring the point, but I am trying to reinforce the point that methamphetamine is not an idle thing. It has profound negative impacts on people and it has a profound negative impact on causing crime. That is why the government has to do much more. It is evident from the data that use is increasing. We can see it very clearly. I would like to cover more of this information, but for the sake of my colleagues making their contributions I will not carry on with it.

I want to talk about the fight against drugs. At the end of the day, drug use reflects consumer demand. One thing I find profoundly disturbing is that I do not see anything done to reduce consumer demand. Western Australia is a poster child globally for the substantial reduction in the use and abuse of tobacco, to the extent that we are a world leader in reducing that. That was done through some laws, but those laws were about making sure that people were informed of the impact of tobacco. A person cannot go to a shop that sells tobacco or buy a packet of tobacco without seeing information that tells them that this is a bad thing and this is how it harms. There was an enormous campaign to alter social behaviour to make smoking unacceptable. That is largely the case. I see nothing of that with drugs. I cannot recall the last time I saw any public information about the things I have talked about regarding methamphetamine—of the dreadful health impacts, of the terrible mind-altering impacts, of the preponderance of heavy users towards violence, violent behaviour and psychosis. I do not see any of that. That is profoundly lacking in the government's program. Everything has to be done to stop the importation of drugs, and more needs to be done, but, equally, if we do not reduce demand for the drug, we will not see a reduction. Criminals are criminals. If there is demand, they will fuel the supply. We have seen it again and again.

I do not mean the cliché that I think I saw in an episode of *South Park* of the drug session in the school and the teacher singing “drugs are bad” in which they were a very banal thing, but there needs to be a whole social and information campaign. Year 12 high school kids should know that using and distributing methamphetamine is an illegal activity with serious consequences of jail time. I do not think most school students even know that. I definitely do not think they have any idea whatsoever of the severe mental health impacts of drug use—of the clinically documented effects of psychosis, paranoia and the like, and what results of that. I do not think they have any idea. These things go beyond partisan politics. The whole of society, with the support of all sides of Parliament, needs to have much more focus on reducing demand for methamphetamine, and I simply do not see it. I see nothing of it. I am being serious. I cannot recollect when I last saw any public information on this at all. This is a crisis and I think it is getting worse. I think it is fuelling the dramatic increase in violent crime in our society.

This is not Liberal Party policy. This is me talking. We need to have a discussion about compulsory detention and the rehabilitation of recidivist offenders involved in drug abuse where we see that behaviour. As I said, I do not see any point to just locking people up without proper rehabilitation. At the end of the day, it achieves nothing other than keeping someone off the streets for a time, although some people might say that is a benefit. How many stories have we heard of families being at their wits' end because there is nothing they can do to stop their child from abusing the drug, getting into crime, ending up in the court system and going through it? At the end of the day, they might get a fine or the like, but then they go into a rehab program, they pop out of it and they are back on the streets using the drug and getting into trouble again. Detention is always a last resort, but I think we need to have a mature discussion about whether there should be compulsory detention and rehabilitation for repeat offenders. There has to be some way of dealing with people who are already into drug abuse and addicted.

We all know the terrible story of the late Phillip Walsh, who was coach of the Adelaide Crows who was murdered by his addicted son. That was a son who those parents, dear Mr Walsh and his family, were trying to deal with and could not, which led to that awful outcome. As I said, we should never take compulsory detention idly, but this is such a crisis that it is something we must seriously consider.

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt) [5.17 pm]: I rise to support the motion moved by the Leader of the Liberal Party —

That this house condemns the Cook Labor government for failing to stem the tide of methamphetamine use in Western Australia, which is made worse by its dangerous inability to manage policing and public health systems.

Perhaps the order we are speaking in is useful. The member of Cottesloe spoke about the challenges that many families face when they seek support for family members or friends at a point of crisis. I will focus on the work we have to do to make sure there are appropriate rehabilitation centres or options available in Western Australia, from my perspective particularly in regional Western Australia, so we do not have those types of stories. Too often we find community members or individuals who have become addicted. It is an illness and it can happen to anyone. Unfortunately, it is just all too common right across the community. I did not get time to delve into the report that the member Cottesloe mentioned, but a *National drug strategy household survey* is done pretty regularly. There was obviously a break during COVID so the data is not continuous, but we can see the trends. The last one that was completed was for the 2022–23 period. There is some interesting information there for members who might have an interest in trends of illicit drug use, prescription drug use and alcohol use. We should include alcohol. I know we are talking about methamphetamine, but none of these things happen in isolation.

I can see the Acting Speaker (Mrs L.A. Munday) nodding her head as a former ambulance officer and paramedic. All of these things are comingled. An addiction is truly a terrible thing and, sadly, we lose too many in the community as a result of people not having avenues to access rehabilitation.

I probably have a slightly different view from the member for Cottesloe, although he did not say one way or the other whether he fully supports compulsory detention. I know a committee looked into alternative pathways in, I think, the 2017 Parliament. I know Hon Colin De Grussa was one of the members of that committee. It may have been the Parliament before that. But there was a significant challenge in dealing with methamphetamine in the state so a parliamentary committee was constituted to look at alternative pathways and how we should treat it. Do we treat it as a criminal issue or as a health issue? We know that debate happens on a global basis. Some good information was captured by that committee. I recommend members who have not familiarised themselves with it, if they are interested in this issue, to read the report as it lays out what other jurisdictions have done.

I wanted to start very close to home. I live in Northam. I have a drug and alcohol rehabilitation facility literally at the end of my street. I am not a “not in my backyard” kind of gal. I am fully supportive of, and always have been, having facilities like this in our communities, particularly in regional communities, because we need to ensure that when somebody identifies that they want and are ready for help, something is available for them. This facility is run by Fresh Start with Dr George O’Neil. It is quite a unique program. I go to its graduations every year. It deals only with men. There are alternative pathways for women, but Fresh Start deals with men in particular. I listen to the journey that not only the men but also their families have been on to get themselves to a stable point in their life. Sitting in the room and listening to some of these stories is life changing—and heartbreaking. I see the devastation on the faces of these men and their families—and the joy. Anyone who has been through an addiction journey knows that, sadly, relapse is quite often a part of it. People need ongoing wraparound support. They do not pop out the end like a shiny new person and that is it; we are done. That would be a unique individual.

I have great faith in Fresh Start and I offer my support to it as an organisation that works in the community; it does a whole raft of things in addition to the work that the individuals do on their own sober journeys, including a lot of community involvement and engagement. It really does take a village to get to that point. Sadly, there are not enough of these facilities in Western Australia.

Mr P. Papalia: Is George still using Naltrexone or he is not allowed to?

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Yes. I did note that it is quite unique the pathway that he has taken, but if we listen to Dr O’Neil talk about how he approaches the issue, if someone presents, they will be vetted to see whether they are truly ready to do it. Quite often they come out of the prison system. My previous neighbours in Northam were a couple that went into the prison system and worked with individuals on a pathway to leaving prison and making sure they could transition. Unfortunately, it is a very complex issue.

When we meet some of these fellas, we see that they are people from all walks of life. We are talking everyone from chefs to people who work on St Georges Terrace and people from the eastern states who come to Western Australia to access this facility. It does not matter how wealthy your family is. It does not matter where you originate from. Sadly, we see people from all walks of life needing rehabilitation. That is why it is everybody’s business when we talk about how we can address the scourge of drugs. We have heard other members talk about the challenges that methamphetamine in particular presents because it is immediately addictive.

I am supportive of residential rehabilitation facilities. When I was the Leader of the Nationals and visited many of the places around our state, I was a fairly regular visitor to the City of Albany and I had many conversations with community groups that are involved in rehabilitation and support a residential rehabilitation facility for the great southern. This has been on the agenda for many years. It was identified in the Barnett–Grylls government’s *Western Australian mental health, alcohol and other drug services plan 2015–2025* that there needed to be additional beds for the great southern. I am a little bit conscious of who is sitting in the Speaker’s chair. I am not allowed to canvass the Acting Speaker (Ms R.S. Stephens), but I want to raise this issue because it has been on the agenda for that community for some time and, unfortunately, does not get a lot of traction. In the run-in to the last election, the Nationals made a commitment to at least put some funding towards that, should we have been in a position to deliver on that, at least to commence plans and identify locations and work with service providers.

The constant feedback we get from places such as Southern Aboriginal Corporation, Palmerston Association and others that are involved in those discussions is that they are advised by government that because there is no planning, they cannot get any funding. It is difficult to present those types of plans for government to consider when they come from an individual provider. I think government has a role to drive these processes. A counterpoint is that for some time, the Southern Aboriginal Corporation has had a proposal for a facility on which it has not been able to get traction with government. Again, it simply gave up asking for the government to progress it and put together its own plans to see whether it could secure funding for additional residential beds in the area. A petition was run by the Nationals WA prior to the last election. Delma Baesjou, who was our candidate, collected over 600 signatures to say that we desperately understand the need for this. Commitments were made to individual groups that were supportive of families and community members. I think Ice Breakers was one that received funding very early in the piece. None of it went to the actual substantive issue, which is that the great southern is the only area in the state that does not have a residential rehabilitation facility. Having seen the benefits of having a residential rehabilitation facility—it is not a government-funded one—in my own electorate, I can understand why the community is so passionate about this. I encourage the government, in advance of this state budget, where we know significant funds are available, to make sure that that is part of the considerations.

Back in 2020, prior to the last election, the Penington Institute's *Australia's annual overdose report*—it is dreadful we even have reports of this nature—which had been released in that year, September, showed that the great southern had suffered the most drastic increase in drug overdose deaths in WA outside of Mandurah. It is not as though the community is asking for something for which there is not a demonstrated need. If we cannot address the issue by cutting off the product and reducing the amount in the community, we surely need to be making facilities available to address what comes next, which is that people find themselves in the grip of addiction. I have a strong commitment to seeing that appear on our election platform going into the next election. I do not think that the need has diminished, but sadly, I do not think that this government has identified it as a priority. I cannot find any reference to rehabilitation beds in the current iteration of the *Western Australian mental health, alcohol and other drug services plan 2015–2025* or the WA priorities plan. That is very disappointing. I urge the community to continue to advocate and make sure it knows who is backing it to get the services and facilities that it deserves.

I refer to an article from 24 November 2023 that appeared on ABC Great Southern. A fellow called Sam Turton, aged 28, has struggled with drug addiction for nine years and is set to move into a residential rehabilitation facility. However, he will have to travel more than 300 kilometres to access the facility in the south west. As he describes it, it means he will be separated from his 19-month-old son, which will make it very difficult. Although he is willing to travel, having made the decision to address his addiction issues, it will be challenging to be separated from his support network. People have opportunities to address their addiction issues in residential facilities, where there are intensive, structured 24-hour supports to address some of the other issues that feed into their addictions. That is one of the benefits of being able to access an intensive rehabilitation service rather than nine-to-five service provision from very well meaning, usually under-resourced, community groups that possibly have funding contracts with the state government. In the same article, a Palmerston Association spokesperson noted that there are 100 people in the region needing residential treatment who did not want to leave their communities. That means that they choose to go without treatment, and we can imagine the flow-on impact that that would have on the local economies, families and relationships within those communities.

I urge the government to include funds for a facility that has been long campaigned for. There is plenty of science supporting and, sadly, plenty of demand for, the creation of a residential rehabilitation facility in the great southern. If someone from the government comes back to me on that during this debate or down the track to say, “Yes, that’s on the agenda”, that will be a great outcome. I do not think that issue is going to go away. Even if there were a dramatic decrease in the amount of methamphetamine in our community—we heard from other members that there was a suppression of those drugs during the COVID period but that we are now starting to see them creep back again—these facilities will still be necessary.

I think that is all I will say, at the risk of canvassing the Acting Speaker (Ms R.S. Stephens); I had some comments for her, but she cannot respond, so it would be very poor form to do that! But I am putting that on the agenda. It is something that I have had passionate conversations about with a number of organisations in my previous role as Leader of the Nationals WA. I had the opportunity and privilege of being able to travel around the state and meet with organisations like the Southern Aboriginal Corporation and Palmerston Association. Asha Bhat is an amazing advocate for the region.

From a very localised perspective, I want to talk about the Regional Men’s Health Initiative. When we first came to government in 2008, we immediately supported it.

[Member’s time extended.]

Ms M.J. DAVIES: It was born out of a time of situational distress due to poor seasonal conditions. There was, sadly, an increase in suicide and alcohol and drug use—the sorts of things that particularly affect men in the wheatbelt. This organisation was founded to try to address some of those issues and to make sure that blokes knew how to address their mental and physical health and wellbeing. That organisation has grown and, happily, it has been

supported by both sides of politics, because it is an amazing program. I want to again say that its contract will come to an end shortly; I think it has four-year contract cycles. I think we were reasonably strategic in making sure that the contract renewals did not fall around the time of elections, so that they could stay outside that hurly-burly. However, when something comes to an end, there is always a risk that a government will choose to spend the funds allocated to it elsewhere. That would be incredibly disappointing. That organisation's interventions and discussions are saving people's lives in the wheatbelt and across the state. This debate is about drugs, and that organisation has self-referrals, is situated within the community and is trusted. Drugs and alcohol tend to exist together, to which we can add mental ill health, and this is a very important program.

Sadly, there is a lack of services that deal with acute drug addiction issues, particularly in our small regional centres, in the wheatbelt and across the electorates of the members for Roe, Moore and North West Central. There are small, isolated communities where those sorts of things are very difficult to manage and people are a very long way away from even a GP or an emergency department. We need to make sure that we do the proactive work to keep people mentally and physically well; that is as important as coming at it from the other end, which is stemming the tide of drugs that exist and, sadly, seem to be increasing throughout our communities. We also need to support our police to make sure that they are able to do their job appropriately, and we need to make sure that they are funded. I hope the government will not mess about with that and will give that organisation the opportunity to continue.

What we did in government and our record sometimes comes up in debate. There was absolutely a meth strategy when we were in government and funding, particularly through royalties for regions, for facilities in the north west. The funding was in the millions for the Kimberley, Pilbara and goldfields. I have a couple of statements sitting in front of me. There was a significant investment in increasing the capacity of services that were already on the ground, delivering vital drug rehabilitation. We also increased the number of beds in the goldfields, Kimberley and north west.

One of these statements touches on the Carnarvon sobering-up centre. We funded that. I have not been there for probably 12 months, but, sadly, that centre has been underfunded and neglected and no longer does the job that it was designed to do. That is not because there is no demand for it or that the people on the ground do not want to deliver those services. The government needs to make sure that there is appropriate funding; there was no shortage of dollars in the last budget surplus. This is about priorities, keeping our communities safe, addressing some of the challenges we see, resourcing our police and making sure that we have support services when we see people succumbing to addiction and the horrific health outcomes that follow. With that, I will sit down and let the member for Roe speak.

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [5.39 pm]: I, too, support the motion —

That this house condemns the Cook Labor government for failing to stem the tide of methamphetamine use in Western Australia, which is made worse by its dangerous inability to manage policing and public health systems.

I will firstly start on the meth scenario and then flow on to some public health issues.

I want to give a short story about either the week after I was first elected or the last week of being a candidate. I recall that a resident from Esperance rang me to tell me that he was involved in the meth scenario and he was worried that he was going to be killed in the next week or two. Of course, being a newly or about-to-be elected member, I was fairly horrified. The reason he wanted to tell me was to let someone know in case his body was found and then, maybe, the people responsible could be brought to order. I was horrified and not quite sure what to do. I rang former police minister Hon Liza Harvey and asked her advice about where I should go and what I should do. She put me onto the appropriate police at the time. That was one of my first interactions as a newly elected or about-to-be elected member.

I also clearly remember the example the member for Cottesloe spoke about—the death of Adelaide Crows coach Phil Walsh. That was obviously a very sad thing. We now see families in which the parents are trying to help out children who are addicted. In some cases, which we see more and more on the night-time news, a family member or grandparents—as happened the other week—are randomly stabbed to death. I am sure that probably 90 per cent of those cases are related to methamphetamine use.

I remember going to the Katanning Town Hall six or seven years ago. There were probably 180 people there and meth was only just coming into the picture at the time. A guy got up on stage and explained how meth works in the brain. He explained, as the member for Cottesloe explained, how it seems to be able to cut through the neural pathways in a different way from other drugs, the effect it has on people and how addictive it is. To some extent, that woke me up to what meth was about.

Back in 2022, I spoke to one of the officers in charge in one of my towns. His alarming comment was not only that meth use was out of control, but also that the police now look at it as a health and mental health issue and not a policing issue. That was concerning and goes to show the challenges facing our police in the regions and in the city. Whether it is St John Ambulance staff, nurses, doctors or community members who are out there trying to help, I congratulate them all because dealing with meth is a real challenge.

The other comment the member for Cottesloe made that I thought was very interesting was that the schoolchildren he had been talking to did not realise that meth was illegal. It is very concerning that this sort of mode is coming to our school society. If I get a short chance, I will talk about school violence as well, which I spoke about in private members' business last week. It seems to be becoming more prevalent.

I will provide a few statistics from the National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2022–2023. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare states —

People experiencing High and Very high levels of psychological distress were 4.8 times as likely to have used methamphetamine and amphetamine in the previous 12 months ...

People who reported having been diagnosed with, or treated for, a mental illness in the previous 12 months were 3.9 times as likely to have used methamphetamine and amphetamine in the previous 12 months ...

According to the survey, almost one in five people in Australia—that is 17.9 per cent—had used an illicit drug in the previous 12 months. This equates to 3.9 million people in Australia in that category in the last 12 months.

A summary of methamphetamine and amphetamine use among people aged 14 years and over in 2022–23 shows that lifetime use was 7.5 per cent, or 1.6 million people; recent use was one per cent, which equates to 200 000 people; and the opportunity to use in the last 12 months was 3.8 per cent. The two age groups most likely to use methamphetamine were 20 to 29 years and 40 to 49 years. The average age of first use is 22.2 years. These are very interesting statistics of meth use among people who had used it in the previous 12 months during the 2022–23 period. There is no doubt about it—there is a real issue.

It is concerning when we see the stats for Bunbury, which is one of the leading meth use destinations, if not the leading meth use destination, in regional Australia. The 2022–23 budget papers included the methamphetamine action plan and the south west residential rehabilitation and treatment service. It was good to see that that was in the budget, but I agree with the member for Central Wheatbelt; we would also like to see a treatment facility in the great southern. As the member for Central Wheatbelt pointed out, in the previous election period, the Nationals WA committed \$5 million for that centre. I look forward to that appearing in years to come.

I want to talk a little bit about the electorate of Roe and a couple of facilities, especially what is called the Adult and Teen Challenge WA program in Esperance. It offers rehabilitation and support services for substance abuse. It is a fantastic facility. If they are ever near Esperance, I urge members in this place to take the opportunity to go for a drive about 20 kilometres out of Esperance. It is near a lake and has fantastic buildings and good boarding facilities. The centre does a fantastic job in rehabilitating many people, not just from Esperance but also from right around the state. I want to take this opportunity to congratulate them for the work the centre does in bringing some people back from a place they would rather not be.

Another feature in that local vicinity is Wongutha Christian Aboriginal Parent-Directed School, which is a school that brings in students from as far away as the Kimberley. They come down each term. It is a fantastic school in that locality. I congratulate the staff for the work that they do educating many Indigenous students from throughout Western Australia, with a real emphasis on the Kimberley. I enjoy it when I get the opportunity to go out there for the end-of-year concert.

I also want to talk about Shalom House. I recall going to the yacht club in Esperance one Saturday for an event organised by four or five groups of parents who had children who were addicted to meth. It was very interesting. There were probably over 200 people there listening to Peter Lyndon-James. The work that Shalom House does—at times with adversity from various governments and local governments—helps those families, and when those people are committed, Shalom House can quite often bring them back. That was another feature in Esperance when we had that seminar.

The member for Central Wheatbelt mentioned Palmerston. It does some great work around the upper great southern, around Katanning. For those who are under 18, there are no regionally based centres, and centres that are available in the city are extremely expensive. There are online drug support services, but regional support centres are few and far between. That is where the cracks are, especially for mental health support in that 16-to-18-year-old age group. It seems that if someone is in that age group, they are in no man's land. I think this is an area that the state government really needs to focus on—backup services for all age groups, especially the 16-to-18-year age group. Mental health services are very important. I refer to a press release from Hon Martin Aldridge in the other place —

The State Government must guarantee and reinforce emergency mental health crisis support ...

'For almost twenty years the State Government has delivered an emergency response line to support patients and families in mental health crisis.

'It is unacceptable and places lives at risk when twice in two months that service was unavailable', Mr Aldridge said.

The Mental Health Emergency Response Line (MHERL) and the regional equivalent Rurallink provides service 24/7 in Perth and Peel and an after-hours service in regional WA.

‘We know that one in five people in any given year will experience a mental illness and almost one in two Australians in their lifetime.

...

MHERL receives over 27,000 calls per annum or an average of 70 calls per day ...

...

‘It is unacceptable that on two occasions callers were met with an answering machine directing them to call 000’ ...

I support Hon Martin Aldridge on that. That is an absolutely essential service. As we know, whether people are meth addicted or have mental health issues, it is absolutely essential that they have support on hand.

Before I talk about public health, I will briefly branch out into what I spoke about last week, which is the increase in school violence. I am sure it is related in many ways to families that are having troubles with meth usage and the like. A week or two back, we saw an excellent quote from a teacher in *The Sunday Times*, who is reported as stating —

“There is no shortage of teachers in WA,” ... “Rather, there is a shortage of teachers who are willing to work in WA.”

That teacher was alluding to the violence that teachers are facing. There was a year 2 student who came to school with a knife the other week and today we saw reports of a 13-year-old student at Shenton College who terrorised their peer group and canteen staff. I understand they took the canteen cash register. Those are the things that are contributing to our teachers not wanting to teach. They want to teach, but they do not want to go to a place where they are facing violence, and it is increasing daily. I am sure meth and other drugs are contributing to it, as is family background.

More than ever, this state government needs to recognise the problems and support our teachers in the workforce. I have said many times that the Minister for Education stands up at the start of every school year and says, “Look at this! There is a teacher in front of every class in Western Australia”. I can assure everyone that there are many methods for putting teachers in front of every class, including merging classrooms, providing a limited authority to teach and using people who are still studying. I understand that some people who are in their second year of study are in front of the classroom. They would have challenges with behaviour management in that particular time frame, when they have been studying for only a year or a year and a half. Those are the challenges.

There are many other things that I would like to talk about. Mental health is a real issue and it is a flow-on effect from our shortage of staff in the public health system. We have had some feedback and we can understand when people who are drug affected or mentally unstable are left in the corridor in our public hospitals and sometimes there are eight or nine mental health patients waiting for a mental health bed.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Staff are working at capacity and we are seeing shortages—not a storm in a teacup, but a volcano already erupting. I would love our nurses and doctors and all health professionals working in WA to hear again what the Minister for Health said yesterday in question time. She said —

Our system has a good staffing profile for medical, nursing and allied health, and different models of care assist with that staffing profile. Of course, there are times of pressure and winter surges when people are sick and unwell and so on and so forth, as happens in every system and every public service that is in demand, but we have been absolutely committed to recruiting into our health system, and the results are clear, because Health’s FTE has gone up by 30 per cent.

That is not the case. We can talk to those doctors and to the nurses in EDs, where mental health patients are lined up in the corridor—it is not good enough. This government needs to lift its game—whether it is on this methamphetamine scourge or in providing the mental health services that are appropriate for our system. I congratulate all our doctors and nurses and our police out there on the frontline, working hard while under-resourced. It is something that this state government absolutely needs to focus on.

MS M. BEARD (North West Central) [5.59 pm]: I rise to make a short contribution. Members who have spoken today on the motion about methamphetamine have covered a lot of territory. We all know that it is an enormously difficult challenge. Methamphetamine is a menace. It is silently infiltrating our communities. It is corroding the social fabric and shattering the lives of many people, some of whom we would never even suspect. It knows no bounds. It affects individuals regardless of age, gender, race or socio-economic status. It does not affect just one part of society. I will focus on something the member for Central Wheatbelt touched on and that I think is incredibly true; this is a vicious cycle.

I asked the Minister for Police a question earlier in the week about wraparound services. As he mentioned at that time, that is not in his portfolio, but the intention of my question was to highlight what I see as a deficit in the help available on the ground to police. The police do an incredible job and need the help of really strong wraparound services to support what they are doing and remove some of the pressure from them.

I learnt about drugs from a 15-year-old; she told me all about drugs. She told me about her life. She told me that her job, when her mother was not in jail—she was in jail at the time—was that when someone knocked on the door, she was to take the drugs from wherever they were and hide them under the house. She was quite blasé about the whole process. To her credit, she has been able to extract herself from that situation and has done very well, but a lot of kids do not manage to do that.

Substance abuse is a cycle. Drugs come into town, people start abusing them and then they start to engage in crime. It becomes a vicious cycle. The solution is to not just get the drugs off the streets; as the member for Central Wheatbelt mentioned, it is about helping those who are on drugs and, at the other end, trying to stem the flow of drugs into town. These are small towns. Children are growing up in an environment that is plagued with neglect and abuse, and this is being normalised in their lives.

The member for Roe mentioned schools. I speak with teachers all the time, as do a lot of members. When I was home two weekends ago, the lights were flashing across the road at the supermarket. I found out later that two 13-year-olds had pulled scissors on a security guard and held them to his throat and the throat of a cleaning lady. They then smashed the door and set off the security alarms. Kids really struggle when they live in environments in which this activity is going on. There is no excuse for it—there need to be consequences—but this is real and it is happening on the ground.

Someone talked today about advertising campaigns. In my day, it was the Marlboro man campaign. He was pretty cool. He smoked cigarettes. Everyone thought that was great. That all changed with the campaign that had the image of someone wringing out some lungs. All my children have now left school and none of them smokes—three out of three do not smoke. They talk about that advert all the time. I believe there is a lot of merit to those campaigns, but it might take more than one generation. We started with something that we thought was good and then it changed. That needs to be worked on with schools.

I also agree that it takes a village to solve these problems. Having wraparound services and support would definitely be a way to help. Those who live in small communities often know who those people are. We are all happy to help them. People are happy to provide help, but they cannot if they do not have wraparound mental health services or a drug and alcohol centre that is up and running and fully functional. As the member for Central Wheatbelt said, there is a perfectly good facility in Carnarvon, but it is not fully functioning. I believe that we need to take a village approach, but we need wraparound services in towns and communities, including in the metropolitan area, to make a change. When somebody comes back from rehab, they would then have somewhere to go and would not end up back on the streets. Also, it is important that people are reintegrated into their communities. They will need housing assistance and peer support groups. An enormous suite of wraparound services and help will be needed to combat this problem. We need to provide rehabilitation pathways, particularly in the regions. The more geographically challenged an area, the more difficult that is to achieve. Unfortunately, or fortunately, a lot of that comes down to funding. At the moment, there is a lack of funding in some of these spaces, but if we do not do something soon, this will continue to escalate and get out of whack.

Some hospitals in our regions are obviously in a dilapidated state. If we get this right, it will take pressure off nurses, because people will not present at hospital; they will have alternatives, like a drug and alcohol centre. The police will not be under as much pressure because they will have additional resources—the wraparound services—to help them. There will be help for people at schools—mental health help and referrals for people who are affected. We need to be realistic. Kids are growing up in environments in which they think this is normal. They have no problem with it. I urge the government to prioritise services and facilities that will help our incredibly hardworking volunteer ambulance drivers, nurses, doctors, teachers and police, who are all at the coalface.

I will finish because I think everyone has covered a lot of what needed to be said. However, I reiterate that I believe that we need to do more and that the government needs to make sure that services and facilities are funded. We need some form of mapping of what is missing at a regional level and in communities, and we need to try to plug those gaps. We all know that that will not happen overnight. We are all aware that this is an enormous problem, but we need to find solutions and take steps so that this does not become an ever-escalating problem.

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Police) [6.06 pm]: I say at the outset that I am not the lead speaker from our side on this motion, but I want to make a brief contribution. The first observation I will make is that there is a bit of similarity between this week's private members' business and last week's. That is probably indicative of the fact that part of the opposition will move a motion or proposal one week, and then the next week the other side of the opposition will do the exact same thing. They do not talk to each other very much.

I should not be disparaging, because the observation I want to make is that there were some quite refreshing contributions from some members of the opposition this evening, amongst the usual disparaging comments about the government and its failure. I refer to some of the observations made by the members for Cottesloe, Central Wheatbelt and North West Central. I commend them for recognising the complexity of this challenge, the deep impact that methylamphetamine abuse is having on the community and the threat it represents. A stark observation was made that it is not something that we can police our way out of. I appreciated the fact that everyone was at pains to commend and recognise the efforts of the police in doing their part of the job.

I will go down the list rapidly. I will reflect on what led to the amendment of the Misuse of Drugs Act under the border search area legislation. I remind the member for Vasse that the response was not made in isolation, although it was probably reported that way by the media because it did not link some of the legislation that preceded it that was all part of a response requested by the police. The member may recall that in 2021, after I got the role as Minister for Police, the then Premier, the Attorney General and I met with the then Commissioner of Police and deputy commissioner at their request. They put to us that the effect of COVID on meth consumption and the resultant crime had been extraordinary. They requested of us a range of measures to try to replicate that effect. I will correct the member for Cottesloe on one thing. He said that during COVID, there was a change in crime, but not a consumption change in meth; is that not correct?

Dr D.J. Honey: I said it was a reduction, but we didn't see an elimination.

Mr P. PAPALIA: It was massive. At the time, the police testing that the member referred to that had happened across Western Australia indicated a 53 per cent reduction in meth consumption. In some locations, it was far higher. According to the then police commissioner, there was also a commensurate 40 per cent reduction in crime. Presentations at hospitals were also impacted and the price of meth doubled. All those things confirmed that the effect was real, and that is why they asked whether we could implement a range of measures to assist them in trying to replicate that effect, not just the border search areas.

The first measure that was ready and pretty much introduced that year by the Attorney General was the anti-consorting legislation. That focused on the people who distribute the drug in the state, such as outlaw motorcycle gangs and organised criminals who bring in the drugs from outside Australia and use the gangs in their distribution techniques. The police wanted to focus on those gangs. We also had the consorting orders, the dispersal notices and, most notably, the thing that got everyone's attention, the insignia legislation. All that was part of a package that was very effective and gave police greater powers.

The next year we amended the Firearms Act to create, amongst other things, a range of a measures that tripled the penalty for stealing and the illegal use and manufacturing of firearms, but we also created a prohibition order. That order, together with that legislation, effectively gave police the power of a warrant-free search of people who received an order to confirm that they were not carrying a firearm, and they were not in a place where there might be a firearm or they might expect there to be a firearm. That was pretty powerful legislation. It has been used sparingly by police, which one would hope is the case.

Similar to the use of those powers, the police have also been very sparing with the use of the consorting notices. These are very onerous laws that the police have been provided with to target individuals. Most recently, the amendment to the Misuse of Drugs Act created 22 search areas. All the locations that the member for Cottesloe referred to are the entry points specifically requested by police.

All those things are in play. It is tempting, and the member fell for the temptation, to declare that those laws have failed, most notably, the amendment to the Misuse of Drugs Act, because the most recent use of that law, as it has only been in place for about six months, indicates that police have not been successful in the search areas in which that law has been activated and resulted in seizures. The other day I said that the member should be aware—I think all members are, it is just of benefit politically to ignore the fact—that police will use these powers of search activations and the search areas to build their intelligence and shape the environment. It may very well be that police have employed those search areas, identified people of interest and then exploited that knowledge at a later date in a different location because, as I said earlier today, 314 kilograms of methamphetamine and \$22 million has been seized from organised criminals in this financial year. I do not know, but it may be that they implemented those search areas and utilised them for that outcome. It may also be that it is based on intelligence and that intelligence may not have been as fruitful as they anticipated. It also might be that by acting on that intelligence, they are also proving up the system, because these are new powers and strategies and they have to confirm that everyone in the regions is capable of implementing them at short notice, but it would have been done based on intelligence.

That aside, I, like the member, commend the police. I think they are doing an excellent job. Methamphetamine is a scourge. That is true. The member for Cottesloe referred to the violence associated with methylamphetamine abuse, and that is true too.

I want to push on to the criticism I received from the Leader of the Opposition regarding unit 18. I get that he will do that. With regard to that issue in today's question, it is not appropriate that we talk about something that is before the Coroner's Court. The reports to which the member referred about unit 18 are based on claims made by a third party that is allegedly reporting claims made by individuals from unit 18. By definition, if a juvenile is in unit 18, they have done some pretty bad stuff and their character, their word and the claims that they make about activities, issues or incidents, might be subject to question. That aside, those sorts of reports are investigated. I can guarantee the member that things are being investigated, but I will leave that as an operational matter for the Commissioner of Corrective Services, Brad Royce, who is an excellent officer and in whom I have great confidence.

In response to the member's questions about what is happening in unit 18 and Banksia Hill Detention Centre, Banksia Hill is incredibly improved from where it was about eight months ago in terms of out-of-cell hours, delivery

of services and interventions. An elders' program has commenced there and an Aboriginal services unit is operating in both Banksia Hill and unit 18. The inmates are receiving services, exercising, going to school, getting interventions and getting on average more than 11 out-of-cell hours a day. In unit 18, although that same measure has vastly improved, it is lower than Banksia Hill with about four and a half out-of-cell hours on average—some get higher, some get lower—and, increasingly, they are getting more services and better program delivery inside unit 18 too, but it is, by virtue of the cohort there, a challenging environment and it will always be. It is not the desired location. We have committed \$1 million to doing a business case for a future facility that will be suitable for that cohort. People know that and we are focused on delivering better outcomes.

I want to reflect a little on what is being done inside our adult prison system for the types of measures that the members for Cottesloe and Central Wheatbelt in particular, but others also, have suggested are required. Inside the prison system under our government—this did not exist before—we created a women's alcohol and other drug prison at Wandoo Rehabilitation Prison. It has been running for more than five years now and it has been incredibly effective. It is recognised across the country as a cutting-edge response. It is essentially a secure residential facility for group-based therapy. More than 270 women have graduated from that 28-week program. A woman voluntarily goes there and is tested constantly and dogs are run through the place to ensure that it is drug free. Our external providers provide support programs inside there, and, on release, those women are supported for 12 months. It has been an extraordinary initiative of this government and a men's version has now been replicated inside the Mallee wing of Casuarina Prison. That has been running for a couple of years. It is early days in terms of being able to measure the outcomes, but, anecdotally, it has been very successful. It is isolated from the other parts of the prison in that the people who go there are volunteers. They are tested and the dogs are run through the place more frequently than they might be elsewhere. That started a couple of years ago. Just last year, Bunbury Regional Prison commenced an alcohol and other drug intervention program in the regions. It is the first time we have had one in Bunbury. The program is in its very early days. Those three programs are a really significant change to service delivery and are focused on drug intervention in our corrective services system. It is a significant initiative and worthy of recognition. It is worth remembering that it has been implemented under this government, and it had not been prior to now.

I make an observation about what the member for Central Wheatbelt said. She referred to the fact the Dr George O'Neill is in her patch. I went to Fresh Start in Shenton Park when he used to be there. When I was in opposition, I used to go there. George, and naltrexone implants, are controversial and probably not supported by the conventional, mainstream mental health services or hierarchy. I do not know what the latest view is. I know when I was in opposition and advocating a little for George, there was a lot of pushback and people were not very supportive. I do not know whether that is still the case. I hold the view that if good things are happening and people are achieving good outcomes, they are worth considering and having a look at. They could be an opportunity for volunteers who want to adopt a different pathway that might be successful for them.

I finish my brief contribution by making an observation. I join the member for North West Central and others in making and agreeing with the observation that this is an intractable problem that can be dealt with only through a village-type response—a lot of measures across a lot of parts of the community, not just government. But within government there needs to be a joined up and collective response. That is the only means we have with the likelihood of success. The police do an extraordinary job. We will keep giving them the powers and resources they need to do their job well, but, as has been identified, this is a big health problem. I concur with the member for Cottesloe's suggestion that we need a much bigger public education program. Things are a bit more challenging than when we were young and smoking was the thing. Members know how difficult it is to communicate with this generation in the first place. Connecting and achieving that outcome will not be as simple as that, but I encourage any additional effort that might be made. A lot of things are happening, but I support any additional effort that might be made in that regard.

MS S.E. WINTON (Wanneroo — Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence) [6.23 pm]: I will make a brief five-minute contribution, if I can. I thank the minister and members opposite for their contributions. This government is absolutely committed to keeping the community safe. There is no question about the fact that alcohol and other drug abuse gets its tentacles into all sectors of society. At the outset, I point out that it is a problem for all communities, and potentially all families, around Western Australia. I am sure many of us, like me, could recount anecdotes of drugs, and methamphetamine in particular, capturing young people from all walks of life, whether they live in Cottesloe, Balga or any regional town around the state. There is no question that those who peddle this insidious drug target vulnerable communities and areas in Western Australia. The police response, and the Cook government's response, to disrupt the supply of this drug into Western Australia is absolutely critical and has made a difference overall to not only the consumption of the drug, but also the damage it causes throughout the community.

I will make a couple of comments in terms of my portfolio for the prevention of family and domestic violence. I have had the privilege of meeting with many organisations that provide important support to victim-survivors of family and domestic violence and to its perpetrators. In many instances, a contributing factor to that violence is alcohol or other drugs or mental illness. I say at the outset that there is no excuse for violence. Drugs and meth can contribute, but they are no excuse. The results of research tell us some key things about drug use and its link to

family and domestic violence. When I have talked to victim-survivors of perpetrators who used methamphetamine, they have told me that the violence is much more extreme than that of drunk perpetrators. That is not just in the family and domestic violence space. People tell me that violence perpetrated by people on methamphetamine is much more severe and intense than those affected by alcohol or other drugs. That impacts on those experiencing family and domestic violence. Of course, it also impacts victims personally when there is the potential for intense acts of violence to be perpetrated against them and the likelihood that they will go to the authorities and report the violence. That intersection with the authorities might have consequences on intimate partners. Another thing that can happen is that victims turn to drugs as a response to the violence that has been perpetrated on them.

The government is aware of that. Built into much of the crisis accommodation and support services for victim-survivors is support for women dealing with their own drug use. I particularly mention one service doing an incredible job, which is the Peel therapeutic refuge. It is focused on not only supporting women who escape family and domestic violence, but also providing wraparound services for victim-survivors with mental health concerns or harm from alcohol and other drugs. It is a really important service that holistically supports victim-survivors.

There is a second organisation I want to briefly touch on. I had a most extraordinary experience. I got the opportunity to go to Breathing Space, which is a program for family and domestic violence perpetrators in Maylands. It is a residential program run by Communicare for men who have committed violence against women. I got the opportunity to sit with three men for over one hour to talk about their experiences as perpetrators. It was a great privilege for them to be so open with me. The Breathing Space program run by Communicare is a 12-week residential program around behaviour change, particularly around drug and alcohol use. In speaking to some of those men, I found that they were absolutely honest that meth use was at the heart of them being unable to change their ways. That Breathing Program has at its heart a support mechanism through which those men can deal with their addictions. We need to highlight that all those organisations out there that provide the service for people to deal with their drug addiction do not always work the first time. For two of those men, that was their third term into the program. These programs that support people with drug and alcohol problems are good, but they do not always work the first time. Addiction is a wicked beast that for many people is a lifelong journey.

I also want to mention other services that provide incredible supports for those with drug abuse problems. One is the Patricia Giles Centre for Non-Violence. I had the opportunity to visit that centre, I think back in November, with the Attorney General and to hear about the partnership with Holyoake, a drug and alcohol services provider. The joint project is also funded through the national partnership with the federal government around family, domestic and sexual violence responses. Importantly, we need to provide and strengthen the safe-at-home services and provide the alcohol and drug and mental health therapeutic support that victims need to bring their lives back together.

I am going to leave my remarks there because I know our lead speaker wants to make a contribution, but I say this: as has been recognised by those opposite, methamphetamine use is a wicked and evil problem that exists in our community, gets its tentacles through all sections of the community and impacts people's lives at all levels. But I reinforce the Minister for Police's point: police play a critical part, as do various agencies within government that provide a holistic response to what are really, really wicked issues in our community. It is about a whole-of-government response together with partnering, backing and supporting community sector organisations, which do the actual work of engaging with people. Importantly, we should not start from a deficit point of view within communities but build that collective in terms of making long-term differences in each town and region across Western Australia.

MR S.A. MILLMAN (Mount Lawley — Parliamentary Secretary) [6.32 pm]: I am the lead speaker for the government in response to the motion that has been moved by the Leader of the Liberal Party. I want members to imagine, if you will, a complete circle. A couple of members have already addressed this. The response to the intractable scourge of methamphetamine, and the devastating effect it can have on individuals, families and communities, needs to be a complete circle. Some members have touched on this. Once again, we have had solid contributions from the member for Cottesloe and the member for Central Wheatbelt and happily, for me, given it is my portfolio responsibility, they came at this issue from a health perspective. They identified quite clearly that drug addiction and drug use is materially and significantly a health problem. Other members tried to characterise it as a law and order problem, which I anticipated from the conservative parties, but even those who tried to characterise it as a law and order problem conceded it was also a health issue that needs health attention.

The member for Cottesloe mentioned community education and referenced the previous public health campaigns for which Western Australia is renowned, and he referred to tobacco. Within the circle that I have asked members to consider, I want members to think about the importance of health and education. I also want members to think about the economic aspect and, quite simply, the question of supply and demand. How do we tackle supply and demand? What are those social, economic, cultural and environmental factors that people are experiencing? Maybe it is employment or, as the minister has just said, family and domestic issues that are driving demand. How do we influence supply and demand? Then I want members to think about the justice response, the police response, how police tackle the supply side, what we do with meth dealers that we have caught and how we drive down supply so that we can eradicate, to the best of our ability, what is permeating our community and imposing such devastating consequences.

As she often does, the member for North West Central has said that we need a whole bunch of services around this and, again, I do not disagree with the member. I will highlight that only the McGowan and Cook Labor governments have had a cabinet working collaboratively within the whole purview of that circle that we have formulated, and then deployed a meth action plan that takes into account the fact that alcohol and drug dependence is a health issue. It looks at the ways in which we can resource our police force to tackle drug dealing and outlaw motorcycle gangs and bikies in our community who are profiting off the misery of drug addicts. It is only the McGowan government that has put in place the health infrastructure and supports that are necessary and it is the McGowan government that put in place the education as part of a coordinated and comprehensive and whole-of-government approach to the problem we are presented with.

I also want members to imagine, if you will, a circle outside that original circle and think about the members of the community. I want members to think about the media and our schools and our community service providers. In the area of health, one of the most important services that is provided by community organisations is alcohol and drug rehabilitation services. This organisation has already been mentioned, but I was honoured to undertake a tour of Palmerston Association farm and the Mallee unit in Casuarina Prison last year. This was a great demonstration of how the community sector works in collaboration and in concert with the Department of Justice and corrective services to make sure that people who are participating in rehabilitation have a pathway.

I am just going to interrupt to pick up something that the member for Cottesloe said about rehabilitation. The science, as I understand it, of rehabilitation programs is that they are much more effective when they are voluntary. I am glad the member is nodding. We want as many people as possible to engage in the rehabilitation pathway. I saw the Solid Steps graduation at the Mallee unit at Casuarina Prison, which was the first maximum-security prison in Australia to deploy a Solid Steps alcohol and other drug rehabilitation program. It was the first therapeutic, community-based AOD rehabilitation program in a male maximum-security prison in Australia. This nation-leading initiative was dependent upon the Department of Health and the Minister for Health taking an interest. It was dependent on the Minister for Corrective Services taking an interest. It was dependent on the community organisations taking an interest. It was dependent upon the prisoners recognising that unless they could break the cycle of addiction, offence, conviction, custodial term, release, addiction, offence, conviction, custodial term, they would be stuck in this cycle—perhaps the third circle I will get members to visualise—whereby they could not be freed from the oppression that this drug had on their lives.

What I saw at Casuarina was, frankly, incredible. For those who have not been to Casuarina Prison, I have been to a couple of prisons, but Casuarina was confronting. It is a maximum-security prison. You are escorted all the way in and you put all your personal effects into a locker, and then you meet these guys. These guys looked tough; they looked like solid guys, and there was a diverse mix of the community. We went in and a band was performing and artists were painting. There was a sense of personal pride and personal fulfilment with these inmates who were also students, or participants in the program, and it was incredible. The Solid Steps organisers brought back to Casuarina people who had finished their term of imprisonment to talk to their peers—their fellow inmates from when they were serving their time. Those who were still in prison, going through this program, and perhaps struggling a bit with the program's requirements, could then see what the future could hold. That provided them with hope and enough motivation to continue the work they were doing.

This is a well-supported, well-patronised, well-resourced program that really unpicks the Gordian knot that is meth addiction, and does so in a way that does not condemn these men—it is a male prison, so they were all men—or judge or criticise them. It recognises that this is an intractable problem that is hard to resolve, and that all the elements of it need to be worked through. That means wrapping around all the support and encouragement that we can.

Another great thing that that program demonstrates is that this government knows that the role of government in society is important, but not ubiquitous. We know we have a role to play, but government cannot do everything. We need to work with partner organisations and community groups, because with their lived experience and peer workforce they bring a level of expertise that the government just does not have access to. They bring a level of enlightenment and new perspectives that makes us better at delivering the services we seek to provide.

From there we went to Palmerston, which people have talked about, Cyrenian House, Holyoake and numerous other organisations within the community, and that just builds on the goodwill in the community and the experience in the community of people who have taken the terrible path through addiction but have then gone through rehabilitation and come out the other side.

In late 2014, before I was elected to Parliament, *The West Australian* ran a series of articles titled “Meth City”. The subheading was —

WA is in the grip of a methamphetamine epidemic. This series investigates the addiction, the family trauma, the crimes and the health consequences.

The journalists responsible were Cathy O’Leary, Gabrielle Knowles, Katherine Fleming and Steve Ferrier. The articles provided an overview perspective of the addicts, the justice system, the case studies, the violence, the health system, the community, the dealers, the syndicates and the meth labs.

I will refer to the article dealing with an addict called Heath. It states —

Today, Heath is a charming, charismatic fitness instructor. But before rehab, he spent years hooked on methamphetamine and came close to losing everything. Here, he gives other addicts a powerful message of hope.

There is that message of hope. One of the things I recall from before the 2017 election, as the member for Mount Lawley, is the relatively frequent meth lab explosions in apartment blocks. There were a few in Highgate, a couple in Northbridge and one or two in Maylands. We do not have that now. When I look back at the circumstances in the early teens—the 2010s through to about 2016—it seemed that all the meth that was entering the market in Western Australia was cooked locally. The problem we had then was all the meth lab explosions. The response from the police at that time was to go after the event to the people who had suffered horrendous burns and so forth, to say nothing of the deleterious impact it had on the residents in the community. I think the reporting of the wastewater data that came out last week prompted the opposition to bring this motion forward. Meth labs—touch wood—are, by and large, not a significant part of the equation today. They are definitely not as much of the equation as they were when the opposition was in government. Unfortunately, locally produced meth has been replaced by outlaw motorcycle gangs—bikie gangs—and criminal syndicates, as the Minister for Police said, that are attempting to flood the Western Australian market with meth that is produced elsewhere. It is undeniable that there was a significant drop in 2018 in response to the implementation of the government’s meth action plan in 2017 introduced by the current Speaker, the former Minister for Police. It was reported in 2018 —

Perth’s previous unwanted title of the meth capital of Australia is now a distant memory, with the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission revealing ice use in the WA capital is at its lowest since wastewater testing began in August 2016.

...

... the average number of hits in Perth per 1000 people a day is 30—half the level it was in December 2017, and below comparative figures in Victoria, South Australia and the Northern Territory.

“These latest results show meth use in Perth has dropped significantly since its peak in 2016,” Police Minister Michelle Roberts said.

“They are promising, but we all know there is still much work to do and we cannot rest while this scourge continues to afflict our community.”

Members opposite have not said this in previous comments they made in private members’ business and matters of public interest, so I was very grateful to hear them talk clearly and unambiguously about the effect of COVID. It was nice to have that front and centre in this debate. It would be good if it was similarly front and centre in other debates, particularly about the workforce and so on and so forth. Unquestionably, meth use peaked in 2016. After the election of the McGowan government, wastewater testing under the then Minister for Police, Michelle Roberts, showed that it had come well off its peak. Western Australia dropped below the other jurisdictions I mentioned—Victoria, South Australia and the Northern Territory—because we had a reduction in meth use. As the Minister for Police said in his contribution in response to the motion this evening, during COVID we had a 50 per cent reduction in meth use and a 40 per cent reduction in crime. Again, picking up the member for Cottesloe’s point—I am not an expert in criminology—there is a correlation between meth use and crime. We saw both of those go down in the midst of COVID. I think the minister appropriately said that it is not correct to say the only cause of that reduction was the border closure. A range of societal, economic and domestic factors affected the way people interacted with one another, the activities they were undertaking, the work they were doing and the stresses, the suffering and the mental health issues they were experiencing. There was a range of factors. Undoubtedly, the border closures were part of that equation, and that is why this government has been thoughtful and responsive when the Commissioner of Police has come to it with suggestions for how to tackle crime in the community and, in particular in this instance, how to tackle the importation of meth. Again, the government relied on the expert advice and evidence and it put in place mechanisms to give best effect to what had worked during the COVID pandemic. The implementation of those policy provisions is only part of the answer.

Returning to my original circle, with all members of cabinet cooperating, the next thing that I want to come back to is the work of the Attorney General. Since 2017, he has been laser focused in ensuring that he does what he can to disrupt, discredit and destroy the operations of outlaw motorcycle gangs in Western Australia. That is something that the former Barnett Liberal–National government attempted when it was in office, but the legislation that it introduced was completely ineffectual. When we came to government, the Attorney General worked with his department, the Parliamentary Counsel’s Office, the then Minister for Police, Michelle Roberts, and government members to ensure that the legislation that was brought before this place was fit for purpose—that it was the right legislation for the unique Western Australian circumstances and would provide us with the necessary response. That is in stark contrast to both the Barnett government’s legislation, which was ineffectual, and other legislation from other jurisdictions around Australia, some of which had even been struck down by the High Court. Again, we are doing similarly with the Minister for Police and the firearms legislation.

These requests have been brought to us by the police to improve community safety in Western Australia. Everyone in this chamber says that they support the work of the WA police, but this government, having had expert advice from the WA police about the measures that needed to be put in place legislatively and operationally and from a resources perspective, is practised in bringing legislation to the chamber and having it debated and passed, and having the resources allocated. As I say, we can look at the runs on the board. There is another article that I want to quote.

Dr D.J. Honey: You need an iPad.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: I know. Both my wife and I are working today, and my father-in-law is picking the boys up from school, so the iPad is at home.

An article dated 21 April 2023 by Joanna Menagh headed “Decades-long jail terms for four men snared in billion-dollar Geraldton meth bust” states —

Four men have been sentenced to decades in jail for their roles in a “sophisticated” drug importation that saw 1.2 tonnes of methamphetamine—with an estimated worth of up to \$1.1 billion dollars—smuggled into Western Australia.

The key points were —

The drugs were loaded on to a boat in a late night, mid-ocean rendezvous

I think people will remember this —

They were then taken ashore in Geraldton where police pounced

The methamphetamine was estimated to be 80 per cent pure

In addition to the 314 kilograms of meth seized this year that the police minister referenced, there is also 1.2 tonnes of methamphetamine. The coordinated and extensive police response faces significant challenges. WA is a vast state. Our coastline is immense, but when South-East Asian criminal syndicates exploit that, the response that we need has to be commensurate with the challenges that we face. The police response is there.

In the time I have remaining, the next point I want to raise, when dealing with a coordinated, collaborative, wraparound, whole-of-government response that incorporates the role of the community, is how important it is to have a cohesive and stable cabinet whose members work collaboratively and know each other’s objectives and the role that each department and portfolio plays in delivering the overall circle. We are blessed to have had an incredibly stable cabinet during the McGowan and Cook eras. We have had one Attorney General, John Quigley. We have had two Ministers for Police, Michelle Roberts and Paul Papalia, and there was a seamless transition between them. We have had two Ministers for Health, Roger Cook and Amber-Jade Sanderson. For the first time in the history of Western Australia, the Minister for Health became the Premier and the cabinet secretary became the Minister for Health. Premier Cook, when he was the Minister for Health —

Mr R.S. Love: It was a seamless transition, was it? It seemed a bit clunky at the time.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: It was a seamless transition. Hang on. I did not make any interjections.

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms M.M. Quirk): Leader of the Opposition!

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: I will not take any interjections because I only have a couple of minutes left. I do not know whether that particular interjection was the right one to make when we are talking about the cohesion, unity and stability of the opposition.

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Cottesloe!

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: I thought there would be another interjection, but that one was exactly what we wanted. There is no cohesion, stability or unity of purpose.

We had Ministers for Corrective Services from Fran Logan to Bill Johnston and Minister Papalia. I have to say that when it comes to the allocation of portfolio responsibilities, having Minister Papalia in the police and corrective services portfolios gives him the opportunity to have a line of sight over what will tackle the scourge of meth, whether it be through the actions of the police in seizing 1.2 tonnes of meth off the coast of Geraldton last year or the 370 kilograms of meth this year, or through the other work that has been done.

Wandoo Rehabilitation Prison, the alcohol and other drug treatment prison for women, has had 270 graduates from its voluntary program, like the Solid Steps program in the Mallee wing of Casuarina Prison. This minister has a line of sight all the way through on how the justice element of the government’s response to the scourge of meth is being effected.

With the stability in the health portfolio; having one minister for both police and corrective services; the stability in the Attorney General's portfolio, whose law reform and legislative agenda match those other elements; the public health emphasis through my minister, the Minister for Health, which was mentioned by the member for Cottesloe; and the work of the director general of the Department of Health, we have the necessary building blocks in place to deploy our meth action plan so we can continue to tackle the scourge.

I do not have very long left, but I want to finish with some important statistics. This comes to my final point, which is about resourcing, because all the mechanisms and levers that have been deployed by the then McGowan and now Cook governments are underpinned by dollars. We need to spend money to get these resources into the community so we can support our meth action plan. The state government is committed to addressing the harms related to alcohol and other drugs. Since 2017, the state government has allocated \$377 million to specifically address methamphetamine issues as part of our Western Australian alcohol and drug interagency strategy and methamphetamine action plan. This includes an increase in funding for prevention programs and community services for those who require additional support. Key elements include funding for methamphetamine treatment beds and community alcohol and other drug services; the establishment of 21 residential rehabilitation beds in the south west region, in Brunswick Junction and Nannup—that came up in a couple of contributions; the establishment of low medical detox services in the Kimberley region, which are due to commence shortly; the continuation of funding for school drug education programs, which aim to help school-age children make smarter choices by providing a resilience approach to alcohol and drugs education; and the delivery of training to frontline workers on how to recognise and respond to amphetamine intoxication and toxicity. As I mentioned before, there is also the opening of dedicated AOD rehabilitation services in prisons, funded by the Department of Justice, including the Wandoo Rehabilitation Prison for women and the Mallee rehabilitation centre at Casuarina Prison.

The only way we can respond to the scourge of meth is to have a coordinated, collaborative, whole-of-cabinet response, and that is exactly what the Cook Labor government is doing. We remain best placed to continue to protect the community safety of the citizens of Western Australia.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

FIREARMS BILL 2024

Consideration in Detail

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

Clause 300: Approval of storage places by Commissioner —

Debate was interrupted after the clause had been partly considered.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 301 put and passed.

Clause 302: Firearm or related thing in transit —

Mr R.S. LOVE: This clause states —

For the purposes of this Part, a firearm or related thing is *in transit* whenever it is not at an approved storage place for the firearm or related thing.

A firearm could be in the hands of a commercial carrier or the postal service, or it could be in a vehicle with the owner of the firearm. Is that what we are talking about here?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The relevance for the types of situations that the Leader of the Opposition is referring to will come up in later clauses. If he wants to address them then, it might be better. This clause states —

For the purposes of this Part, a firearm or related thing is *in transit* ...

Subsequent clauses go into the detail of the different types of transit.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I think clause 313 covers commercial transport. Does this clause also refer to people taking their firearm from one property to another?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 303: General duty of safekeeping of firearms and related things —

Mr R.S. LOVE: This clause talks about the general duty of the safekeeping of firearms and related things. If we look at the situation in which a vehicle is involved, it will be taken on board. In the day-to-day use of a firearm by, say, a primary producer, they will take the firearm from where it was stored in compliant storage in a shed or their house and have it with them through the day, presumably with a vehicle. Can the minister give me an idea of what the expectation of police will be around the security of a firearm if I were to leave it in the ute and hop in the tractor

and drive around the paddock for an hour feeding cattle or something like that? What will be reasonable in those circumstances? Is there a build-up of case law under the previous legislation that will point to that or will it be prescribed in the regulations? I want to get an idea about that.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am informed that the situation the member has referred to in which a firearm is moved around in a vehicle, for instance, is covered by clauses 305 and 306. Clause 304 is the safekeeping clause and not relevant to moving a firearm around in a vehicle. I can address that concern under clauses 305 and 306.

Ms L. METTAM: What is meant by “take all reasonable precautions” when it comes to the safekeeping of a firearm?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am informed that it is currently the case that a person should use the best available location to ensure safekeeping of the firearm, given the circumstances. That is currently the expectation.

Ms L. METTAM: When it comes to taking reasonable precautions and the storage units themselves, has any consideration been given to the grandfathering of these clauses? It was something that was raised with me regarding the transition to the new regulations. When it comes to what is reasonable, will that take into account the transition to what will be set out by the new regulations?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am informed that clause 303 refers to the general obligations around keeping a firearm safe. Clause 304 refers to the obligations with respect to storage. That would be an appropriate point at which to talk about what the member has raised. The subsequent clauses talk about vehicles moving around, which the Leader of the Opposition wants to talk on.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 304: Storage in compliant storage —

Mr R.S. LOVE: I think the member for Vasse also wanted to ask questions on this clause. I asked this question the other day—yesterday perhaps. It related to the fact that there are cabinets that are now deemed to be compliant and have been approved as storage units under the current law. Having been through that process myself recently, I know how that works.

Mr P. Papalia: Did you buy a Bunnings one?

Mr R.S. LOVE: No. Actually, I shifted an old one. I was too stingy to buy a new one.

The fact is that I had to send a picture of it with a little thing on it that said it was police approved. It was pretty old. What will happen to some of those containers under the laws that will come into effect? If they are compliant now, will they be grandfathered or will there be a time that people have to replace those units with a different storage unit?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I think I have stated this publicly. The intention will be to grandfather some storage units. In all likelihood, it will be the ones that are currently used to store small numbers of firearms. We will confront the challenge as storage obligations increase and requirements are enhanced. We will want to do that in a structured fashion anyway. We would not want everyone to feel compelled to seek storage that may not be available, for instance. I understand that other jurisdictions confronted that challenge. I think Victoria had issues when it raised its standards.

That aside, we have indicated that there will be grandfathering for those who hold a small number of firearms. The requirements around storage will become more demanding subject to the number and type of firearms people have—if they have larger numbers and more attractive or potentially dangerous firearms.

Mr R.S. LOVE: What did the minister mean when he said “small numbers”? The numbers will be small anyway because people will be able to own only five firearms on a hunting licence, or 10 in competition.

Mr P. Papalia: That’s not small.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Is the minister talking about five firearms being small or one? What are we talking about?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Those deliberations are still underway. They will be done in consultation with interested parties and peak bodies. They have not yet arrived at the number—the upper limit for grandfathering.

Mr R.S. LOVE: That process will be of interest to people when it happens. How will that occur? Will there be a review of all the storage units? Will everybody have to send in a picture? Will the existing information be reviewed? The police already have compliance programs so they must know what containers are available and the standard of them. Will they publish a list? Will there be a recall scenario so people have fair warning?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The knowledge the police hold is that licence holders are compliant with the minimum standard. Beyond that, many people may exceed that already and the police are not necessarily aware of that.

With respect to grandfathering for a low number of firearms, it will be the current minimum standard and then for a period of time they will be grandfathered. Subject to the number of firearms and the type of firearm, that might dictate other levels of security that will be required. That will be determined in consultation with interested parties.

Ms L. METTAM: To set out and provide clarity around what would be able to be grandfathered, what sort of time frame does the minister anticipate is needed to provide that information?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Without setting a hard target, the hope is that it would be by the middle of the year—well in advance of the law coming into effect. There will be requirements around more onerous or more demanding obligations around storage for the new regime for other numbers and types of firearms, so if there is a need for some people to upgrade their storage or security, providers will be capable of meeting that requirement in the time frame for transition.

Ms L. METTAM: What constitutes “compliance” and how will the minister ensure that lawful firearm owners are compliant?

Mr P. PAPALIA: As I indicated earlier, the consultation around determining levels of storage or the enhanced security required for different numbers and types of firearms is yet to be completed. That will be underway and will inform what is required for compliant storage. With respect to how someone will prove that they are compliant, it will effectively be a photograph in situ with geolocation confirmation of the site to confirm that it is where one says it is. But that sort of process will be determined during the consultation process to ensure that it is possible to achieve.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 305: Security arrangements for firearms and related things in transit —

Mr R.S. LOVE: We were talking before about security arrangements for firearms and related things in transit. There are two sections here in this block of clauses 305 and 306, so the discussion could range over the two perhaps. The word “transit” would imply the person is in possession of a firearm but somehow they are not in a vehicle. Under what conditions would the security arrangements for firearms and related things in transit apply as opposed to it being in a vehicle? Might the person be in a motel unit or something while they are on their way somewhere and they have the weapon in their possession? What is envisaged by this provision?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The Leader of the Opposition is right about his suggested situation. It could be in a hotel or somewhere where the licence holder is in transit to another place to go shooting. They should comply with those obligations in that location while they are in transit.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I do not want to dwell on this for too long because we would like to honour an agreement that the member for Roe made to complete this at a reasonable hour. I am looking at clause 305(1)(b), which talks about the regulations. Are there regulations, scenarios or practices already in place that are considered reasonable by police that might point to these regulations, or are we waiting for some sort of prescription? It would seem difficult because the scenario might be different anywhere someone is.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The current regulations are fairly lax, or non-existent you might say, with respect to detail around those measures. Things being considered are potentially requiring a trigger lock, removal of a bolt or something—an action like that to render the firearm safe. Those things are being considered but the regulations have not yet been concluded. Again, that consultation will continue and we will seek input from interested parties. Public safety will be better than what it is now.

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

Mr P. PAPALIA: That is right.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 306: Security arrangements for firearms and related things in transit in vehicle —

Mr R.S. LOVE: We are on clause 306. The question I asked before was about a pretty commonplace scenario. A person might have a firearm for whatever they might do with it, but they have other things to do on the property as well, which might mean that they leave the firearm in the ute while they work in the yards or do something else. What will the situation be there? Will it be problematic if the vehicle is unattended? The vehicle might be securely locked but it is not always easy in a smaller vehicle or a ute to make the firearm invisible. How will that work in practical terms? Will people have to make an arrangement in the vehicle?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I note that it will probably not always be viable for the firearm not to be visible, but if it is in a locked vehicle, that will be the best available measure that can be applied to comply with these requirements, noting that at the moment I do not think that is even specified. I am informed that there is a court precedent that confirms a case of a firearm being concealed and that being the best that could have been done. In this case, we are detailing some measures that will improve security. That will be a good thing. It will be reasonable if a person is on their property and it is not possible to conceal the firearm.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 307 and 308 put and passed.

Clause 309: Shared compliant storage —

Mr R.S. LOVE: I want to get an explanation around how this will work in practice. The scenario might be that there is a house with a storage unit that has been assessed as a compliant storage unit for firearms. There are two people who do not share a licence, so they each put a gun in the cabinet and lock it. One accesses the cabinet to take their own gun out and locks it again. Will that be allowed? Is that what we are talking about here? I read this several times and got more confused. For the benefit of the house, can the minister explain how this will work? That would be good.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Essentially, the member's observation is correct. In that scenario, the individuals have licences of their own and keep a couple of firearms in the same cabinet or storage system. It is envisaged that the regulations in part 3 will refer to a measure like trigger locks as a mechanism for providing additional safety —

Mr R.S. Love: From the other user?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes. They will be responsible for their firearm. It is reasonable that they share the storage because they live in the same premises.

Ms L. METTAM: Who, ultimately, will have access to the storage? Will it be each of the licensed firearm owners?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Only licensed firearm owners will have the key or access via combination. I have been informed that this is a recommendation of the Law Reform Commission report to enable shared compliant storage. We are trying to find the number of the recommendation. Recommendation 115 of the Law Reform Commission report states —

In the case of co-habiting licence holders the Firearms Legislation should permit them to share their storage safes on condition that each firearm in the shared safe has a fitted trigger lock.

Clause put and passed.**Clause 310: Regulations: storage —**

Mr R.S. LOVE: Clause 310 refers to the regulations for storage. It states —

- (1) The regulations may make provision for or with respect to the storage of firearms and related things, including provision for ...
 - (a) requirements as to how a firearm or related thing must be stored, including requirements as to the design, construction, placement and fixing of storage facilities;
 - (b) requirements for security arrangements on premises to be used for the storage of firearms and related things, including requirements for security alarms, premises surveillance and surveillance monitoring.
- (2) The regulations may prescribe circumstances in which a firearm or related thing is not required to be stored in compliant storage.

I have a question on clause 310(1)(b), which is the requirement for other security measures.

Is it envisaged that a person with a number of guns that does not exceed their limit—10 for the primary producer licence, 10 for the competition licence and five for the hunting licence—will not need elaborate security devices? I am not talking about collectors with a very large number of guns. Alternatively, is it envisaged that measures other than a compliant cabinet will be required for those smaller holdings of firearms?

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is not that specific. It will depend on not only the numbers, but also the risk associated with the location, the types of firearms and the attractiveness and other considerations around the need for additional security. As I indicated earlier, some licence holders exceed the minimum requirement already and, subject to consultation with interested parties around what the new storage obligations will look like, some of the current licence holders may already meet the future requirement. We cannot really say they will all be required to upgrade or they all will not be. It will be subject to each circumstance. The considerations around the regulations for additional storage are prompted by consultation at the outset. The Western Australian Firearms Community Alliance in particular in the early stages of this consultation advocated for increased storage obligations as a means to enhance public safety, as did other people. The Law Reform Commission report recommended that that is an approach to adopt as well. Some licence holders will need to upgrade their storage, but some may not because they already exceed the minimum and they may have exceeded the future intended requirement.

Clause put and passed.**Clause 311 put and passed.****Clause 312: Grounds for refusal or cancellation of firearm authority storage arrangements and facilities —**

Ms L. METTAM: Can this decision be appealed at the State Administrative Tribunal?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes, because it is a decision by the commissioner.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 313: Commercial transport of firearms and related things —

Mr R.S. LOVE: This clause has been troublesome for quite some time for people wanting to transport their firearms across Australia in particular. The National Party has raised the issue on various occasions with numerous organisations, including Australia Post and the Western Australia Police Force. I am pleased to see this clause in here. I am seeking an understanding. Clause 313(3) states —

The regulations may make provision for or with respect to the requirements that must be complied with by a person in connection with a commercial firearm transport activity.

Given the issues that we have had getting carriers et cetera for firearms, can I have an assurance that the regulations will be made with a view to doing what we can to enable the commercial transit of firearms in a manner that has been very difficult in Western Australia over the last few years?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The short answer is yes. I would like to acknowledge the advocacy of the Western Australian Firearms Traders Association in this regard. They have been engaged with police for some time, calling for reform of this part of the law. This is the solution and I think they will be happy about it.

Clause put and passed.**Clause 314 put and passed.****Clause 315: Commissioner may make firearms prohibition order —**

Mr R.S. LOVE: This provision allows the commissioner to make firearms prohibition orders if the commissioner is satisfied that —

- (a) the person is not a fit and proper person ...
- (b) possession of a firearm by the person would likely result in unlawful use ...
- (c) the person is a member of a disqualifying organisation; or
- (d) it is otherwise in the public interest to make a firearms prohibition order against the person.

I am very much in favour of paragraphs (a), (b) and (c), provided (a) is a process that we all understand and feel comfortable with. I think we are still discussing a few things around the health aspects. Paragraph (d) reads —

it is otherwise in the public interest to make a firearms prohibition order against the person.

Can the minister give me an understanding why that paragraph is required and how he would see it operating?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Member, this essentially replicates the status quo. The law is one that we passed through this place a couple of years ago, with the exception of paragraph (c), “the person is a member of a disqualifying organisation” because at that time, we did not have “disqualifying organisations” available to us. Beyond that, nothing in here is not already the law today. It will enable the commissioner to have the ability to act in the public interest to make a firearms prohibition order against a person. It will give flexibility for the commissioner to make one of those orders in the public interest.

Mr R.S. LOVE: The minister pointed out that provision (d) is currently in legislation. Can the minister enlighten the house whether it has been used; and, if so, how often?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Leader of the Opposition, prohibition orders generally have been employed. I understand 48 are active. I do not know whether that consideration was specifically employed for the issuing of prohibition orders.

Clause put and passed.**Clauses 316 to 332 put and passed.****Clause 333: Review of decisions by Tribunal —**

Mr R.S. LOVE: This clause falls under part 9, “Review of decisions”. We know that some decisions have been taken away from certain measures of review. Clause 333 states —

A person aggrieved by a decision can apply to the Tribunal for a review of the decision.

However, “decision” is defined under clause 332 as —

... a decision to impose a restriction, limitation or condition) made by or on behalf of the Commissioner, or a delegate of the Commissioner, under this Act;

We have skipped over quite a bit, so can the minister list the matters that can be reviewed by the State Administrative Tribunal, and the matters that have been taken away from that process?

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is any decision. The Leader of the Opposition referred to the definition “a decision to impose a restriction, limitation or condition”. It includes those, but it does not exclude anything else, so it is any decision. Whenever the commissioner’s power to make a decision is used, it is subject to appeal.

Mr R.S. LOVE: That is interesting because the rhetoric has been that people have gained legal access to large numbers of firearms, but in a way that the commissioner has said that they should not have access, and they have gone to SAT and received an approval. Is the minister saying that that system could still occur under the current regime?

Mr P. PAPALIA: This provision provides much greater clarity around the commissioner's decision-making process and what the commissioner can consider. Therefore, it is anticipated that that will result in less likelihood of successful challenges to those decisions, where they can be challenged. Beyond that, there is also the creation of disqualifying orders under clauses 9 and 10. Those are not a decision of the commissioner and are therefore not subject to appeal before SAT. There is no decision to be made; these offences attract a disqualifying order, so they cannot be appealed. I think that is the rhetoric that the Leader of the Opposition referred to, with regard to those offences.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 334: Hearsay evidence in review proceedings —

Mr R.S. LOVE: Clause 334 makes provision for hearsay evidence in review proceedings. Can the minister give me an idea of why this clause appears to seek to bring about representations that can be made that would not normally be admissible as evidence? Is that correct? Can the minister explain why this provision is required?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am informed by people who know that the tribunal can accept evidence of that nature already, and it will give whatever weight it decides to that evidence. That complies with the current practices of SAT and it will also enable the use of body-worn camera vision from police to potentially be used before SAT.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 335: Notifying Tribunal of exempt material —

Mr R.S. LOVE: This clause refers to the commissioner letting the State Administrative Tribunal know that there is exempt material. Exempt material means material that is exempt under the Freedom of Information Act 1992. Clause 335(3)(a) states —

the Attorney General cannot issue a certificate under the SAT Act section 159(2) in relation to notified exempt material;

Why is that provision in there and what is its effect?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am informed that this entire clause is the current status quo. The purpose of clause 335(3)(a) is to prevent police being issued an order by the Attorney General to release information to SAT. There may be reasons for the police wanting to retain that information in confidence depending on the source, the nature of the information and the intelligence indications around compromising sources and the like.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 336 to 338 put and passed.

Clause 339: Surrender of firearms and related things —

Ms M. BEARD: I need clarity on this, although I think I know the answer. If people go past the amnesty date and need to surrender their firearm but have not voluntarily handed their gun back, will they be able to sell it interstate?

Mr P. PAPALIA: If it is a licensed firearm, they could, but that is not what this clause relates to. It relates to unlicensed firearms. I think I understood the nature of the member's question. People can sell their firearm after the completion of the buyback scheme and until the act comes into effect. If they want to sell it or dispose of it lawfully, they can.

Ms M. BEARD: That is what I was alluding to. If it is unlicensed, does it have to go back to the police station? Can it not be sold to an interstate dealer or buyer? Does it have to be licensed?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Sorry, if the member is referring to someone being in possession of an unlicensed firearm, there is an enduring amnesty. That is an enduring amnesty under a national cabinet agreement. Right now, totally unrelated to this, if anyone out there has an unlicensed firearm that they want to surrender to police, there is an amnesty. They will not get themselves in trouble. They can avail themselves of that opportunity, but they should probably notify the police station that they are coming with it before they go.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 340 to 344 put and passed.

Clause 345: Power to enter and search vehicles and places —

Mr R.S. LOVE: This clause will provide the power to enter and search vehicles and places. Are there provisions in other legislation or other areas of police procedure that allow police to exercise similar powers of entry without a warrant to those that will be exercised under this provision?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am informed that under the Criminal Investigation Act, there are general powers to search without a warrant under certain circumstances. I am aware that under this legislation, prohibition orders will enable a search without warrant, as occurs under the Misuse of Drugs Act when a border search area is in force; police can search without a warrant within those areas. There are probably others, including a vehicle search authorisation. There are a number of other bits of legislation that enable it.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 346 to 410 put and passed.

Clause 411: Continued operation of 1973 Act authority as transitional authority —

Mr R.S. LOVE: This is about the changeover. I am happy for the minister to talk in more general terms and then we can move on. I think the minister has an amendment a little further on.

Mr P. Papalia: That is true.

Mr R.S. LOVE: This will probably be the end of it for me. Could the minister explain the process of the authority provided under the 1973 act as we move towards transition? We might stop at part 17 for a moment to get the expected dates of the repeal of the old act and the regulations. Can the minister explain how the transition will occur so that people can get an idea? I do not think we will need to go through everything in detail if that is done.

Mr P. PAPALIA: This transitional authority is to enable an orderly and controlled process to move licence holders to the new law from the old act and the authorisations under it so we do not have everyone trying to do it at once, creating difficulties or concerns. Overall, most firearm authority holders under the 1973 act will be able to retain their licence permit approval or exemption during the transitional period, which will become a transitional authority until renewal, when they may be issued a replacement authority, which is a licence permit or approval under the new act. The commissioner may extend the term of a transitional authority if required. Transitional authorities are subject to the provisions of the new act relating to the cancellation and supervision. The commissioner will be able to suspend, cancel or amend the term of a transitional authority according to provisions of the new act—for example, the fit and proper requirement. This will be an unlikely scenario and it will not impact most firearm authority holders. We understand, of course, that we will have new disqualified persons who will lose their firearm authorities upon commencement, and they are listed in clause 9 of the bill.

Mr R.S. LOVE: As part of the transitional authority, the minister tabled in the house this document—the mandatory health assessment briefing note. It refers to the transition, and has options 1, 2 and 3. This is to do with the health system. Would that be commensurate with the transition of those licences? It refers to a one–five-year period or a two–10-year period.

Mr P. PAPALIA: We went with the five-year period. I want to reiterate what I said at the outset. That was a briefing note with observations or recommendations from the police at a point in time. It also had, as an attachment, a form that may or may not be the form. The document is an indicator of what was being considered at that point. The Leader of the Opposition can see where I have circled option 1, which we went with, in the recommendations.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 412: Cancellation of transitional authority —

Mr P. PAPALIA: This is not necessarily related to this clause. As an additional piece of information about clause 411, the reason we selected five years is because that will be the maximum term of the new licence. That is an opportunity for people to have a five-year licence, so it aligns with that.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 413 to 437 put and passed.

Clause 438: *Firearms Act 1973* repealed —

Mr R.S. LOVE: Clause 438 is the repeal of the Firearms Act 1973 and subsequent to that is a separate clause, clause 439, which is the repeal of the 1974 regulations. If the transitional period is five years, as has been selected, does that mean that we expect the repeal of this provision to come into operation in five years from commencement?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Leader of the Opposition, the answer is no. The only thing that will have a five-year transition period is the health assessments. Beyond that, the old act will be repealed in March next year and the new act will commence in March next year.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 439: *Firearms Regulations 1974* repealed —

Mr R.S. LOVE: The regulations that are now in place will be repealed, presumably when the old act is also repealed. That indicates that the new regulations must be formed and ready to be gazetted at that time. Will the transitional period from one set of regulations to another be during that period or will there be a savings provision for the old regulations for some time?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The new regulations will be gazetted in December and come into effect in March.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 440: Act amended —

Ms L. METTAM: Similarly, in relation to the consequential amendments to the Children and Community Services Act 2004, when will those changes come into effect?

Mr P. PAPALIA: All consequential amendments will take effect when the new act comes into effect in March.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 441 to 443 put and passed.

Clause 444 put and negatived.

New clause 444 —

Mr P. PAPALIA: I move —

Page 216, after line 24 — To insert —

444. Section 227A inserted

At the end of Part 14 insert:

227A. Savings

A reference in Schedule 1 clause 2 to an offence under a provision of the *Firearms Act 2024* Part 5 Divisions 1 to 4 includes an offence against the regulations made under the *Firearms Act 1973* section 6(1).

Clause 444 of the bill was going to insert a new provision, proposed section 229, in part 15 of the Corruption, Crime and Misconduct Act 2003. Parliamentary Counsel's Office alerted the WA Police Force that a change to the Firearms Bill would be needed as a consequence of the Corruption, Crime and Misconduct Amendment Bill 2023. That other bill was before the other place when the Firearms Bill was introduced, but it has now passed the Parliament. The Corruption, Crime and Misconduct Amendment Bill contained provisions to insert proposed sections 229 to 233 into part 15 of the Corruption, Crime and Misconduct Act. As a consequence of those reforms, the provision in clause 444 of the Firearms Bill needed to be updated. It is proposed that we insert a new clause 444 into the Firearms Bill that will insert proposed section 227A into part 14 of the Corruption, Crime and Misconduct Act 2003. The substantive provisions in proposed section 227A are the same as those previously contained in proposed section 229. However, Parliamentary Counsel's Office determined that proposed section 227A would be better placed in part 14 of the Corruption, Crime and Misconduct Act rather than part 15 of that act. This change in placement has no actual or practical effect on the substantive changes being made to the Corruption, Crime and Misconduct Act 2003.

New clause put and passed.

Clauses 445 to 492 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

ELECTRICITY INDUSTRY AMENDMENT (ALTERNATIVE ELECTRICITY SERVICES) BILL 2023

Returned

Bill returned from the Council with amendments.

House adjourned at 8.07 pm
