



Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

FORTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION
2024

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 7 August 2024

Legislative Assembly

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

VISITORS — COOGEE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [12.01 pm]: On behalf of the member for Cockburn, I would like to welcome the students from Coogee Primary School and their teacher, Cassy Grant, to the Speaker's gallery this morning. Welcome.

PAPER TABLED

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

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW APPLICATION BILL 2024

Appropriations

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriations for the purposes of the bill.

MEMBER FOR ROCKINGHAM

Leave of Absence — Notice of Motion

Dr A.D. Buti (Minister for Education) gave notice that at the next sitting of the house he would move —

That the member for Rockingham be given leave of absence from the Legislative Assembly up to and including 19 September 2024 on account of parental leave.

BILLS

Notice of Motion to Introduce

1. Towing Services Bill 2024.

Notice of motion given by **Dr A.D. Buti (Minister for Education)** on behalf of Ms R. Saffioti (Minister for Transport).

2. Mining Amendment (Transfer of Royalty Administration) Bill 2024.

Notice of motion given by **Dr A.D. Buti (Minister for Education)** on behalf of Mr D.R. Michael (Minister for Mines and Petroleum).

3. Planning and Development Amendment (Metropolitan Region Scheme) Bill 2024.

Notice of motion given by **Mr J.N. Carey (Minister for Planning)**.

4. Reserves Bill 2024.

Notice of motion given by **Mr D.A.E. Scaife (Parliamentary Secretary)**.

CORRECTIVE SERVICES — PRISON OFFICERS — REGIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM

Statement by Minister for Corrective Services

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Corrective Services) [12.04 pm]: I rise to update the house on the progress of regional recruitment initiatives conducted by Corrective Services to boost prison officer staffing numbers across the custodial estate.

Corrective Services has recommended the delivery of the entry-level training program in regional areas to enhance the recruitment of local prison officers. Previously, applicants from regional areas had to travel to Perth to undertake the ELTP prior to their placement as a prison officer. This presented a considerable barrier to the recruitment of regional staff and hindered efforts to grow prison officer numbers in regional areas. This year, there will be four ELTPs conducted at regional prisons. There is currently a training program running at Albany Regional Prison, with recruits graduating on 22 August. A second program will also commence later this month in Albany. Further training programs will commence at Greenough Regional Prison and Eastern Goldfields Regional Prison in September. An ELTP is also planned to commence at Bunbury Regional Prison in the first quarter of 2025, with further regional training programs to be scheduled throughout that year.

The response from communities has been promising, with 520 applications received for regional areas so far in 2024. This includes 204 applications for Albany, 108 for Greenough and 92 for Eastern Goldfields. Regional training programs form part of Corrective Services' broader plan to boost staffing numbers across the custodial estate. It is estimated that 298 prison officers will be recruited and trained in 2024.

It is fantastic to see Western Australians embrace living and working in our outstanding regions. Chris, Dawn and Mia, a family who all work at Eastern Goldfields Regional Prison, are wonderful examples of the dedicated individuals we have working in Corrective Services across the state. The family moved to Kalgoorlie five years ago from Perth after Chris got a job as a prison officer at Eastern Goldfields Regional Prison. Dawn has since become a nurse manager and Mia an education clerk there. They all agree that the goldfields provides a fantastic work–life balance and they well and truly feel part of the community. Although their jobs are difficult, they find them extremely rewarding, and they bond over a shared love of helping people. I understand that Mia wants to follow in her father’s footsteps and become a prison officer, which is great to hear.

I regularly visit WA prisons and am consistently blown away by the work ethic, drive and motivation of our prison officers. They keep the community safe and often change lives with the work that they do. I am pleased that Commissioner Brad Royce has announced a new range of initiatives to recognise service, including a pandemic response medal to acknowledge the incredible work performed by prison officers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

I encourage Western Australians across the state to consider Corrective Services as a rewarding career.

GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA JOHN MONASH SCHOLARSHIP

Statement by Minister for Education

DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale — Minister for Education) [12.07 pm]: Last night, I was pleased to attend the 2024 John Monash Leadership Series event at the University of Western Australia. It was fantastic to listen to Professor Fiona Wood, AO, in conversation with 2012 John Monash scholar and UWA graduate Dr Sam Brophy-Williams. The Leadership Series is run through the General Sir John Monash Foundation, which was established in 2001. The foundation administers a number of scholarships with the aim of promoting leadership, knowledge and international connections and of building Australia’s capabilities for the future.

At that event, I announced that the Cook Labor government will contribute \$5 million to the Monash foundation to establish a perpetual fund for the government of Western Australia John Monash scholarship. This fund will allow for at least one outstanding Western Australian postgraduate student per year to be a scholar in their field through the awarding of the government of Western Australia John Monash scholarship. Scholarship recipients will receive a contribution of \$80 000 towards tuition and living expenses per year of study up to a maximum of \$240 000 for three years of study, plus travel support. Applicants can apply for scholarships to undertake a master’s degree or a PhD. Applicants will be assessed on their academic excellence, leadership and future capacity to have a positive impact on society, and they can apply to study in any discipline and at any institution in the world. The government of Western Australia John Monash scholarship will be available to those who have graduated from a Western Australian university and whose field of study benefits at least one of the following: teaching and education, nursing, regional Western Australia, and disadvantaged communities. I encourage our best and brightest postgraduate students to consider applying for the government of Western Australia John Monash scholarship. I look forward to seeing what their research can do to further our knowledge and for the broader Western Australian community.

PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS — FLY-IN FLY-OUT WORKERS

Statement by Minister for Industrial Relations

MS S.F. McGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Industrial Relations) [12.10 pm]: I rise to inform the house that the draft code of practice titled “Psychosocial hazards at work for fly-in fly-out (FIFO) workers in the resources and construction sectors” is now open for public consultation. In response to revelations of extensive sexual harassment and abuse in the state’s FIFO mining industry, the Cook government requested that the Work Health and Safety Commission of Western Australia and the Mining and Petroleum Advisory Committee review the existing FIFO code. After a broad review, this draft code incorporates changes in workplace practices brought about by the Cook government’s modernised work health and safety legislation. Once finalised, it is intended that the code will be used by people who have duties in the workplace to manage exposure to psychosocial hazards and risk in the resources and construction sectors. It is intended to apply to workplaces in Western Australia that utilise fly-in fly-out, drive-in drive-out and bus-in bus-out work arrangements that are covered by the Work Health and Safety Act and supporting regulations.

A draft code of practice to manage health and safety in employer-provided accommodation is currently being developed to complement this code. The draft code has been published on the open consultation page on the Department of Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety’s website for a period of three months, with the submission portal closing on 24 October 2024. The Work Health and Safety Commission will collate the feedback for government to consider a final FIFO code. All submissions will be made publicly available, unless the submitter requests anonymity.

Our government is focused on ensuring that all Western Australian workers, including women employed in the resources sector, are safe and protected. This is an industry that prides itself on safety as a core priority, but we know that the issue of women’s safety has been overlooked for far too long. The Cook Labor government remains

committed to eliminating inappropriate behaviours in Western Australian workplaces, including the mining sector, but we cannot do it alone. That is why it is important that we hear from industry and the broader public on the draft FIFO code by 24 October.

KEYSTART — LOANS

Statement by Minister for Housing

MR J.N. CAREY (Perth — Minister for Housing) [12.12 pm]: I rise to inform the house about our changes to the Keystart property price and income limits to assist more Western Australians to achieve their home ownership goals. Keystart's new property price and income limits will see more Western Australians eligible for the scheme, with a new product settings mechanism. Keystart's property price limits will now be reviewed against annualised median house prices sourced from the Real Estate Institute of Western Australia. These settings are dynamic and will increase or decrease to reflect market conditions.

The changes support Keystart's mission of helping more Western Australians into home ownership sooner. Since its inception in 1989 under the WA Labor government, Keystart has assisted more than 122 000 Western Australians achieve their home ownership goals. Our government is acutely aware of the pressure on the housing market and its impact on many Western Australians, and we continue to do everything we can to boost accommodation options and housing supply. These Keystart changes are just the latest cost-of-living relief measure we have delivered, alongside our \$400 household energy credit, student assistance payment, increase in social housing income eligibility limits and rent relief scheme. This change demonstrates our government's commitment to ensuring that more Western Australians can achieve their home ownership goals.

ABORIGINAL RANGER PROGRAM

Statement by Minister for Environment

MR R.R. WHITBY (Baldvis — Minister for Environment) [12.14 pm]: I would like to update the house on the Cook Labor government's Aboriginal ranger program. We launched the Aboriginal ranger program in 2017 as a five-year \$20 million grant program administered by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions. Since then, we have more than quadrupled that investment by putting \$100 million towards the program. This has not just supported WA's Aboriginal empowerment strategy or our state's Closing the Gap commitments; it has meant thousands of on-country jobs throughout regional WA. It is a key plank of our government's commitment to working with traditional owners, support for regional jobs and efforts to protect Western Australia's environment.

This program has been successful from the start. Its first phase consisted of three funding rounds in which grants were allocated to 28 Aboriginal organisations to support 35 ranger programs throughout WA. This led to employment for 1 257 people—a big number—98 per cent of whom were Aboriginal and 45 per cent of whom were women. We leveraged more than \$11 million of additional funds in that time, which supported active management of almost 80 000 hectares of land—an area four times the size of Bali. Through the program's second phase, which commenced in 2021, we funded and supported a further 56 Aboriginal organisations to implement 77 ranger programs. Now, through the eighth round under this phase of the program, we have awarded an additional \$16.5 million to 12 Aboriginal organisations throughout WA. This money will support projects addressing climate action, cultural tourism and youth engagement, including a dedicated program offering youth traineeships and pathways for teenagers and young adults, and projects that will enable Aboriginal people to participate in the renewable energy and carbon capture sector.

In celebrating this program's success, I would like to acknowledge the work of Hon Don Punch, Minister for Regional Development, and the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development for its administration of the royalties for regions program, which largely funds the Aboriginal ranger program. I also thank Hon Dr Tony Buti, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, for his continued support of the Aboriginal ranger program and its aim of empowering Aboriginal Australians in WA.

Research shows that for every \$1 invested in this program, about \$3 worth of social, economic, cultural and environmental value is created. By investing in this program, the Cook Labor government is demonstrating its steadfast commitment to making real, tangible and practical differences on the ground for Indigenous communities.

POLICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2024

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by **Mr P. Papalia (Minister for Police)**, and read a first time.

Explanatory memorandum presented by the minister.

Second Reading

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Police) [12.18 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

Recent significant incidents in other parts of Australia, and serious incidents in Western Australia, indicate that the use of knives and other edged weapons when committing offences is a serious issue. Tougher measures are needed in both

penalties for offences and additional powers for police officers so that members of the community can feel safe going about their everyday lives. In 2021, laws were passed in Queensland to give police officers the power to use metal detectors in certain locations to detect the presence of concealed knives and other edged weapons. The power is exercised without a warrant and without the police officer needing to have a reasonable suspicion of any offence having been committed. In April 2023, the original Queensland law, now known as “Jack’s Law”, was extended to enable police with a senior officer authorisation to use handheld metal detectors to detect unlawfully possessed knives and other weapons in all safe night precincts and also at other locations. In December 2023, the Queensland Police Service announced that 400 weapons had been seized since the passing of “Jack’s Law”, with more than 39 000 individuals having been scanned. This proactive approach led to the charging of 1 070 individuals with almost 1 900 offences.

I will now outline the particular measures that the government is taking through the Police Legislation Amendment Bill 2024.

Use of metal detectors: The bill takes a stronger stance on our five protected entertainment precincts, which will be established as permanent designated areas where police may use a metal detector to detect the presence of edged weapons. This recognises that these precincts are entertainment and socialising hubs characterised by a high concentration of people and the consumption of alcohol, which makes any unlawful carrying of knives a particular risk to community safety. WA Police Force operational policy will determine what days and times the metal detection powers will be used.

Similar to the Queensland laws, the bill also introduces amendments to the Criminal Investigation Act 2006 to establish, with a senior officer’s authorisation, temporary designated areas where the new powers to scan persons with a metal detector to detect the presence of knives and other edged weapons may be exercised. This will occur when a senior officer is of the opinion that it is necessary to do so to safeguard the area or place, or people who are in or may enter the place or area. This could be on the basis that there is likely to be a large gathering of persons at a relevant place, such as a community, entertainment or sporting event, or the officer may have intelligence information that persons who may be in possession of knives or edged weapons may be gathering at a relevant place. A senior officer declaration cannot be in force for more than 12 hours and cannot be for an area that is larger than three square kilometres. Further, if the officer who made the declaration is an inspector, the declaration must be ratified by a police officer of or above the rank of superintendent within three hours. If it is not so ratified, the declaration will cease to have effect. This additional senior officer ratification is similar to the requirement for activation of a border search area under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1981. Under these provisions in the bill, this will mean that places within a designated area, such as shopping centres, licensed premises, train and bus station platforms and similar places, will all fall within the definition of public places, thereby allowing police officers to conduct a metal detection scan on people in these places.

In a designated area, police officers will be provided with two key powers: to stop and detain a person for the purpose of undergoing a metal detection scan and to conduct a metal detection scan on the person. A metal detection scan is a non-invasive scan involving either the use of a handheld metal detection device that passes over the outer clothing of the person and their property or the person passing through an archway-type scanner, like those used at airports. When the scanner activates, a person will be required to produce any object that may have caused the scanner to indicate that metal is present and then be required to re-submit to a further scan.

The bill provides several safeguards to ensure that use of the new powers is measured and reasonable, including that the powers may be used only in a public place within a designated area; the powers cannot be used in any private residence, private hotel room or private lodging room or similar private premises; police officers must inform people about the requirement to be scanned; police officers must exercise these powers in the least invasive way that is practicable in the circumstances; and police officers can detain a person only for so long as is reasonably necessary to exercise the powers. From an operational perspective, police will activate their body-worn camera to record all engagements.

Any person who refuses to undergo a metal detection scan or refuses to produce any object when requested will commit an offence. This offence will have a penalty of a fine of up to \$12 000 or a term of imprisonment of up to 12 months, or both. This penalty is consistent with the penalty that applies under section 153 of the Criminal Investigation Act 2006 when a person refuses to comply with an order given by a police officer.

The scheme will require the Commissioner of Police to provide information in the agency’s annual report about the exercise of these new metal detection scanning powers. The annual report would include the number of people scanned in designated areas, the number of charges laid under the Weapons Act 1999 in respect of edged weapons detected, the number of charges laid under the Criminal Investigation Act 2006 for failure to comply with being scanned and any other information requested by the Minister for Police. Three years after the reforms commence, a review of the operation and effectiveness of the metal detection scanning scheme will be undertaken. A report of the review will be required to be tabled in Parliament by the minister.

Possession of edged weapons: Tougher measures are needed in penalties for offences involving knives and other edged weapons. To do so, the bill amends the Weapons Act 1999 to create a new category of weapons. This scheme replicates the same limitations that currently apply to controlled weapons; that is, it will be an offence to be in possession of knives or edged weapons unless the person has a lawful excuse.

A person charged with a new edged-weapon offence will bear the onus of proving that he or she had a lawful excuse for possessing the edged weapon. Further, as is currently the case under the Weapons Act 1999 with regard to controlled weapons, a person who has a lawful excuse will still commit an offence if they possess an edged weapon in a manner that could reasonably be expected to cause someone to be injured or disabled or to fear that someone will be injured or disabled. In addition, a lawful excuse to carry or possess an edged weapon will not include the excuse that the weapon is carried or possessed for defence.

However, given that edged weapons are more serious items than controlled weapons, a higher penalty will apply for persons found in unlawful possession of those items. The penalty will be up to three years' imprisonment and a fine of \$36 000. Provision has been made to list or exempt certain items by way of regulations. Edged weapons such as ballistic knives, swords disguised as canes and knuckle knives will continue to be classified as prohibited weapons, which are totally banned from possession. The bill replicates the provisions of section 8A of the Weapons Act 1999, which currently ban the sale of, and place some limitations on the supply of, controlled weapons to children. However, the higher three-year penalty will apply when the items are edged weapons.

As a consequence of these new offence and penalty provisions for edged weapons and to ensure parity with the Weapons Act 1999, there is a need to increase the penalty for offences that involve prohibited weapons, which is currently three years' imprisonment and a fine of \$36 000. Given the nature of the items that are classified as prohibited weapons and that an absolute prohibition applies in relation to possession, it is proposed that in future these will be classified as crimes and the new penalty for this crime will be up to five years' imprisonment and a fine of \$60 000 on indictment and up to three years' imprisonment and a fine of \$36 000 if the offence is dealt with summarily.

It is recognised that, as has been seen here and in other parts of Australia, juveniles are committing offences with knives and edged weapons. Under the Young Offenders Act 1994, police officers have a number of diversionary options available to deal with juveniles who have committed offences. These include the ability to issue a caution or to refer the offender to a juvenile justice team. These diversionary options are not available for any serious offence that is listed in schedules 1 or 2 of the Young Offenders Act 1994. None of the current offences contained in the Weapons Act 1999 is listed in schedules 1 or 2 of the Young Offenders Act 1994 and this will remain the case. However, given the harder line being taken on offences that involve edged and prohibited weapons, it is not considered appropriate to allow for cautions to be given for those offences. The bill will therefore amend the Young Offenders Act 1994 to preclude the ability of police to caution a juvenile who has committed an offence in relation to prohibited or edged weapons. This will mean that referral of the offender to a juvenile justice team will become the first diversionary option available to police officers.

Move-on order reforms: A move-on order made under section 27 of the Criminal Investigation Act 2006 enables a police officer to order a person who is in a public place or in a vehicle used for public transport to leave it, or a part of it, as specified by the officer. These orders are issued by police officers to address conduct that may constitute a breach of the peace or as a diversionary measure to prevent the occurrence of criminal offences, including violence, and require a person to leave a specified place for a reasonable period of time up to 24 hours to prevent a repetition of that conduct.

A person who does not comply with a move on order without a reasonable excuse commits an offence contrary to section 153(1) of the Criminal Investigation Act 2006. A move on order must be given to a person in writing on a prescribed form. There is, however, no power in the Criminal Investigation Act 2006 to require a person to remain "on the spot" in the public place for the purpose of issuing a move on order. Frontline police officers regularly experience difficulty in serving a person with a written notice of a move on order as the person frequently leaves the place before the order is issued. In such a situation, an officer would need to arrest the person to issue them with the move on order. This is inconsistent with the principal purpose of such an order, which is to quickly remove a person from an area, not to arrest and detain them in custody. The bill proposes to amend section 27 of the Criminal Investigation Act 2006 to give police officers the power to verbally direct a person to accompany the police officer to a suitable place to issue a move on order, which may include a police station or police facility, and to remain in that place, for the purpose of giving a move on order to that person.

These proposed amendments are consistent with recommendation 13 of the June 2018 *Statutory review of the Criminal Investigation Act 2006: Final report* and are also consistent with powers currently contained within the Restraining Orders Act 1997 and the Road Traffic Act 1974. It is proposed that it be an offence if a person without reasonable excuse fails to comply with a direction to remain in place or accompany the police officer to another place. This offence will have a penalty of a fine of up to \$6 000. Additionally, the bill will provide the power for the electronic issuance of move on orders. As I outlined earlier, the measures contained in the Police Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 are about strengthening the protection of our community through enhancing the ability of our police to perform their duties. I commend the bill to the house.

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

YOUNG OFFENDERS AND PRISONS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2024*Introduction and First Reading*

Bill introduced, on motion by **Mr P. Papalia (Minister for Corrective Services)**, and read a first time.

Explanatory memorandum presented by the minister.

Second Reading

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Corrective Services) [12.33 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

The Young Offenders and Prisons Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 will amend the Prisons Act 1981 and the Young Offenders Act 1994 to provide a clear legal framework for circumstances in which the deployment of prison officers to a detention centre is necessary.

On 22 June 2023, the Premier and I announced a range of measures to enhance the safety and welfare of staff and detainees in the state's youth detention facilities. These measures included deploying additional prison officers into detention centres to provide greater security and safety in situations in which there are staffing requirements or emergencies.

Youth detention facilities in Western Australia manage a fluctuating cohort of often challenging young people. Unfortunately, the complex nature of detainees can sometimes result in violent behaviour that impacts the operations of the facilities. As a result of challenging and often violent behaviour, the usual daily programs and services that are designed to assist and educate detainees, including those centred on therapeutic care, may not be able to be safely and securely accommodated. To assist in improving the security and safety at youth detention centres so they can continue providing the services and programs that detainees require, this bill will create a new framework under which at the request of the chief executive officer under the Young Offenders Act the CEO under the Prisons Act may deploy prison officers to a detention centre for as long as is required.

The intent of the bill is to utilise the deployment of prison officers to detention centres when circumstances require it; the intent is not to replace custodial officers with prison officers. As such, the Cook government remains committed to continuing to boost staffing in our youth facilities, with recruitment and training of new youth custodial officers continuing. This bill will also ensure that YCOs can continue to focus on rehabilitation, mentoring and the delivery of the new model of care.

The bill will create a two-stage process for the deployment of prison officers to detention centres. The first stage is the designation of a prison officer as a special custodial officer, which I will refer to as an SCO. By designating a prison officer as an SCO in the first instance, it will allow all necessary training to be conducted and working with children checks to be obtained before operational needs arise for the direction and deployment of an SCO into a youth detention centre.

The bill will introduce a deemed designation to provide for emergency situations when for reasons such as staff unavailability or current deployment there may be no SCOs available to assist. The deeming provision will operate by allowing the CEO under the Prison Act, when requested by the CEO under the Young Offenders Act, to direct a prison officer who has not been formally designated as an SCO to assist in a detention centre. These prison officers will be deemed to have been an SCO from the time that the direction is given for a maximum period of 48 hours. If the prison officers are required beyond that time, the prison officer must be designated as an SCO via the new two-stage process that will be introduced in the bill.

The bill will also provide SCOs with the same powers, responsibilities and functions as custodial officers. The only difference between the powers available to SCOs and youth custodial officers will be that SCOs may be authorised to use a control weapon if certain conditions are met. These conditions are that the use of a control weapon is approved by the chief executive officer under the Young Offenders Act and the use of the control weapon is considered necessary in the circumstances.

It is important to note that if a situation arises in which an SCO intends to use a control weapon, it must be used in accordance with the use-of-force provisions of the Young Offenders Act and the Young Offenders Regulations 1995. This will mean that the same use-of-force restrictions that apply to custodial officers will also apply to SCOs. This is the position that currently applies under the Young Offenders Act, which permits a prison officer to use a control weapon in a detention centre.

The bill will also insert a definition of "control weapon" to clarify that a control weapon includes a firearm, but only if the firearm is used with ammunition that is prescribed by the regulations. The definition is not intended to capture weapons with lethal force, such as firearms that shoot live ammunition. Ammunition prescribed by the regulations will include only ammunition that may be required in a detention centre to exert control.

The second stage of the process is the direction. This is when the designated officer is directed to perform the functions of an SCO in a detention centre. The powers of designation and direction will be vested in the CEO under the

Prisons Act; however, these powers may be exercised only at the request of the CEO under the Young Offenders Act. A designation of a prison officer or a direction to an SCO to perform functions at a detention centre will remain in force until one of the following occurs: the prison officer ceases to be a prison officer; the CEO under the Prisons Act revokes the designation or direction, which may happen if, for example, the operational requirements of the CEO under the Prisons Act change and the prison officers are required to perform duties under the Prisons Act; or the CEO under the Young Offenders Act requests the CEO under the Prisons Act to revoke a designation or direction, which may occur in circumstances in which the CEO under the Young Offenders Act decides that a designated prison officer is not the right fit for the detention centre, or the operational circumstances that required the deployment of the SCO are no longer relevant.

The bill provides that the discipline and dismissal of SCOs will be managed under the Prisons Act rather than the Young Offenders Act. This is appropriate because SCOs will remain prison officers at all times and will therefore be disciplined as prison officers. To ensure the lawful disclosure of information when managing disciplinary issues involving SCOs, the bill will amend the definition of “relevant information” in section 113 of the Prisons Act to include the Western Australian Public Sector Management Act 1994.

The safety of staff and detainees in our care is the highest priority for the Cook government and will remain our priority at all times. I am confident that the amendments contained within the bill will enhance security and safety in youth detention centres. Importantly, this enhancement will ensure that detainees will not be disadvantaged by missing out on important programs and will allow custodial officers to continue to focus on the rehabilitation and mentoring of detainees.

I commend the bill to the house.

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

COLLIE COAL (GRIFFIN) AGREEMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2024

Second Reading

Resumed from 19 June.

MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Leader of the Liberal Party) [12.41 pm]: I rise today on behalf of the opposition to contribute to the second reading debate on the Collie Coal (Griffin) Agreement Amendment Bill 2024. I speak on behalf of our lead speaker, the member for Cottesloe, who is unable to be here today.

This bill is crucial for the continuation of operations at the Griffin Coal mine, which is a vital component of our state’s energy infrastructure and economic landscape. It goes without saying that we support this bill. Although we support the bill, we wish to highlight several critical issues and concerns that warrant attention and further discussion.

The primary purpose of this bill is to amend the Collie Coal (Griffin) Agreement Act 1979 and to extend the current agreement by 12 months, ensuring its continuation until 30 June 2026. Without this extension, the existing agreement would expire on 30 June 2025. Additionally, the bill will provide for third-party access to the Ewington rail line, which is a significant provision aimed at optimising the use of existing rail infrastructure for broader economic benefits.

The bill contains several key provisions. Firstly, section 4 of the principal act will be amended to update the definition of the agreement to include the 2024 variation agreement. The bill will also insert proposed section 5, which will ratify and authorise the implementation of the 2024 variation agreement, and proposed section 6, which will insert schedule 3, which includes the full text of the 2024 variation agreement detailing the amendments and operational extensions. The explanatory memorandum provides further detail on these provisions to ensure clarity and transparency of the proposed legislative changes.

Our support for this bill is due to the clear strategic importance of the Collie coalmines to Western Australia’s energy and security stability. The continuation of operations at Griffin Coal is essential to maintain a steady supply of coal, which underpins our energy infrastructure and supports numerous domestic industries in this state.

The provision for third-party access to the Ewington rail line is another positive aspect of this bill. By allowing other users to utilise this infrastructure, we can stimulate economic development and better optimise the use of state resources. This approach aligns with our broader economic goals to encourage new ventures and facilitate efficient transport logistics.

Although the opposition supports the bill, several issues need to be addressed, such as the timeline for extension. The government’s decision to extend the agreement until only June 2026 raises questions about the long-term vision for Griffin Coal. The short-term nature of this extension suggests uncertainty about the future of coalmining in the region. A more extended agreement would provide greater stability and assurance for all stakeholders involved. The provision for third-party access to the Ewington rail line is certainly promising, but there are practical concerns about its implementation. The current agreement’s expiration in 2026 could deter potential users from entering into long-term rail access agreements. To provide certainty for potential users, the government should clarify its future plans for this rail infrastructure beyond the current agreement.

The bill's minimalistic approach to amendments, focusing solely on the short term, reflects a lack of comprehensive long-term planning. The government must also articulate a vision for Western Australia's future, including how it plans to transition to sustainable energy resources while maintaining energy security and economic stability.

The allocation of \$220 million to support the struggling Griffin Coal mine has raised significant concerns about transparency and accountability, and we have some questions about that. Despite the substantial financial commitment, the government has provided no clear details on the criteria for this funding, expected outcomes or the exact number of jobs at stake. The lack of transparency around the decision-making associated with this and the absence of a comprehensive public explanation also highlight the need for greater accountability. This financial intervention also appears inconsistent with the state's broader commitments to renewable energy and transitioning away from fossil fuels. The government's parallel investment of \$3.8 billion in renewable infrastructure, including wind generation and energy storage, starkly contrasts with the continued support for coal, raising questions about the coherence and prioritisation of its energy projects. This criticism is compounded by a lack of clear detail in the plan outlining how the state intends to balance these conflicting interests. Although immediate job preservation is certainly crucial, there must be a transparent and accountable approach to ensure a just transition for workers and communities dependent on coal, aligning with the state's long-term environmental and economic goals.

As set out in the WA Liberal Party's energy policy, we support the extension of the Collie coal agreement. We believe that our policy of a reduction in emissions by 2030 offers a more robust and sustainable path forward for Western Australia's energy sector. Our policy will ensure a smooth transition to renewable energy while maintaining stable power supply and keeping energy costs affordable and reliable for consumers. Our plan will extend the life span of existing coal generators where necessary until renewable generation, supported by gas generation backup and energy storage, can meet the state's needs. This pragmatic approach will ensure that we will not face abrupt power shortages during the transition period. We have outlined a commitment to build a new 300-megawatt gas generator to boost the amount of gas transported by the Dampier to Bunbury natural gas pipeline, and a process that will potentially involve private capital in the construction and operation of the new gas plant. This strategy will provide a reliable and cleaner backup for renewable energy supplies and sources. Our policy includes current battery and wind farm projects, with a focus on realistic generation and storage milestones. We will also invest in necessary transmission line upgrades to ensure the efficient distribution of renewable energy.

While I am on the topic, we are also opposed to the south west offshore wind farm. A number of concerns have been raised about the consultation process for the wind farm, which extends from Busselton to Mandurah. There is widespread opposition to this project, with many questions remaining unanswered. Offshore wind is very inefficient, and there are real concerns that the cost of this project will ultimately be imposed on households.

The Liberal Party will monitor and adopt new technologies when they become economically viable, including potential sources such as wave tidal, geothermal and nuclear energy. This forward-thinking approach will ensure that we remain at the forefront of energy innovation.

In conclusion, although the Collie Coal (Griffin) Agreement Amendment Bill 2024 is essential for the immediate continuation of Griffin Coal's operations, it raises significant concerns that need to be addressed. We support the bill with reservation and urge the government to provide greater clarity, transparency and long-term planning. I will leave my comments there. I look forward to the consideration in detail stage.

MS J.L. HANNS (Collie–Preston — Parliamentary Secretary) [12.51 pm]: I rise to make a very short but important contribution to the Collie Coal (Griffin) Agreement Amendment Bill 2024. I would like to outline the Cook Labor government's support for the Collie community; indeed, much of my contribution will speak to that. The Cook Labor government is delivering a just transition for the Collie community, which is my community and the place I have called home for nearly 19 years. Part of the reason for this is that the local economy has been so reliant on coal and coal-fired power stations. Under the just transition plan, the Cook government is trying to achieve diversification in the community's local economy so that future jobs will be created in industries that will ensure a long-term sustainable future for the people of Collie and the surrounding region.

I want to highlight that the transition package that has been announced, implementing a number of tranches, adds up to about \$663 million—if my maths is correct—which is significant support for my community. The initial stage occurred with tourism; the trails that have allowed tours and tourists to visit Collie have significantly improved the tourism offerings in the local area. The Wellington Dam wall continues to be a major attraction, as are the \$10 million worth of adventure trails, which have injected a huge amount into the local economy with sporting and other events across a number of years. The really important piece is industry attraction, which targets industries that use existing workers and their skills. With some reskilling and retraining, thanks to the Jobs and Skills Centre, South Regional TAFE and other providers, we are preparing workers for the industries of the future; it is really important work. The Jobs and Skills Centre is located in the main street of town. It assists workers with individual transition planning. Consultants work one on one with workers and their families. It is an incredible way to support the community and make sure that the workers and community are supported in the long term.

I quickly want to touch on the Collie futures small grants program, which is also close to the heart of the Minister for Regional Development. The grant round is aimed at providing up to \$100 000 so that people can create a small

business or expand their existing one. I will provide a couple of examples today. Sharon and Adrian Taylor recently received a grant to start up a drone business; that is Adrian's transition plan. He currently works in the coal-fired power industry. He has set up this business with a lot of support from the state government and the workforce of the South West Development Commission to get his business up and running. I wish both Adrian and Sharon all the success in their future. Their only fatal character flaw is that they are Collingwood supporters, but I give them some gip about that on a regular basis.

The other one is the local butcher, Redgie Old, and his wife, Emma. They recently received a grant to upgrade their butcher's shop. They are going into a very popular part of the local economy, which is smallgoods. My husband got a tour of their smallgoods facility and the smoking house, as they call it. The locals are very excited to see Redgie and Emma be able to grow their business. With all these small grants comes a focus on creating new employment; they are there to try to generate one or two jobs for local business operators. If a local business operator puts on an extra one or two people, that collective growth in small businesses will create a significant number of new jobs, which is exactly what we are trying to achieve, on top of those very large industries that we are looking to attract to employ the hundreds of workers who will transition. On top of all that, we have a very carefully managed and staged exit process for the coal-fired power station industry. Those dates are very clearly set, giving the community the certainty it needs around the exit plans. I was a councillor on the Shire of Collie for many years and we were calling for surety around what that transition would look like. When those dates were announced, it certainly gave the community dates to work towards for a careful and staged transition out of coal-fired power stations. Again, I thank the Cook government and the Premier for their support for the Collie community.

I was interested to hear the contribution of the member for Vasse around the Liberal Party's support for this bill and I want to touch on that very briefly. It is incredibly important; on that point, we agree. I want to remind my community about the fact that the state Liberals, depending on the week, have had varying opinions about what should happen to the coal-fired power stations. The first one, memorably in 2021, was that they would be closed as at 2025 with no plans for our community. The points that the member for Vasse made today about batteries, wind farms, transmission line upgrades and reducing the energy costs of Western Australia—all these plans that the Liberals are now saying are their plans for the energy system—are a little bit like our plans, to be fair. As a former teacher, it kind of made me think about what happened in a lot of circumstances. When I gave students an assignment, I knew that the very studious ones would put in the hard work, do the research and submit their assignments on time. Other students in my class sometimes did not necessarily do the planning and preparation. They copied their best friend's work and got out their pocket thesaurus—remember those? I loved my pocket thesaurus—to find a few words they could change, then submitted that to the teacher and hoped they would not notice. That is certainly what the state Liberals have in mind for my community. They have failed to consider that there is nothing in that plan to attract new industry, nothing to support local jobs and nothing to support workers like my husband, my neighbours, the students whom I taught for many years at Collie Senior High School who are now adults in the community, or my friends. There is nothing to support our community that has been the powerhouse of our state for over a century, and that is really disappointing.

Very quickly, I will shift to the federal Liberal Party. I noticed that the member for Vasse kept her options open with two bob each way on whether nuclear is going to be in the mix for the state Liberals' plan. I want to make some very short comments about that. Mr Dutton and his state Liberal colleagues have really shown that they do not care about the Collie community. They are putting their political future before the social and economic certainty of my community, and that is incredibly disappointing. I note that Mr Wilson—the federal member for O'Connor, which includes Collie—recently admitted that he had no idea how much a nuclear power station would cost. He has also said that Collie is not a priority project for the federal Liberal Party. I can assure the community that Collie's just transition is a priority for the Cook Labor government. Our plan includes industry attraction and creating an energy future that does not require the need for nuclear energy.

I want to make a couple of closing remarks on the issue of nuclear energy. The CSIRO's *GenCost 2023–24: Final report* outlines the fact that renewables are the cheapest form of energy and that nuclear energy would deliver only increased power prices for Western Australians if it were to become part of the energy mix that the Liberal Party is looking at in its energy policy. Firstly, nuclear energy for the south west interconnected system is too slow; our energy needs are now, not in 2040, which I think is the date the Liberals have given to the media. It is too risky; we do not even need to talk about the environmental and community risks of locating a nuclear power station in my hometown. It is also too expensive, as I have already outlined.

Something that has been front and centre is the media attention Collie has garnered as a result of this announcement about nuclear energy. A number of people have contacted my office, including federal member of Parliament Patrick Gorman, who is Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister. He was in Collie last week, asking Mr Dutton—as reported in a headline in the *Collie Valley Bulletin*—“Where the bloody hell are you?” Mr Dutton was nowhere to be seen to outline his plans for our community, but we found him this week. He is, in fact, in Kalgoorlie, where he made the point at the Diggers and Dealers Mining Forum event that he would not be putting a nuclear power station in Kalgoorlie. That is fantastic for the residents of Kalgoorlie, but not so fantastic for Collie, because it locks us in as the location for this plan.

One remark I would like to make about nuclear power stations is that they are usually located where there is a hell of a lot of water. I am not sure whether the Liberal Party is aware of this, but that is something that Collie does not have a lot of. Certainly, we are not located on the coast, where a lot of nuclear power stations have traditionally been located. One of the key local issues for the residents of Collie is the state of the Collie River and the decline in rainfall over time. To be able to service the needs of a nuclear power station when there is a shortage of water leaves many, many questions to be asked about the Liberal Party plan.

I will leave my comments there today, but I again reinforce the fact that the Cook government's firm focus is on Collie's just transition. I again thank the Premier for his support.

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Minister for State and Industry Development, Jobs and Trade) [1.02 pm] — in reply: It is my pleasure to close off the second reading debate on the Collie Coal (Griffin) Agreement Amendment Bill 2024. I thank members for their contributions, and I particularly thank the opposition for its support for this bill. That is not surprising; it is a tradition in this place that parties treat state agreement bills in a bipartisan manner, with good cooperation, and I would like to acknowledge the spirit and intent of the opposition in continuing to observe that tradition.

I also thank the member for Collie for her contribution. Again, what an incredible champion she is for that community. She is doing an amazing job at a time when we are really looking at a bold and bright future for Collie, but a future that will pivot away from reliance on thermal coal power generation and, to a certain extent, coalmining. This will obviously be a challenge, but it is a very exciting time as well, because it is about reimagining what Collie's future might be and providing a great, new and bold pathway for the Collie community and its economy. I think all members, of both the government and this Parliament, are indebted to the member for Collie for the great work she is doing in that community.

As members have observed, this bill will facilitate a simple set of changes. Firstly, it will extend the state agreement to June 2026. This is the period when we expect to be in a position to anticipate a future without relying upon the Griffin Coal coalmine and the power generation assets associated with it. We have nominated that date because the state will be underwriting a significant amount of the contractual obligations of the parties to make sure that, as the Leader of the Liberal Party observed, we can guarantee energy security. It is important that we do that. I think we should all be cognisant of the importance of energy security. We take that for granted in Western Australia because we have a really reliable interconnected system, great reliable power stations—some older and perhaps less reliable than others, but we have a really resilient system—and we have a bold future for renewable energy and the role it will play in securing our energy security future, but that is not felt everywhere. Other countries are looking at an uncertain future. Japan, Vietnam, Indonesia and others are looking to decarbonise their electricity grids, but they do not have the luxury that we do, which is tracts of land where we can install renewable energy and have significant assets such as solar and wind to draw upon to support our electricity grid. This bill is a very important part of the task of Parliament in securing Western Australia's energy security. That is one of the reasons that I think all members are supportive of it.

I will touch very briefly on some points the member for Vasse made. We will obviously have an opportunity to go into them in more detail during the consideration in detail stage. She mentioned that this bill does not address the issue of securing the future of coal. That is true. This bill is simply about making sure that we support the Griffin coalmine and its related power generation assets at a time when it cannot reach a commercially sustainable arrangement as part of its contractual arrangements. This is a historic issue that we have all inherited. That is unfortunate, but they are the cards we have been dealt. We do not believe that the state should support these contractual arrangements, but we have no choice at the moment. We are putting what we consider to be a responsible end date on those arrangements, which is to say that we are happy to support it while it is important for energy security, but please be under no illusion that this will stop in June 2026. That will not stop coalmining. People will still have mining leases and they can do what they feel is appropriate with those mining leases, but the state and the Parliament is saying with a united voice that we will not subsidise that—they will stand on their own two feet. That is an important message to deliver.

Another thing this bill will do is provide the owners of the related infrastructure, such as rail, with the opportunity to work with third parties to utilise those assets in a way that continues to complement the diversification of industry in the Collie area. Obviously, with the Ewington pits being based in the Coolangatta strategic industrial area, we are very interested in seeing how the rail infrastructure can contribute to the projects of other proponents that are looking to establish in that area. That is another thing this very simple bill will do. It will not secure the future for coalmining, as such, because it is a very simple fix for a very specific problem, but coalmining itself can continue into the future; it just has to be made commercially viable. Members can visualise a range of different ways in which that might happen. Not all coal is mined for thermal power generation; it is also mined for customers who are interested in utilising it as part of their industrial manufacturing processes. There is a wider range of applications for coalmining.

The member for Vasse also raised issues around the accountability and transparency of funding. Member for Vasse, I can remember sitting in the coffee shops of Fremantle when I was an undergraduate at Murdoch University,

designing the revolution. We were going to seize the means of production by the Thursday, and perhaps emancipate the workers by the following Tuesday—but none of that came to pass. We work in a mixed economy in which we have private interests, and it is the responsibility of the government to interact with those private interests in the interests of the people of Western Australia and to ensure that there is no market failure. Unfortunately, we do not have the opportunity to say to these people that regardless of their commercial interests, we will be completely transparent about these matters. We simply have to do this in a commercial-in-confidence way. In some respects, we might regret that and in some respects we can say that it is not a perfect situation, but nothing about this situation is perfect. As governments, we are sometimes in the unenviable position of using public funds for good public outcomes, but, by necessity, they have to involve the private sector, and the commercial-in-confidence arrangements into which we have to enter have to be respected. We acknowledge that. From time to time, members have seen me come to this place with a brief ministerial statement to provide an update to the house on the funding going towards the energy security needs of the community. We are not able to provide further accountability or details about that, but we are doing everything we can to make sure that we provide as much information to the people of Western Australia as possible.

The member for Collie–Preston talked about the Collie transition package that we have in place, which was to the value of—member for Collie–Preston?

Ms J.L. Hanns: To the value of \$663 million.

Mr R.H. COOK: It was to the value of \$663 million. This is an important piece of work by the government. We want Collie to have a bright future. We acknowledge that for reasons that are not of anyone's choosing, Collie's future is latched to the mast of coalmining at the moment. Therefore, we are looking for a new way that we can transition that community out of a significant reliance on coalmining to other things that can be done, given that we have such a great community and a skilled workforce with a can-do attitude, and it is an incredible part of the world. As the member for Collie–Preston observed, some of the early initiatives in the area of tourism have had a spectacular outcome. Not everyone in Collie wants to be a tourism operator, and I understand that, so we are looking at other things that we can do. Through our funding, we have seen a number of really interesting players come to town, such as Magnium Australia, which is looking to establish a magnesium refining processing facility there. I have been down to see that facility; it is really exciting. Magnesium will continue to be one of the critical minerals that we rely upon as part of the renewable energy future. I am really excited about the next stage of its process, which is a definition feasibility study so that it can take its pilot plant to full scale. The other player is Green Steel of WA. It is a really exciting prospect as it can utilise renewable energy as part of Collie's strategic location as part of the south west interconnected system to really see how we can bring green steel to Western Australia. I am really excited about its program, which has benefited from \$2.7 million from the state government. Also, International Graphite has commissioned its qualification-scale graphite micronising plant in Collie, having received a \$2 million grant as part of that process.

We can see the kernels of success for the future. The Prime Minister said that *Collie's just transition plan* is a nation leader and an exemplar of how to transition communities away from the traditional industry of coalmining and coalmining-related industries, such as power generation, to really look at a bright future. It is one that that community richly deserves. We are very proud of the work that the government is doing but particularly proud of the work that the member for Collie is doing in leading the community as part of that process. The member for Vasse also talked about the Liberal Party's policies on the construction of about 300 megawatts of gas-fired power. We believe that wind and energy storage and solar will play a key role in the interim period and that we do not need a new coal-fired power station today. We will need one at some point in the future as part of a firming program of renewable energy and energy storage, but the Australian Energy Market Operator has said in its projections that that is in the medium term, not in the immediate term.

I do not want to verbal the member for Vasse, but I think she said that the Liberal Party was going to build them. Here we have a funny situation. I wish the member for Vasse had had a coffee with me when I was an undergraduate at Murdoch University because she could have contributed beautifully to the process of seizing the means of production by nationalising our gas-fired power stations as part of the construction program. We know that there are a range of private proponents in the market at the moment, and we are looking forward to working with them on that program.

Ms L. Mettam: I didn't say that about private investment, Premier.

Mr R.H. COOK: Comrade Mettam, it is good to have you with us!

Regrettably, the Liberal Party has decided that it is not in a position to support offshore wind power. Of course, that is not something for us, as a state jurisdiction, to have a view on; that is a commonwealth government program. Offshore wind power has been a staple of many electricity grids right across the globe. There is a hysterical debate going on at the moment about offshore wind power. I am glad that the commonwealth government is committed to the consultation process so that the community can have input and can learn and be satisfied that it is an appropriate form of energy. The priority of my government is making sure that we take advantage of the huge opportunities for onshore wind and solar power generation at the moment. We are very much looking forward to seeing that

industry grow and securing our renewable energy future, which will be complemented by the construction of significant battery energy storage through the expansion of the Kwinana big battery. We have the Collie big battery under construction and a private provider will soon be constructing a large battery in the Collie area as part of its program, which will provide significant improvements. One of our key power generators in Western Australia is from the mums and dads who have installed photovoltaic cells on the rooftops of their homes. If we can secure and hold onto the energy that pours into the system during the day and release it into the grid later in the evening when it is required as part of the peak demand period each day, we will really be getting ahead. I do not think we have seen even the tip of the iceberg of the power of the mums and dads who have these solar systems on their rooftops and the role that they can play as part of our renewable energy future.

The member for Vasse also talked about the fact that she believes that the offshore wind power options will lead to higher costs for consumers because it is a more expensive option than onshore wind power. I accept the analysis that says that it is more expensive, but I think it is curious that someone who is part of a political party that is currently talking about the installation of nuclear power at Collie should be talking about the cost of energy. I note the comments of the member for Collie–Preston when she said that the federal Leader of the Liberal Party, Peter Dutton, has in no way distanced himself from the proposal to install a nuclear power station at Collie. Be under no illusions: this would be the single most destructive thing for our climate controls or our impact on climate than anything any national government has ever undertaken, because while we wait for the decades to pass for a nuclear power station to be visioned, designed, constructed and commissioned, we would be burning millions and millions of tonnes of coal that otherwise should not have been burnt. The destruction of our environment by the Liberal Party's energy policies is absolutely self-evident. It is extraordinary that the Liberals are taking this forward as some sort of serious solution for Australia's energy future. The federal Liberal leader has been asked several times to clarify his comments on nuclear energy in the Collie area, and he has failed to do so. It is the latest thought bubble from a party that does not believe in climate change or that humans have a role to play in mitigating the impact of carbon emissions in relation to climate change challenges. Liberal Party members are simply trying to delay it again, as they always have. They are the champions of clean coal and are, by and large, the people who simply reject the fact that climate change exists, whether we are talking about Tony Abbott or Scott Morrison. They are climate change deniers and environmental wreckers. Peter Dutton must be brought to account. I think it is great that he is in Western Australia to try to make some friends and tell people just how much of a dinky-di Western Australian he is. Member for Collie–Preston, I remember he was on the radio the other day saying that he looked forward to going “up” to Collie to have a chat to the locals there.

Ms J.L. Hanns: Technically it is up hill; down south then up!

Mr R.H. COOK: I do not think anyone actually pointed out to him that Collie is actually down south, but it is great that he understands the important role that Western Australia will play in Australia's future. It is time he got on board and understood that a renewable energy future is the only way forward for Western Australia and the nation as a whole. He continues to utilise a cynical, ideological, political agenda that had its birthplace on the east coast, and tries to impose that on the Western Australian community and economy. It is reckless and irresponsible and will result in higher power bills for Western Australian households. That is the key, and I think we should take special note of that from the member for Vasse's comments. If we go for these higher energy options, Western Australian households will pay. Western Australian households will pay even more under a Dutton Liberal government than ever before because he has an ideological, reckless and irresponsible drive to impose nuclear power on Western Australia. We would need to burn coal for at least the next two decades to make that happen, and WA households would pay the price.

I would like to thank members for their contributions to the debate. Once again, I thank the member for Collie–Preston for her tireless leadership and championing of the Collie community. I thank the opposition for its commitment to support this bill, and I look forward to exploring these issues further in consideration in detail.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

[Leave denied to proceed forthwith to third reading.]

Consideration in Detail

Clause 1: Short title —

Ms L. METTAM: I appreciate that the Premier touched on this in his second reading response, but I note that the government will be extending this agreement for only a further 12 months to June 2026. Was consideration given to extending the agreement beyond that timeframe so that the issue will not need to be revisited in Parliament again; and, if so, what persuaded the government not to take that path?

Mr R.H. COOK: The timeframe for the bill is aligned with our commitment to support Collie coal to June 2026. The government is providing funding to Griffin to prevent a sudden mine closure. As I said in my second reading speech, this is about energy security and stopping the whole thing from stopping. We want to ensure that the energy

system security is assisted by providing coal to Bluewaters power station and we want to provide certainty to the Collie workforce and community. If we have a situation in which Bluewaters, under the contract with Griffin, cannot get its coal because Griffin simply cannot turn a profit and therefore shuts down its coalmine, we will have to shut the power station down and the whole thing will come to a grinding halt. We are working on a proposal whereby we are happy to resolve the market failure issues, but not forever, so we need an end date. June 2026 is considered sufficient time to reduce the electricity system's reliance on coal from Griffin and to ensure a managed transition of the Collie coal industry. If Griffin Coal is to continue after this, any long-term plan will need to be industry-led on a commercially sustainable basis. That is the key. At the moment, it is not commercially sustainable. We as the government say that we want to keep the lights on, so we are quite happy to intervene in that context, but we will not do this forever. Essentially, after that period, it will be up to Griffin to look after itself and for Bluewaters to look after itself as well.

Ms L. METTAM: Does the one-year extension imply that the government does not anticipate Griffin Coal will be continuing beyond 2026? Further, if the answer is yes, what evidence does the government have to form that position?

Mr R.H. COOK: I have been given a rather concise and interesting answer, which is that we do not know. It really depends on what Griffin considers to be its future at that point in time. We may come back to Parliament with a termination agreement. We may come back with a different proposal, depending on how Griffin sees its future and the commerciality of that future. We will not be coming back to Parliament and saying that we want to continue the current set of circumstances. We will not tolerate a continuation of the historical set of circumstances that gave rise to the Collie Coal (Griffin) Agreement Act; we will seek a new future. As I said in my second reading speech, these guys still hold tenements under the Mining Act. They may simply choose to continue under the Mining Act as opposed to under this particular agreement, but it really depends on the nature of those tenements and whether they will be sustained into the future or what other future it might envisage.

Ms L. METTAM: Was there any discussion about a long-term extension; and, if so, what was the substance of those discussions?

Mr R.H. COOK: That was an interesting question. For the benefit of the others, could I ask the member to repeat it? I might be able to answer it more accurately.

Ms L. METTAM: Was there any discussion about extending this agreement further than June 2026? If so, what was the substance of those discussions?

Mr R.H. COOK: It turns on the question of at what point we believe, as a state, that we should not continue to intervene in the commercial relationships between the parties. From that perspective, we are saying that by June 2026 our electricity system, both generation and fuel, will have evolved to the point at which we can look at other options. I want to clarify my comments on the previous question and points of the member opposite, if I may. That is to say that the tenements we envisage will finish with the state agreement, but that will ultimately need to be decided in the future following deep engagement with all the parties.

Ms L. METTAM: Last year, when the remit was extended to June 2025, the Premier indicated that —

... the extension will be a short-term arrangement that will allow for a more sustainable medium to long-term solution to be negotiated between Griffin and its customers that is based on a fair price being paid for coal.

Is this legislation an indication that a more sustainable solution is yet to be reached?

Mr R.H. COOK: Probably. These are difficult conversations to have. We have suppliers that are bound by a historical contract that is not sustainable. We have customers related to that contract who have a right to purchase the coal at a particular price that is not sustainable either. We have worked tirelessly with all parties to reach—I might use the word “sustainable”—a more enduring outcome. We believe this is the best way for us to reach an end point as part of those conversations.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 2 to 5 put and passed.

Clause 6: Schedule 3 inserted —

Ms L. METTAM: Proposed clause 2, “Variations of the principal agreement”, will vary the principal agreement by inserting proposed subclause (4) into clause 11A, which will oblige the company to submit additional proposals for approval by the minister —

... for the financial year ending 30 June 2026 for the exploration and development of the coal resource contained in the Company's Coal Mining Leases ...

The Premier's second reading speech indicated that the government had announced in December last year that it would allocate \$220 million to support the continued operations at Griffin until June 2026. Is the funding conditional on the company submitting additional proposals under this proposed subclause?

Mr R.H. COOK: I am advised that, ultimately, it is all interrelated. We need an authorising framework so the company can continue to mine under the state agreement, as opposed to the Mining Act. In that context, it will inform the discussions about the cost implications of its mining plan and how it proposes to go forward and, in turn, what continued subsidy the company might need. This is a standard component of a state agreement; it simply allows for mining to be conducted. It is obviously important that it be subject to a mine plan.

Ms L. METTAM: Can the Premier provide a breakdown of how the \$220 million will be expended?

Mr R.H. COOK: I am advised that \$220 million is our best estimate of the amount needed to make up the shortfall in the cost of mining and revenue from mine sales between now and June 2026. To date, we have spent \$103.7 million, and that has been provided to Griffin Coal's receivers and managers to secure the mine. It essentially makes up the shortfall between what it is paid for its coal and the cost of extracting that coal. That is the breakdown. From that perspective, we do not anticipate that it will go beyond \$220 million, but in the event that that happens, we will obviously come back to Parliament to make sure it is informed of the progress.

Ms L. METTAM: I appreciate that the government will provide a statement to Parliament, but will it also update Parliament by providing a breakdown of how those funds will be spent and some transparency around the \$103.7 million spent so far?

Mr R.H. COOK: We will provide as much information to Parliament as we can. We have to observe the commercial-in-confidence arrangements that are in place. I want to assure the member that a key part of this agreement is understanding how the operation of the mine is being managed and making sure that Bluewaters Power has an appropriate supply of coal so it can keep doing what it is paid to do.

We manage it in the sense that we are working very closely with Griffin to assure ourselves that the mine operation is efficient and is extracting the contractual volumes of coal, and we are doing everything we can to make sure that it operates smoothly. Beyond that, we are bound by the arrangements that are in place, both contractual and obviously those that are commercial-in-confidence.

Ms L. METTAM: What obligations were placed on the company as part of, or outside of, this agreement that were critical to securing \$220 million in funding?

Mr R.H. COOK: I am advised that Griffin's receivers and managers must meet a number of terms of the process agreement that we have with Griffin as part of this subsidisation process in order to receive the funds, including meeting reporting requirements. That goes to the point I was making about the operation of the mine, the amount of coal that is extracted and so on. Details of the process agreement are confidential and commercially sensitive, but, as I said, it goes to the issue that Griffin is doing everything it can to make sure it is running an efficient mine. Obviously, we will work closely with its receivers and KPMG. They are assisting us to make sure that we have appropriate oversight and that the money we give is resolving the problems that the pits are facing.

Ms L. METTAM: The Premier talked about \$103.7 million being expended so far. He may have already answered this question, but will the \$220 million payment go directly to the company subject to this legislation passing, or has that already happened and the money already been drawn down?

Mr R.H. COOK: I am advised that the moneys are expended on a monthly basis as required. The money goes to the receivers and ultimately supports the operation of the mine. What was the second part of the member's question?

Ms L. Mettam: Is it subject to the legislation passing?

Mr R.H. COOK: No, it is not; that is separate. As I said in my second reading speech, the legislation will essentially do three things: one, contemporise the act; two, allow for the state agreement to continue until June 2026; and, three, allow third parties to utilise assets that previously were restricted to being used only for coalmining.

Ms L. METTAM: What is the government expecting of the company in terms of maximising its revenue through normal business practices, such as the renegotiation of contracts going forward so the WA taxpayer can be protected?

Mr R.H. COOK: The changes we are making here today really go to the issue of protecting WA taxpayers because this is a hard stop. We are moving as quickly as we can not to be bound, from an energy security point of view, to the arrangements currently in place. We continue to make sure that our advisers work with the receivers to ensure the moneys are expended simply for the purposes of bridging that gap between revenue and cost and making sure that costs are kept to a minimum so that gap is kept to a minimum as well. That goes to the issue I was talking about before; that is, we are working closely with both Griffin Coal and its receivers to ensure that the mine is operating efficiently so it can reduce its costs as much as possible and the gap is as minimal as possible.

Ms L. METTAM: With this clause obliging the company to submit additional proposals for approval by the minister or Premier for the exploration and development of the coal resource, does it not indicate that the state agreement will need to be extended beyond 2026?

Mr R.H. COOK: The short answer is no. This is about extending the state agreement to June 2026, and beyond that the company would be required to come to us with a proposal about the continuation of activities or what other

proposals it might have in mind for the future of the mine. That will have to be a separate discussion. As I said before, it depends on what it sees as its future as a commercial operator and whether that meets with our interests and goals as the state regulator.

Ms L. METTAM: Still within clause 6 of the bill, I refer to clause 2(3) of proposed schedule 3, which will provide third-party access to Ewington rail infrastructure. Can the Premier advise whether any approaches have been made to the government to discuss access to the rail line; and, if so, by whom, and what are they proposing to move on that line?

Mr R.H. COOK: The only developed proposal we have seen is from a company called Green Steel WA. It is interested in utilising aspects of the Coolangatta strategic industrial area to establish a green steel operation. The rail infrastructure is strategically placed within that strategic industrial area, so it is interested to see whether that can be part of its operations. Green Steel will then need to work with the owners of that infrastructure, which is Griffin Coal, as a third party to see how it can use it.

Under the current state agreement, Griffin Coal can only use that infrastructure for the purposes of mining coal—it cannot be used for other purposes—so we are taking this opportunity as part of extending the state agreement to make that change, because we think that could be a really good outcome for other parties.

Ms L. METTAM: What discussions have been had or issues or concerns have been raised about the fact that this agreement will expire in 2026, and how does the Premier anticipate getting around that? What will happen after 2026?

Mr R.H. COOK: It is essentially a binary option. One of two things will happen. Either Griffin will see a future for the coalmine and come to us with a proposal around that and how it might continue into the future, albeit without our assistance in its operation subsidies; or there will be a termination agreement and, as a state, we will seek to retain those assets so that they become part of our overall rail network and can be utilised in that context. The fact that we are extending this state agreement to June 2026 does not represent a risk to a third party that might be seeking to enter into a long-term arrangement for utilisation of those assets.

Ms L. METTAM: Is the Premier aware of any other potential rail users who might be interested in entering into an agreement for rail access?

Mr R.H. COOK: We are obviously cognisant that any proponent looking to establish themselves at Coolangatta will be considering the rail infrastructure as part of their assessment of that area. Green Steel is the only party at this point in time that has developed a proposal wanting to make use of the rail asset.

Ms L. METTAM: Still within clause 6, I refer to clauses 2(4) and (5) of proposed schedule 3. Under these clauses, the mining leases and principal agreement will be extended to 30 June 2026. I note that in the Premier's second reading speech, he indicated that a minimalist approach to the negotiations was adopted in the amendments to the state agreement. He stated —

No amendments have been included that may amount to an alteration of other rights and obligations of the parties under the state agreement on the basis that such amendments are more appropriately negotiated as part of a longer-term solution.

Can the Premier indicate what the government anticipates the longer term solution will be, what further legislation will be required for the longer term solution, and whether further negotiations to the state agreement or additional funding will be required as part of a longer term solution?

Mr R.H. COOK: I can confirm that there is a range of different pathways we could go on, and this goes to the heart of what I was saying before. It really depends on what the opportunities are going forward beyond 2026. The owners of the Ewington coalmine may come to us with a proposal around a new way that they want to operate in the area. It might be that, through technology, there are other opportunities for a whole range of things to do with those mines. They might see a future for the mine or a hard stop. Those are obviously discussions that will take place. I have not done one, but my understanding is that at the end of a state agreement, we would usually bring a termination agreement bill to Parliament that formally concludes a state agreement, which would set out the rights and obligations of the parties on how we wrap up the whole show. Members can imagine that might go to assets being returned to the state or to enduring opportunities for the mine. It might be that there are some other commercial arrangements for the interests of the Western Australian people we would want to enter into. Hopefully, they are the conversations that we will have over the next couple of years.

Clause put and passed.

Title put and passed.

[Leave granted to proceed forthwith to third reading.]

Third Reading

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Minister for State and Industry Development, Jobs and Trade) [1.51 pm]:
I move —

That the bill be now read a third time.

I thank my advisers—who are fleeing the building as we speak!—for their assistance. I again thank the opposition for its agreement on the Collie Coal (Griffin) Agreement Amendment Bill 2024. I will have to talk for another seven minutes now—which reminds me of another interesting story!

As I said in my reply to the second reading debate, this is an important bill because it is about not only energy security and the future of Western Australia's electricity grid, but also the future of Collie. It is a really important time to make sure that we reassure the people of Collie that the Western Australian government has their back. We want to reassure them that we are looking to not only secure the future for coalmining in the immediate term and the power generation assets relying upon that coal, but also take the opportunity to talk about Collie's future—and the future for Collie is very bright. The place has changed. We feel it in the streets and see it in the faces of the people there and the conversations that we have. They are all really excited about the future. I am not sure that every one of them, as I said, wants to be a tourism operator. I have met a few there who are enjoying their new futures, but many are looking at other opportunities. I am indebted to the member for Collie talking about the gentleman who received some assistance to establish a business based on drones and the exciting opportunities coming from that.

It is also about reskilling a workforce and making sure that they have employment opportunities for the future. I have been very impressed by the work of South Regional TAFE in the town. I was there some years ago to open the new skills centre, which is about sitting down with Collie community members to talk about what they want to do and the skills they might need to get those opportunities. Many are skilling or reskilling to look at how they can continue to be part of a thriving community. I might observe that there are now more people living in Collie than there were when we announced our decision to close its coal-fired power stations by 2030. That is a great indication of the success of the just transition plan, but it is also an indication of the great excitement in Collie about what the future looks like.

As a keen mountain biker—although I take the advice that my bones do not bounce as much as they used to—it is great to see the proliferation of mountain biking in the area. As the member for Collie–Preston pointed out, the mural that adorns Wellington Dam is an iconic tourism attraction centrepiece; people come from miles away to visit the dam walls. While they are there, they take the opportunity to visit the town to shop, have a meal or take up some of the accommodation offerings. That is really exciting because it is an indication of what the future will look like.

As I said during my response to the second reading debate, Magnium Australia, International Graphite and Green Steel WA are all looking to take advantage of the great skills that exist in that community to see how they can take their projects forward, which is incredibly exciting. Green Steel represents a huge opportunity for Western Australia, and, because of that, we know that Collie can offer a great opportunity for that company. We all talk about the skilled workforce in that community and the opportunities it represents. Given its strategic location as the centrepiece of the south west interconnected system, Collie has a historical opportunity to be part of these advanced manufacturing operations and projects that can take advantage of its proximity to our electricity network. That is really exciting. I do not think we will recognise Collie in the future compared with the community that it is today as we see all these companies beating a path to Collie's door to take advantage of government supports and affordable and reliable electricity and workforces that can power their businesses.

Acting Speaker (Ms R.S. Stephens), I will ramble on a bit longer, apparently! I thank all members for their participation in this debate; in particular, I thank the opposition for its support. As I observed in my response to the second reading debate, it is the tradition in this place that oppositions support state agreement bills. I am very pleased to see that tradition continue today. We very much look forward to securing the future for Griffin Coal and Bluewaters to June 2026. After that, we will wish all parties well in their endeavours, but the state will no longer be in a position to subsidise existing arrangements. We want to see those arrangements move forward on a commercially sustainable basis.

I once again thank the advisers for their support and guidance through this debate. I thank the opposition for its support for this bill.

MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Leader of the Liberal Party) [1.58 pm]: I thank the Premier's advisers for their support during the consideration in detail of the Collie Coal (Griffin) Agreement Amendment Bill 2024. The opposition supports the bill. It is important that there is certainty going forward. I will leave my comments there.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

VISITORS — WEMBLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [2.00 pm]: On behalf of the member for Churchlands, I would like to welcome students from Wembley Primary School to question time today. Hopefully they are either here or arriving soon.

Ms C.M. Tonkin: They're here already.

The SPEAKER: Very good. I hope they enjoy their time at the Western Australian Parliament today and I hope question time is not too interesting for them.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE
STUDENT ASSISTANCE PAYMENT

471. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Minister for Education:

I refer to the minister's statement yesterday referring to the outstanding success of the Western Australian student assistance payment.

- (1) Will the minister and his department be contacting the 20 per cent of students and families in Western Australia who were not aware, or could not access the payment, to ensure they are compensated and treated equitably with all other students and families in Western Australia?
- (2) Given that government members of Parliament were provided details of information of school take-up rather than the opposition and the media, is the minister disappointed in their advocacy performance with their local families?
- (3) Does the minister now regret the mode of payment in comparison with some other states that ensured all schools were funded 100 per cent of the payment to take into account all students?

Dr A.D. BUTI replied:

- (1)–(3) I think I might be getting a Dorothy on this, so thank you very much, member for Roe. Let us start off with the 80 per cent. Under any system, 80 per cent is an incredible success. Today, we have less than 70 per cent of the opposition in attendance! It is about 66 per cent of them; what a failure! That is an absolute failure. I am not going to go through everything because I think I may be getting a question on this from a member on this side of the house. When we announced this, from our research—I am prepared to stand corrected on this—the Nationals WA members in the lower house posted one Facebook post in mid-April. At least they did better than Liberal Party members, who I do not think posted anything. This was a government program to provide cost-of-living assistance to Western Australian families and opposition members, for pure political reasons, did not promote it. Shame on you! Absolute shame. Do not stand up here and try to be high and mighty now when you did not promote the system. All you did was try to counter the system, counter the program and be negative. Do not stand here and say you are now concerned about the 20 per cent of families that missed out.

Regarding the premise of the question from the member for Roe, how does he know they did not know about it? I can tell the member now, many people did know about it but just did not do the work, did not go and enrol, did not make an application. Members in this house constantly went around to schools and helped people fill in the forms. I even invited the member for Roe to go on a road trip. I went with the member for Kimberley.

Point of Order

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I have a point of order.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order please, members. I think some people need reminding that points of order are held in silence.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Thanks, Madam Speaker. I just want to point out to the minister that there are 51 schools —

The SPEAKER: Sorry! Member for Roe, you may get the opportunity of a supplementary question, but a point of order is not an opportunity to point out anything to a minister or a member. It is to make a point of order to me with respect to the standing orders being infringed.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Dr A.D. BUTI: I will just make this point now, and I am sure I will be making other points during question time. Let us consider the results in Albany, as a result of the great work of the member for Albany. In Albany, Albany Senior High School had an 83 per cent participation rate. North Albany Senior High School had 80 per cent. Esperance Senior High School, which is in the member for Roe's electorate, had 61 per cent and Katanning Senior High School, in his own town, had 71 per cent.

What did you do at Katanning Senior High School to promote the program? Zilch. So do not stand up here, being all high and mighty. You and the opposition are condemned for the way you put down this program, which is geared for cost-of-living measures to provide relief for educational purposes. You are shameful, the way you have sought to downgrade this program, and the galah next to you. What did you do?

Several members interjected.

Withdrawal of Remark

The SPEAKER: Order, please! Minister, your language is unparliamentary and I ask you to withdraw.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I withdraw that I said "galah" to the Leader of the Opposition.

The SPEAKER: And apologise.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I apologise.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Dr A.D. BUTI: It is absurd that we now have opposition members complaining that we did not do enough when we have had an 80 per cent success rate and they did not do anything to help. They are local members. They may not understand this: every member in this chamber is a local member who has a responsibility, regardless of party politics, to advocate for their local constituents. I can assure the member that when we were in opposition and there was a government program, we advocated for our local constituents. That is what local members do. That is the obligation we take on when we swear allegiance on the first day of a new Parliament. You did not do that. Shame on you. You are condemned for your behaviour with regard to this program.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE PAYMENT

472. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Minister for Education:

I have a supplementary question. How should our remote families feel, such as those at Bayulu Remote Community School near Fitzroy Crossing, which only had 25 per cent of students and families take up the payment?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please! Premier! Minister.

Dr A.D. BUTI replied:

I can assure the member that our local members went out to all communities. The member for Kimberley and I actually did a road trip and we went to remote communities and advocated. We actually went to that school and advocated. We could not physically make everyone do it if they did not want to do it, but we advocated for it. You did not advocate for it, so shame on you.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please! The member for Kingsley.

COST OF LIVING — RELIEF

473. Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI to the Premier:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's priority to ease cost-of-living pressures for Western Australian families.

- (1) Can the Premier outline to the house how this government is providing support to households facing cost pressures this winter?
- (2) Can the Premier advise the house how these policies are helping to ensure that Western Australian kids can enjoy and participate in the things that matter?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I thank the member for the question.

- (1)–(2) I join the Minister for Education in expressing my extraordinary dismay at the lack of commitment or support from those opposite in relation to measures around the cost of living. I cannot believe that we are in a situation in which opposition members, as members of their local communities, are not focused on the issues that matter to Western Australians. This is about promoting programs that assist people with the cost of living. We as a government have been, and are, focused on making sure that we provide relief to Western Australians who, because of interest rates or other issues beyond their control, are struggling with the cost of living today. We understand that, and that is why we are working hard.

It was with absolute pleasure that I joined Rebecca and Murray Dunstan and their son Zeb as part of an announcement to roll out this \$700 electricity credit. That is made possible by the great work between the Cook Labor government and the Albanese Labor government, because only Labor governments understand what ordinary people in the community need to help them with the cost of living. The first \$350 instalment began to appear on bills from 20 July. I know that that has been met with much relief from families—including the Dunstans—who are getting through this cold, wet winter. Through our partnership with the commonwealth government, we are delivering a record \$700 in electricity credits to every WA household, plus a \$725 electricity credit for small businesses over two instalments.

By now, nearly every Western Australian household would have had \$350 slashed off their power bill and eligible small businesses would have received their first \$362.50 instalment. Talking to Bec and Murray, I know this credit will make a real difference for Western Australians. For them it means freeing up money for junior sport, school holiday activities and perhaps even that much sought after Harley Reid jersey. Who wrote these notes? Apologies to the Deputy Premier and all the Dockers supporters in the chamber!

The SPEAKER: I did not see the issue!

Mr R.H. COOK: At the end of the day, no parent wants their kids to miss out. One of the greatest rites of passage in this state is attending the Perth Royal Show. The magic of the show should be accessible to everyone, but we know that the costs can add up, and that is why we have invested \$5.2 million to make a great day out at the show cheaper for WA families. This year, tickets for kids will be free. Kids will get into the Royal Show for free. On top of that, adult and concession tickets will be half price. That means that an adult ticket will go from \$44 to \$22 and a kid's ticket from \$22 to free. The funding will also support the nightly fireworks and drone show, which is set to be the biggest in the show's history, with fireworks launched from a hundred different spots around the main arena. This is the important thing about the show. We all remember how much the rides, showbags and everything cost at the show, but there are literally hundreds of opportunities to enjoy the Royal Show free of charge, such as the exhibits and the great displays—my mum always took me to the log chopping—and, of course, the fireworks display in the evening is absolutely magical, so we want people to be able to enjoy that. I am sure that every member of Parliament will join me in being pleased that I can confirm that the Bertie Beetle bag will be back this year. We know that the cost of living is impacting WA families, and my government is 100 per cent focused on making sure that we are doing everything we can to assist them with that and help reduce the pressure on family budgets. From the WA student assistance payment to electricity credits and our support to make the show cheaper, we are supporting Western Australian families and doing what is right for WA.

CRIMINAL INJURIES COMPENSATION — DANNY HODGSON — EX GRATIA PAYMENT

474. Ms L. METTAM to the Premier:

I refer to the abhorrent attack on Danny Hodgson by a teenage perpetrator who had been released from jail after receiving 23 charges across 13 separate incidents and the attempts by the State Solicitor's Office to strike out Mr Hodgson's compensation bid. Given that the Premier's pathetic bail laws have put Danny Hodgson in the position he is now in, will the Premier personally intervene and ensure that Danny is provided with the ex gratia payment and the compensation that he rightly deserves?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

The state government is profoundly sympathetic to what Danny and his family have endured following the attack and has provided continued support to Danny and his family. Danny has commenced legal action against the state, with the state being represented by the State Solicitor's Office. This is a complex legal case, and due to legal technicalities associated with Danny's action, the SSO has come to the position that it must apply to the court for a strike-out application. The SSO has advised me that it has been in communication with Danny's legal team and has advised that should these legal technicalities be able to be overcome, the strike-out application may be put aside for the case to continue. I sincerely hope that this can occur and that Danny may have the opportunity to put his case forward. We want to do everything we can to support Danny and his family, and we respect his right to bring these actions to the courts. Obviously, it is appropriate that these actions are taken in the appropriate manner. I cannot speak to the claim itself or the conduct of the case because it is before the courts as we speak, but the SSO, as I said, is working with Danny's legal representatives and has advised that should these legal technicalities be able to be overcome, the strike-out application may be put aside so that the case can continue.

CRIMINAL INJURIES COMPENSATION — DANNY HODGSON — EX GRATIA PAYMENT

475. Ms L. METTAM to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. Given the Attorney General met with Danny's father two years ago regarding this issue, will the Premier ensure that cabinet approves an ex gratia payment before Parliament rises or as a matter of urgency?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

As the member said, the fact that the Attorney General met with Danny Hodgson's family goes to the heart of our commitment to work with the family to make sure they can overcome a range of issues. We want to continue to support Danny Hodgson's family. What happened to Danny was absolutely horrible. No-one should have to experience that. It was senseless, random violence in the city against someone who was minding his own business. It is a horrible set of circumstances. There are legal actions in the courts as we speak, so I will not make any further comment on it.

COST OF LIVING — TRANSPORT

476. Mr K.J.J. MICHEL to the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's commitment to providing cost-of-living relief to all Western Australians.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house how this government is providing support to households with cheaper transport options including capped fares and free travel for school students?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house whether she is aware of any threats to the ongoing availability of such initiatives?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

(1)–(2) I thank the member for Riverton for that question. We know that this Liberal–National opposition has been opposed to cost-of-living initiatives in this state. Regarding the student assistance payment, we recall the opposition said that we should not provide support to families in Western Australia that is not means tested. Remember that? I find it quite ironic again that it opposed the initiative and is now saying it did not go far enough. We saw that opposition to the student assistance payment. The Liberal and National Parties are also opposed to public transport. Public transport is one of the most affordable ways to move around the city, and we have introduced other initiatives around the state in regional WA. The first was the two-zone fare cap for people travelling more than two zones, under which the most people will pay and continue to pay is less than \$5 with a SmartRider. This is saving people in Butler, for example, member for Butler, over \$1 000 per annum, and even more for people living in the member for Dawesville’s electorate. So far, from October 2023, an estimated \$14 million has been saved through the nine-zone journeys, which is a 27 per cent increase from the figure of the previous year. That is a real saving for those travelling around our suburbs and through some of our regional towns.

Free public transport on Sundays lets people move around the suburbs free on Sundays. We have seen a 30 per cent increase in patronage on Sundays as a result of that initiative and savings for workers and everyone else travelling around on a Sunday. The ride to school free program saves families with two children around \$560 per annum. That is on top of the student assistance payment and the other assistance we have provided. So far, \$4.6 million of subsidised public transport fares just for the school initiative has been paid out.

In regional WA, other initiatives include the regional pensioner fuel card increase, the doubling of the conveyance allowance for families who cannot access good bus services and the provision of over 360 000 capped airfares to regional residents. That is one of the biggest success stories in relation to the cost of living, in which we saved regional families hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars in airfares since this initiative was introduced. We continue to support it. As has been fed back to me, both from our regional members and the public, this was one of the best things that we could have done to support liveability and transport within regional WA.

This is what we are doing to support the cost of living. We know the opposition, after eight years, left unaffordable airfares for regional Western Australians. The National Party said that it was committed to the regions but did nothing on regional airfare affordability. The Nationals WA and the Liberal Party will unwind our cost-of-living initiatives for our public transport system. They do not believe in subsidising public transport. They do not believe in building public transport. It means kids going to school and families moving around the suburbs and it means people connecting to TAFEs, because, of course, now we have made them affordable, as opposed to what the other side did. It would mean massive increases in public transport fares if the National and Liberal Parties were to gain power, impacting families and the ability of people in Western Australia to connect to schools, jobs and other opportunities.

FIREARMS BUYBACK PROGRAM**477. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Minister for Police:**

I refer to the firearms buyback scheme with the \$63 million budget and the minister’s latest media publicity stunt on the weekend that saw firearms loaded into a truck and dumped on the ground.

- (1) Who came up with the idea to transport these firearms in the back of a truck?
- (2) What was the cost of staging his latest political media stunt?
- (3) Which government agency will be making this payment?
- (4) Who authorised that payment?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please. Minister for Police, before I give you the call. Minister for Education, please do not interject while questions are being asked.

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

(1)–(4) I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question, which gives me the opportunity to raise yet again with the people of Western Australia, particularly those who have the opportunity —

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please. I asked for silence while you asked the question. The minister is fewer than 15 seconds into his answer and you are already interjecting. I would like to hear the minister’s answer.

Mr P. PAPALIA: It gives me the opportunity to raise again with the people of Western Australia the success of the government’s response to introducing the toughest gun laws in the country and toughening firearms legislation,

which has been relatively untouched for 50 years. What we have seen with the buyback, which has now been underway for a little over five months, is 20 000 firearms being taken out of the suburbs and towns of Western Australia. There are 20 000 fewer guns, making the community safer and reducing the opportunity for those guns to find their way into the hands of criminals or people who would do harm with them. It is making the community safer. It is a wonderful thing to see that the people who held those licences and have willingly and voluntarily taken advantage of the firearms buyback have benefited. They have been able to receive funds in return for returning those firearms and getting them out of the community. That is a good thing.

The purpose of our recent media about the level of the return of firearms was to bring it to the attention of people who are being misinformed and misled by the Leader of the Opposition and the appalling behaviour of the National Party and some members of the Liberal Party who are encouraging gun owners to retain firearms that will not be able to be held when the laws come into effect. People are believing the misleading and completely false information being peddled by the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues in a very divisive and dangerous manner on many occasions. When those people believe that information and choose not to take advantage of the buyback, which will end at the end of this month, they will find themselves in the position when the laws come into effect of being in possession of a firearm that is no longer lawful. They will have to lawfully divest themselves of the firearm before that time. They might be able to sell it elsewhere in the community. If they sell it in Western Australia, it probably will not be worth as much as they could get through the buyback. They will have to lawfully divest themselves of the firearm or they will be breaking the law, and they will not want to find themselves in that position. The modelling suggests that many thousands of people who are currently in possession of firearms will not be able to get a licence when the laws come into effect because if they are not a farmer or a club shooter and if they do not really know the person they have a property letter from, which is their only genuine reason for having a firearm, they are unlikely to have a genuine reason to have a firearm after the laws come into effect. Right now, they should take advantage of the buyback; it is in their interests to do so because they will lose their firearms at the end of this process and there will not be another buyback program after the buyback ends.

FIREARMS BUYBACK PROGRAM

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

I have a supplementary question. Noting that the minister has not answered any of the questions I have asked, what will happen to the remainder of the sum allocated to the buyback after 31 August, and why will the minister not consider extending the window of opportunity for people to take up the buyback further down the track?

A government member interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

I will repeat the message: do not listen to the Nationals WA; it may not even exist after the next election. To the extent that National Party members are telling people anything, particularly about firearms, people should assume that it is wrong. The firearms buyback is on now. People can take advantage of it if they have a firearm. Bear in mind that more than half the firearms received under the buyback were in the city, in Perth, in the metropolitan area. More than half of those 20 000 firearms were from the city. People who currently have a firearms licence but who determine, when they look at the legislation, that it will not be possible or it will be unlikely for them to get a licence under the new system should consider taking advantage of the buyback. Do not listen to the Leader of the Opposition—that is my point.

The National Party has been running a bit of a narrative that is really offensive, divisive and dangerous in light of recent events, such as the elevation of the terrorist threat level and other events in the nation and around the world. It is extraordinary that it would suggest that the rewriting of the Firearms Act to make it safe for communities and to elevate public safety to be the number one consideration would somehow be an attack on people. That is the language that the Leader of the Opposition employs. He employs language that suggests to people that they are being threatened and attacked when what has happened is that finally, after 50 years, the legislation has been rewritten to elevate public safety as a primary consideration. If an event occurs as a consequence —

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

The SPEAKER: Silence, please.

Point of Order

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Under standing order 78, the answer must be relevant to the question. The minister did not answer the first part of the question, and now he is not answering the second part of the supplementary.

The SPEAKER: With respect to the member's point of order, it is true that standing order 78 states that the answer has to be relevant to the question. The minister's answer has been relevant to the question. It is a matter of opinion whether he has answered it, and that is how the standing orders operate. There is nothing in the standing orders that says one must answer a question in a particular way or to the satisfaction of the person who has asked it. The response simply has to be relevant to the question asked, so there is no point of order.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr P. PAPALIA: Thanks, Speaker. I will be quick to finish. I want to bring to the Leader of the Opposition's attention that his language and the nature of his response to this legislation has led to unnecessary division, anger and, in some cases, threats of violence against me and other people. It has also potentially elevated the threat level to police. He should consider what he is saying. He should consider what happened at Wieambilla not that long ago and consider the nature of his language around the firearms laws, which are designed to make the community safer.

COST OF LIVING — EDUCATION

479. Mr T.J. HEALY to the Minister for Education:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's delivery of cost-of-living relief to Western Australian families.

- (1) Can the minister further outline to the house how the WA student assistance payment has provided financial assistance to families across the state, regardless of where they live?
- (2) Can the minister further advise the house how other cost-of-living initiatives are being delivered to assist parents with the cost of school supplies?

Dr A.D. BUTI replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for Southern River for his question, his support of the WA student assistance payment and his leadership in his community in ensuring that his local community members were able to benefit from this government's program. The Western Australian student assistance payment program distributed more than \$75 million to provide almost 400 000 students and their families with important cost-of-living support. It is outstanding. Despite the negativity of the opposition, who were negative from day one—within the first hour of the announcement, the member for Roe was out there being negative—we obtained an 80 per cent success rate. That is 80 per cent of eligible recipients enrolled in WA schools receiving a payment. This can be put down to the government's extensive advertising and community awareness campaign, which included information translated into more than 15 languages, and comprehensive support for people who needed help to submit their claims. It can also be attributed to the exceptional work done by government members, like the member for Southern River, who got out there in their school communities, promoted the program and helped parents and carers to claim.

I was at an education forum in Eaton with the member for Collie–Preston. She offered herself and her staff to assist parents at the school if they needed assistance. That is what we did on this side of the house. Southern River had success rates in schools of 89 per cent, 87 per cent and 84 per cent at Gosnells Primary School and so on. I am not surprised that suburbs in the metropolitan area with the highest uptake of claims were Baldivis, Canning Vale and Ellenbrook. I suspect the very competitive member for Southern River will be a little disappointed that he was pipped at the post by the member for Baldivis, but that is the way it goes. These are outstanding results. I have already mentioned the member for Albany's contribution to ensure that her constituents received the benefit. I compare that with like schools in the member for Roe's electorate and what he did. I would really like to know whether the member for Roe went to any school and said that people should be enrolling in this program. Did you, member for Roe?

The SPEAKER: Minister, you are the one who has been asked a question. Please proceed.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Yes, I asked a question. The member did not, did he? The member for Roe's silence says it all. I do not know how he can get up in the morning and say that he is a member of the Legislative Assembly of Western Australia and the member for Roe. I do not know how he does that because I could not get up in the morning and say that I am the member for Armadale if I had not gone out to advocate for my constituents to receive a benefit that will help with cost-of-living pressures. I would not be able to do it, but as we know, the Nationals WA does not have any principles. Its members stand for pure basic politics and they have been found out in the way they have opposed this program.

Then we had the comment-a-minute member for Vasse who likes to comment on everything. Contrary to her baseless allegations, the government did not pocket the unclaimed funds, as she went out and said we had done.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

Dr A.D. BUTI: No, we have not done that. I will tell members what we have done with the unclaimed funds. We have increased the secondary assistance scheme clothing allowance. This measure provides an extra \$185 for eligible secondary school students from low-income families and brings the total support available through the secondary assistance scheme to \$535 a year for 2024–25. Further, a total of \$500 000 is also being provided to the WA-based charity Give Write to support its work distributing new and recycled stationery to schoolchildren in need right across the state; and, further, a significant increase in supporting the government's successful KidSport program—well done, Minister for Sport and Recreation—with up to \$500 in vouchers now available to eligible families to cover the cost of children's sport in 2025. There will soon be another announcement made about further support and funds from this program. The member for Vasse is wrong—completely wrong—but why should we

be surprised by that? We have not pocketed money. It is being used for other purposes. It would be good if the members for Roe and Vasse congratulated us; but, no, all they can do is be negative. They play base politics—shame on them!

Yesterday I had a meeting with the Western Australian Council of Social Service, which expressed gratitude for what the government has been doing with the residual funding and how much it is needed by people in need.

In closing, I thank all school staff and local members who have supported families to access this government's support. The promotion of the payment in their local communities demonstrates their support for their communities, and the opposition remains condemned.

CHILD PROTECTION WORKERS — INDUSTRIAL ACTION

480. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Child Protection:

I refer to the closure of child protection offices to protest the government's under-resourcing of the child protection sector, and comments from workers that mental health is not a priority, workers are underpaid for the work they do and the stress it causes, and that nothing is fixing the ongoing systemic issues that workers have to deal with.

- (1) Does the minister support CFMEU workers being paid 25 per cent more when working on state government projects while workers in the minister's child protection agency are going on strike due to underpayment and the minister's inability to deliver the resources they need?
- (2) Is child protection not a priority of this government?

The SPEAKER: Before I give the Minister for Child Protection the call, the first part of the first question is out of order. It does not pertain to this minister's portfolio area. The member can only ask ministers about their portfolio area, not about industrial relations and not about payments in other sectors of the community.

Ms S.E. WINTON replied:

- (1)–(2) I welcome the opportunity to speak about child protection workers in this state and the incredible job they do each and every day. Since I became minister, it has been my great privilege to travel around the state and I have had conversations with hundreds of child protection staff about the extraordinary work that they do. It is challenging, difficult and complex work, and they do an incredible job. I remind the house that we value child protection workers and the critical work they do. At the heart of what we believe in and what we prioritise is keeping children safe. Child protection workers are critical to that work. That is why since coming into government in 2017 we have increased the workforce to 225 full-time equivalent workers. That is a 30 per cent increase in the workforce. Members, I acknowledge that they work in challenging environments, and that is why we continue to roll out further programs that work to support, retain and attract people, particularly in the regions.

I am happy to highlight our regional workforce, as I have done in the house before, and the attraction and retention initiative of \$3.7 million that is particularly focused on supporting child protection workers in regional and remote areas, where we know they do critically important work. We have spent \$1.4 million to address safety concerns by installing worker safety devices in Halls Creek, Geraldton, Midland and Broome. Of course, a critical part of the work that I am focused on is listening to child protection workers and what they need. What I hear overwhelmingly from them is that we need to focus on and support placements for children in care. That is why, since I have been minister, we have had a focus on celebrating, encouraging and valuing foster and family carers in this state.

We have done a significant amount of work because we know that carers, in partnership with child protection workers and/or the various services and early intervention programs, play a critical collaborative role in keeping children and families safe in this state.

Members, I am very proud of our record on this side when it comes to supporting vulnerable children and families in this state. There is no more important cohort than the child protection workers who get up, show up and do incredible work right throughout our state every single day.

CHILD PROTECTION WORKERS — INDUSTRIAL ACTION

481. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Child Protection:

I have a supplementary question. Why are child protection workers not going to work and why are the offices shut and why are workers in the transport portfolio feeling better supported than those who look after the most vulnerable in our state?

Ruling by Speaker

THE SPEAKER: Again, before I give the minister the call, I need to give the Leader of the Liberal Party some advice. Firstly, a supplementary question has to be directly related to the first question and it has to be simple, short and to the point. When you have one part and then put "and" in the middle, you are effectively trying to ask two points, not just one direct question.

The other point is that I advised you that it is not for this minister to comment on another portfolio such as industrial relations or what other people are paid. She can be asked only about her portfolio area and about the people in that portfolio area: what they are paid, what their conditions are—so forth and so on. If the question is to the Premier, for example, who has a broader responsibility, he can be asked that broader question, but you cannot ask that broad question of a minister.

If you also look to the standing orders, you also just generally cannot ask for an opinion. If you look at the standing orders, which the Deputy Leader of the Opposition referred to, standing order 77 says that you cannot ask for an opinion in a question. You cannot ask for an opinion about what people are paid in some industry, what kind of gardens they like or anything else. Therefore, your supplementary is out of order on so many fronts. I advised you in respect of your first question about that first element. You have persisted in asking it in the second point. Your question is ruled out of order.

TAFE COURSES — INVESTMENT

482. Ms J.L. HANNS to the Minister for Training and Workforce Development:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's record of delivering affordable TAFE and training options for Western Australians.

- (1) Can the minister advise the house how this investment is delivering record levels of TAFE enrolments and providing Western Australians facing cost-of-living pressures with cheaper training opportunities?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house whether she is aware of anyone who opposes this important investment in WA TAFE?

Ms S.F. McGURK replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for Collie–Preston for her question and interest in this matter. I know it is very pertinent to her electorate and she has had a longstanding interest in in this area before and since she has entered this place. Of course, it is a great opportunity to talk about vocational training and the work that this government is doing in that area. Every month, new records are set. There is new interest and appreciation, not just in Western Australia but around the country at a federal level, of the importance of skill development and the work and effort involved—not just the resources and money, but the thoughtful application of those resources to ensure that we have the skills needed to meet the current skills demand and the skills demand of the next decades.

One of those records that we just reached, of which I am very proud, is our achievement of a record high in publicly funded vocational course enrolments in 2023. There were 153 800. It is amazing. A record number of people are enrolling in vocational training at TAFE and at private providers funded by the state and federal government at record levels in Western Australia. We should be really proud of that. It is important for industry and employers, and for those people who are getting those skills. It is life-changing for them to get skills and qualifications, lift their skills and go and get work that is meaningful, gives them income and gives them choices. There are so many wins, and I am very proud of the work that we have done as a state government since 2017.

I will just go through the records that have been broken. I talked about the number of publicly funded enrolments in 2023. Those enrolments were 10 per cent higher than they were in the previous year. They broke the previous record in 2021, which was 150 000 enrolments.

If we look at fee-free qualifications and skill sets, fee-free enrolments are up 33 per cent from 2023, the previous year. That is massive; they are up one-third. For heavily discounted courses, there are over 58 000 enrolments, so it is massive. It is important that we are not just throwing money into the system generally; as I said, there has been a thoughtful application of how we are applying these resources. The big winners in this have been those in-demand areas of care, social assistance and health care. Early education and care, nursing and health continue to attract the strongest interest amongst fee-free courses; that is the case at the moment, as well as for the last couple of years. When we look at our courses with heavily reduced fees, that is actually where we are also getting some really important buy-in. We are seeing that in the trade-related courses. We are not offering many of those completely free—some of them we are—but they are heavily reduced. We are also seeing, for instance, in electrical training, some heavily reduced training and some record take-up.

It is not only the sort of courses that we are offering, but also that we are targeting those sections of the workforce that are under-represented in paid employment. We need to lift those people's engagement in the workforce, not only for meeting skills demands, but also for those individuals. When we think about the number of vacancies we have across the board across the state, it is good for those people, not only women—obviously it is always important that we give our attention to how we increase their enrolment in the workforce—but also people with disabilities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and people from non-English speaking backgrounds. For instance, enrolments of people with disabilities were

up 19 per cent from 2022–23, so nearly 20 per cent up in terms of fee-free courses. Also, two-thirds of all enrolments in fee-free qualifications were by women. That is fantastic. Again, this is up nearly 12 per cent from 2022–23. Finally, there is also an increase for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Obviously, all this is in sharp contrast to the opposition's track record. I am always very pleased to get up and remind this place, as well as the public, about what they did when they were in government. It is not only what they did not do—they did not invest; they did not put any thoughtful application into the policy and the application of resources—but, in fact, they did wilful damage to the system. They increased fees. Some of those TAFE fees went up fivefold. We saw apprentice and training commencements fall by nearly 10 500. The number of people in training fell by over 10 000. The number of completions fell by 5 700—nearly 6 000. In all those metrics, the numbers of commencements, people in training and completions were all down under the previous government.

Finally, let us not forget the cost of those courses. A diploma of nursing qualification under the previous government cost \$10 000. A diploma of electronics and communications engineering cost over \$8 000. A diploma of early childhood education and care—crucial in not only the metropolitan area but also the regions—cost over \$7 000. A cert IV in building and construction cost \$4 000. Do members know how much all those courses cost under WA Labor? They do not cost. They are free.

Members, there has never been a better or more popular time to train in Western Australia.

REX AIRLINES — REGIONAL ROUTES

483. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Minister for Transport:

I think we have a couple of minutes of question time left after that copious reply.

I refer to the recent news that regional airline provider Rex Airlines has entered administration. I note it is the carrier for several regional communities, including Albany, Carnarvon and Esperance, on regulated routes.

- (1) What action has the government taken to ensure these air routes remain in place to provide a critical connection to regional communities?
- (2) What advice has the Minister for Transport received about the ongoing viability of routes currently operated by Rex Airlines?
- (3) What assurances can the government provide to families, businesses and communities that these routes will remain in operation in the long term?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

- (1)–(3) First of all, there has been no better friend of regional air travel than this government. We have gone in and subsidised regional airfares, supported regional air routes and helped support the creation and expansion of Nexus Airlines. There has been no bigger friend of regional air travel than this government. As soon as we were informed of what was happening with Rex Airlines, we sought immediate meetings to be held between my office, the agency and the administrator's representatives to ensure that the existing regional routes will continue—and they are continuing—and we let the public know that those regional routes will continue. Of course, the east–west routes are no longer continuing. We continue to be ready to do what we can to make sure regional residents continue to have access to affordable air travel and that the existing services continue.

REX AIRLINES — REGIONAL ROUTES

484. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Minister for Transport:

I have a supplementary question. Can residents and visitors be confident in booking airfares on Rex Airlines to Albany, Carnarvon, Esperance and Monkey Mia in the weeks and months ahead?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

All the information we have received from the administrator is that air services will continue. As I said, we stand ready to do what we can to ensure that regional residents continue to have access to regional air travel.

COST OF LIVING — KIDSPORT

485. Mr P. LILBURNE to the Minister for Sport and Recreation:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's support for WA families in the face of global cost-of-living pressures.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house how this government's expansion of KidSport is making sport more accessible for kids and young people in Western Australia who would normally not be able to participate?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house how KidSport is removing financial barriers for WA families?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for Carine for his question. I also reflect on the tremendous success of our Western Australian athletes in Paris. So far, Matt Ebdon and John Peers have won gold in tennis men's

doubles; Brianna Throssell has won gold in the pool; Iona Anderson has won silver and bronze in the pool; Jack Robinson has won silver in surfing; Annabelle McIntyre has won bronze in rowing; and Josh Yong and Zac Incerti have won bronze in the pool. Of course, I am sure lots of Western Australians will be focused on Nina Kennedy as she pole-vaults for a medal tonight, so we send her our best wishes. To all our athletes we send our very best wishes and we will welcome our Olympians and Paralympians when they return home. They have done a tremendous job.

This is linked, essentially, to KidSport, because when we focus on programs that allow more girls and boys to participate in sport at the earliest possible time, it then has, as we know, a lifelong impact on their lives going forward. The Cook Labor government has very much focused on what programs it can support that also have an impact on family household budgets and finances, given the cost-of-living concerns that many families have at the moment. I am very proud that this Cook Labor government increased the KidSport voucher amount from \$150 to \$300 and then, more recently, to \$500. More children will also be able to access the program because we have finessed the criteria to access KidSport.

For example, we have focused on and targeted children who are being cared for by foster carers to support them. We have also made sure that biological children of foster carers can access KidSport. We have a category that also allows special considerations for people who are experiencing hardship; I want members to be aware of that because it is an important consideration. What has it also seen? The increase in the dollar amount has already seen an increase in the number of vouchers being accessed. Very soon, we will reach \$50 million of KidSport funding since its inception more than 10 years ago. We have some great statistics in, for example, the Cities of Stirling and Joondalup, which cover the member's electorate. Nearly 3 000 vouchers were supported in the 2023–24 financial year. There has been more than \$600 000 in funding and 362 clubs supported across the board in terms of codes, including support for boys and girls in netball, basketball and swimming lessons. We have also tweaked the criteria to ensure that uniforms, resources and playing equipment are covered.

All of that has been included and expanded under the Cook Labor government. Why? It is because we know that this will have an impact on those families that need to access assistance. We are seeing it now on fields and courts and in pools and gymnasiums—all those fields where sport is played. We are seeing an increasing number of kids engaged and involved. It is a great news story for all Western Australians. It is also a clear focus, and we recognise that by placing support in programs such as KidSport, we are supporting families and making sure that all kids—I am sounding like Rampaging Roy Slaven now!—are engaged and involved in sport. That is what we want to see. I am so proud of the rollout of this program. It can be seen in every electorate across the state. I encourage members to continue to liaise with their sporting clubs and organisations. Let them know that KidSport is not only alive and well but also growing under the Cook Labor government.

Mr P.J. Rundle interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: What is wrong with you? You never say anything. I wanted to catch up with the member here. Here he is; he never supports anything. A great number of kids in the member for Roe's electorate have accessed KidSport and benefited from such things as the community sporting and recreation facilities fund, from which a number of programs and projects in the member's electorate were funded in the last round. He has not sent me a card to thank me yet! I tell you what: I get cards, flowers and things from lots of people, but never from the member for Roe. Nothing! He is a hyena, sneaking around there, hanging around those bins —

The SPEAKER: Leader of the House, please resume your seat.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: KidSport is working well. It is brilliant. I encourage all members to continue to be in contact with their sporting clubs to make sure they know that the government has enhanced and increased the program, because we want that money to get out to the families who need it and we want to make sure that more and more kids in Western Australia are playing sport, no matter where they live.

The SPEAKER: Hear, hear! Let that be a reminder that when you are speaking, you need to stand in your place. The member for North West Central with the last question.

PATIENT ASSISTED TRAVEL SCHEME — SUBSIDIES

486. Ms M. BEARD to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the patient assisted travel scheme in Western Australia, which provides vital support for regional and remote patients who require travel assistance to access essential medical services that are often not available in the regions.

- (1) Can the minister explain why Western Australia's PATS rates are still so low relative to other states and territories when regional Western Australian patients have much further to travel?
- (2) How does the government justify these low rates in light of WA's economic standing and the significant revenue generated from our natural resources?

Ms A. SANDERSON replied:

(1)–(2) I thank the member very much for the question. It gives us an opportunity to talk about the incredible cost-of-living announcement that was made on the weekend to support regional patients accessing health care, with a 50 per cent increase in the fuel subsidy for the patient assisted travel scheme. Like the Leader of the House, I am still waiting for my thankyou card from the member for North West Central for increasing that fuel subsidy. This is an important increase. We understand that there are cost-of-living pressures. We understand that health care is essential and that access to health care is part of the cost-of-living measures. Although we provide a fully accessible public health system, we know that access for regional residents can be a challenge. That is why it was under this government that we saw a substantial increase to the accommodation allowance by 83 per cent for those eligible under PATS. We continue to build on that by lifting the kilometre rebate for the PATS fuel subsidy from 16¢ to 26¢. That is a 50 per cent increase.

Compare that with the increase—the only increase—delivered by the Liberal and National Parties when they were in government in 2009. The Liberal–National government’s increase to the fuel subsidy was three measly cents. This is a genuine and meaningful increase for people accessing health care. For patients making a trip to Albany, the rebate will go from \$131 to \$212. For Geraldton, it will increase by \$85 from \$136 to \$221. For Kalgoorlie, it will go from \$190 to \$309 and from Port Hedland, it will go from \$545 to \$885. This is a meaningful increase and it is on top of the increase in the Country Age Pension Fuel Card subsidy to \$675 a year. It is on top of delivering on the state and commonwealth electricity rebates of \$750 a year. It is also on top of the regional airfare zone caps, which this government is responsible for. This government also provided the WA student assistance payments for people with school-aged children, and greater access to health care with oral contraceptives and UTI treatment for women with pharmacists to save on paying for GP appointments. We are very proud of our record on cost-of-living payments. I am surprised to hear criticism from the member for North West Central, who has stood up and advocated for an increase in the fuel subsidy. Again, I await the thankyou and congratulations in the post!

PATIENT ASSISTED TRAVEL SCHEME — SUBSIDIES**487. Ms M. BEARD to the Minister for Health:**

I have a supplementary question. Given that the rates are significantly lower than in other states, including for accommodation, does the minister believe it is acceptable that patients in one of the wealthiest and most remote states in Australia still face significant financial barriers to accessing essential medical care?

Ms A. SANDERSON replied:

That is why we increased the fuel subsidy. That is why we increased the eligibility for the PATS accommodation allowance. That is why we are increasing access to services locally. That is why we have doubled cancer services in regional Western Australia. That is why we have increased our staffing footprint. That is why we are redeveloping hospitals in regional Western Australia. That is exactly why we are doing all those things to deliver world-class health care to Western Australia’s regions.

The SPEAKER: Members, that concludes question time.

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION*Minister for Police — Personal Explanation*

MRR.S. LOVE (Moore — Leader of the Opposition) [3.03 pm]: I rise under standing order 148 to make a personal explanation. During question time, the Minister for Police repeatedly implied that I have incited or provoked violence against him as a result of my support for law-abiding firearms owners. I reject this.

Point of Order

Dr A.D. BUTI: I have a point of order.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, a point of order has been called, so that interrupts what you are saying.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Madam Speaker, personal explanations are used to clarify a statement you have made, not to then engage in a debate on whether you agree with what another member of Parliament has said.

The SPEAKER: On the point of order, a personal explanation is about you personally explaining something. It is not an avenue for debate or to run any comment on what another member of the chamber has said. I will give the Leader of the Opposition a little more opportunity if he has a genuine personal explanation and is proposing to stick within that standing order.

Personal Explanation Resumed

Mr R.S. LOVE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to clarify and make it quite clear that I have never sought to incite violence against any member of Parliament. Such an accusation is false and should be rejected, and I seek an apology from the minister.

The SPEAKER: Sorry, that last part was completely out of order and against the standing orders. Member, it will make it difficult for me to take you at your word in future if, when I ask if you are going to comply with the standing orders if given a second opportunity, you accede that you are going to, and then you do not. I think that is there for everyone to see.

FAMILY VIOLENCE LEGISLATION REFORM BILL 2024

Consideration in Detail

Resumed from 6 August.

Debate was adjourned after clause 22 had been agreed to.

Clause 23: Section 54 amended —

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Can I just remind the chamber that we are dealing with the Family Violence Legislation Reform Bill 2024. It has 75 clauses, no schedules, and we are dealing with clause 23. The question is that clause 23 stand as printed. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Clause 23 amends section 54. Can the Attorney General explain, for the benefit of the chamber, what is sought to be achieved under clause 23 by inserting, after section 54(1)(a)(iii) —

(iv) is, or has been, in breach of an electronic monitoring condition mentioned in section 28(2)(e);

or

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Certainly; the member wants to know what this clause refers to. Part VII of the Bail Act deals with the enforcement of bail undertakings, and section 54 deals with situations in which the bail accused may be required to appear before a judicial officer to show cause as to why a variation or revocation of bail should not occur. This clause will insert new subparagraph (iv) into section 54(1)(a) to account for a breach of an electronic monitoring condition under the grant of bail.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 24 and 25 put and passed.

Clause 26: Sections 66F to 66H inserted —

Mr R.S. LOVE: I have a specific question on clause 26, but first I will ask the Attorney General to explain what this clause will achieve, because it is quite an important provision around the disclosure of electronic monitoring information and the use of that information. Perhaps the Attorney General could give a general explanation about this provision and then I will ask a specific question.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: The government has made an affirmative decision to allow the Western Australia Police Force to use electronic monitoring data to investigate any unlawful activity. The member might recall that during the COVID crisis people had to give information that registered when they entered premises and there were objections to the Commissioner of Police using confidential information for the investigation of other offences, but here we have made the decision—an affirmative decision—that the information collected as a result of electronic monitoring will be available to the police to investigate any offence. This will not be confined to family violence offences or breaches of electronic monitoring conditions. When there has been a burglary and the device has placed the person at the scene of the burglary, the electronic device data can be used in the investigation of an offence unrelated to the protected person. Western Australians value a safe and orderly society, and the government has no difficulty allowing the electronic monitoring data to be used in pursuit of persons who pose a risk to the safety and wellbeing of the community and to detect unlawful activity. The Cook government considers the use of electronic monitoring data as no different from the use of CCTV cameras; they help make people safe and feel safe, they deter wrongdoing—who wants to do a burglary while wearing a bracelet that can put them at the scene of the crime?—and they provide evidence in the event of wrongdoing. A positive decision has been made that this data can be used in all aspects of policing.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Proposed section 66F(5) says —

The CEO (corrections) must establish procedures for the disclosure of electronic monitoring information under this section.

Can the Attorney General explain why, if there will be a general ability for the police to access the information, it will be necessary to establish such procedures? Could those procedures limit the use of any of the information, or will this simply lay out the method for the disclosure and how the police can go about that?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: It is just an agreement between the CEO of the Department of Justice and the Commissioner of Police about what procedures should be undertaken to access the information held by Justice in the investigation of a crime. There must be a procedure; it will not be just anyone ringing up a clerk at Justice and saying, “Tell me about this.” There will be an identifiable procedure so that all police squads will know how to access the information

that they might need in short time. We can think of situations like the search for Cleo, for example, when the police used mobile towers to triangulate a location. Sometimes the police will need information expeditiously that comes from the data held by an electronic monitoring device and, accordingly, there will be a procedure in place so that they will know exactly how to do it.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Proposed section 66H is headed “Powers of CEO (corrections)” and states —

The CEO (corrections) has all of the powers conferred under this Act on a community corrections officer and may review, vary or rescind a direction given by a community corrections officer.

In the context of clause 26, why is proposed section 66H necessary? I am not seeing where that interplays with the rest of the proposed sections that we are dealing with.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: It really replicates the current section 50A on page 69 of the Bail Act. Under part VIA, “Administration of home detention conditions”, of the Bail Act, section 50A will be deleted. It will be replaced and replicated by this section because it deals with electronic monitoring, not just the administration of home detention conditions. We are just replicating the section and applying it to electronic monitoring conditions.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 27 to 31 put and passed.

Clause 32: Schedule 1 Part D clause 3 amended —

Mr R.S. LOVE: Could the Attorney General explain the import of deleting “over the age of 17” and inserting “17 or more years of age”? Is there a difference? Is there a change in that?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: The explanatory memorandum states —

Schedule 1 Part D deals with conditions which may be imposed on a grant of bail, and clause 3 makes provision for ... home detention ...

Subclause (1)(a) makes a minor amendment to current drafting to make it clear that home detention can be imposed on a 17-year-old

Subclause (1)(b) amends reference to gender-specific language in Schedule 1 Part D clause 3(2)(a) by replacing the term ‘his’ with ‘the accused’s’, —

There is one they have picked up, Leader of the Opposition —

in accordance with contemporary drafting conventions.

Subclause (2) amends clause 3(4) to confirm that persons who are dealt with under Schedule 1 Part C clause 3F(1) or 3G(1) are not subject to this clause; rather, they are dealt with under proposed subclause (4A) which provides that if a home detention is imposed, an electronic monitoring condition must also be imposed and that the accused is to be under the supervision of a community corrections officer and comply with any directions given by that officer under clause 3(5).

...

Subclause (4) inserts two new directions into Schedule 1 Part D clause 3(5) which support the enforcement of electronic monitoring by community corrections officers and police.

The new directions allow a community corrections officer to direct an offender to charge the electronic monitoring device they are directed to wear to ensure the device is always operational and to require that the offender not enter an ‘exclusion zone’.

Failure to charge an electronic monitoring device risks the in-built battery going flat, thereby rendering the device ineffective and undermining its purpose of monitoring the whereabouts of the offender.

An exclusion zone is a protected area specific to a victim or other persons—it could be a place of residence, place of employment or other place frequented by a victim. A person subject to electronic monitoring is not to enter an exclusion zone, which is intended to protect the safety and wellbeing of a victim.

As home detention can be applied to a 17-year-old, they can be subject to the mandatory fixation of a monitoring device, whereas before, GPS devices were not fitted to anyone under the age of 18.

Mr R.S. LOVE: The Attorney General mentioned the exclusion zone, which the explanatory memorandum states is —

... a protected area specific to a victim or other persons—it could be a place of residence, place of employment or other place frequented by a victim.

Can the Attorney General explain how much in real time the monitoring will take place? If the person enters the exclusion zone, such as the house that the person they have been accused of abusing is in, what will the sequence of events be in terms of alert, reaction et cetera?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: It is both impressive and incredible. Through the Minister for Police, we might be able to organise a visit to the monitoring centre for the Leader of the Opposition. There are banks of screens. Once the device is fixed to an exclusion zone, the device is registered. Then they call up the device on the computer and literally draw a green boundary around the exclusion zone. That then disappears from active viewing on the screen. However, if the device enters the designated exclusion zone, an alarm immediately rings and it comes up on the screen. The monitoring of this takes place at a police command centre. There are police all around, as well as community corrections officers, so that they can say immediately to the policeman at the next screen, “It’s gone off; we need a response.”

As to the response team, those questions could be further asked of the Minister for Police, but there is an active response team to respond. A memorandum of understanding exists between the department and the Western Australia Police Force and it sets out the response protocols for electronically monitored offenders. It is a very advanced, tested and stable method of monitoring and response. I was so impressed when I saw it. There could be up to 500 extra units and if any of them enter an exclusion zone—ping!—up it will come on the screen and a response will be given.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Clause 32(4)(c) states —

after paragraph (b) insert:

(ba) direct the accused to charge the approved electronic monitoring device so as to ensure the device is at all times operational;

I assume that if the device stopped sending a signal, it would be similar to what we would see if they entered an exclusion zone. Would there be a defence if there was a reason that the device could not be charged, such as the failure of the device that was not caused by someone hitting it with a hammer or, as happens frequently in my electorate in the town of Dongara, there being no power for five days? What would happen in that circumstance if there was a reason that the device was no longer charged?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: We are taught in one of our early units at law school that for the conviction of anyone of a criminal offence, there have to be the actus reus and the mens rea. The action has to be linked to the mental element; it cannot be an unwilling act. If the battery goes flat because a person has deliberately not charged it, that is the mens rea—the decision by the restrained person not to charge it. However, if it goes flat beyond the control or actions of the restrained person under circumstances like the member described, such as a power failure, there are defences under the Criminal Code for that, and there is no mens rea because the accused’s actions did not contribute to it. However, when the device has been interfered with, there will be a penalty for damaging the device, and there will be a breach of an order when he—as it will usually be; rarely she—fails to repower the device.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 33: Schedule 1 Part E inserted —

Mr R.S. LOVE: Clause 33 states —

Part E — Condition that must be imposed on a grant of bail for particular accused persons

1. Electronic monitoring condition

...

(2) The judicial officer must impose an electronic monitoring condition as a condition on the grant of bail unless the judicial officer is satisfied there are exceptional circumstances.

Can the Attorney General give me an idea of what those exceptional circumstances might entail? I know the Attorney does not like to go into hypotheticals, but is there some sort of guidance around what would constitute exceptional circumstances? Is there already some indication in the current law around what that might be or is it a matter that has to be worked out over time?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I would not like to define or confine a definition of “exceptional circumstances” as these are determined by the court on a case-by-case basis; for example, in his contribution to the second reading debate I thought the Leader of the Opposition cited the well-identified circumstance in which a person ordinarily resided in an area beyond GPS reception—in a remote or region area where it does not work. That might be one example of an exceptional circumstance, but I do not want to confine the judiciary in any way. Another circumstance might be that a person suffers from diabetes and their limbs swell and the device is constricting them. It might be that a person is a double amputee and has no legs. An unlikely circumstance—because it is about gender—is because a person is pregnant, in the rare circumstance that a female might be subject to this sort of an order. I do not want to constrain the judiciary, but it has to be for a substantial reason, not an arbitrary decision. There are numerous Supreme Court decisions of people who have applied for bail having to demonstrate exceptional circumstances; one of these decisions is that everyone who is charged with murder must show an exceptional circumstance to get bail. I can think of a case of an 80-year-old man who unfortunately killed his wife by smothering her in the middle

of the night with a pillow after 40 years of marriage. He was suffering advanced dementia, did not know what he was doing and in the middle of the night took it upon himself to smother his wife. He was hospitalised and it was an exceptional circumstance. Those cases are not ordinary; they are rare.

Mr R.S. LOVE: This is not related directly to this clause, but the Attorney General raised the situation of some medical situations or a person who may be an amputee. Is there no other range of devices other than the ankle bracelet—whatever it is—that is currently being used? Are no other devices available?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: There are none that have been tested and approved. I suppose we could slip an Apple AirTag in their pocket or something, but nothing has been approved under the regulations other than the bracelets.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Proposed clause 1(5) of proposed part E states —

A community corrections officer may suspend the electronic monitoring of an accused subject to a condition under subclause (2) ...

I am guessing that will be in exceptional circumstances. Will some sort of review take place when the decision to suspend happens so that it is reported that this has occurred?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: As I will explain shortly, the legislation makes provision to deal with suspending electronic monitoring at an operational level because it is not always practicable to bring the matter back before a court to authorise suspension. The Bail Act 1982 and the Sentencing Act 1995 allow a community corrections officer to suspend electronic monitoring. The relevant provision under schedule 1, part D, section 3(6) of the Bail Act provides —

A community corrections officer may suspend the electronic monitoring of an accused subject to direction under subclause (4) —

- (a) while satisfied that it is not practicable to subject the accused to electronic monitoring; or
- (b) while satisfied that it is not necessary for the accused to be subject to electronic monitoring.

Additionally, section 147A(2) of the Sentencing Act 1995 provides —

A CCO may suspend the electronic monitoring of an offender under this Act —

- (a) while satisfied that it is not practicable to subject the offender to electronic monitoring; or
- (b) while satisfied that it is not necessary for the person to be subject to electronic monitoring.

Operationally, a recommendation to suspend electronic monitoring is only made in extraordinary circumstances and with the endorsement of a director within the Department of Justice. Factors to be considered include the duration of a suspension; a current risk assessment and risk mitigation strategy including the method of monitoring to be used during the period of suspension; whether the risk mitigation strategy includes regular or random telephone contact with the accused or treating hospital to confirm that the offender is still present in the hospital; and the anticipated recommencement date of the electronic monitoring.

A recommendation to suspend electronic monitoring is only made when it can be verified that adequate protection of the community can be assured. The primary reasons for recommending a suspension include medical or psychiatric treatment or hospitalisation; interstate or intrastate travel—a fly-in fly-out worker, for example, flying out to do a two-week hitch on a rig in the Indian Ocean—or a change in circumstances that has rendered electronic monitoring not practicable or unnecessary. For example, the protected person may have moved overseas and it is no longer necessary because the protected person is not in the jurisdiction or in the country. The wife has relocated to America with a new partner, or whatever, so it is not necessary now.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Under proposed schedule 1 part E clause 1(5), the explanatory memorandum says there is a policy that requires approval by an assistant commissioner before electronic monitoring is suspended. Is that something that would be set down in a rule to be developed? There is not much assurance on that; it is only a policy of the department. Why is there not more of a stipulation, either in regulation or in the legislation, that it must be someone at a certain level to make the decision. Can the Attorney General explain why it is a matter of policy rather than regulation?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: We have to look at the practical application of this clause. The explanatory memorandum states —

In practice, a community corrections officer cannot, of their own volition, suspend electronic monitoring—this is governed by Department of Justice policy which requires approval of an Assistant Commissioner before electronic monitoring is suspended.

There is the director general of the department and the Commissioner of Corrective Services, and up at the third tier is the assistant commissioner. It has got to be an assistant commissioner at a policy level who agrees to the suspension. There are legitimate examples of why electronic monitoring will be suspended, and I have enumerated a number of those in my previous answer.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I think the Attorney General restated what I said. It is the policy of the department; it is not in a rule or regulation or any other hard-and-fast matter. Perhaps it is in its list of delegations. I am not sure whether it stipulates what level a person has to be before they are given delegated authority under the act. Perhaps that is where it shows up.

I move onto another matter, which is also not mentioned in the legislation, but in the explanatory memorandum. Under the section the Attorney General read, it says —

Other considerations may include where the accused is changing their place of residence, which may warrant the suspension of electronic monitoring pending installation at the new premises. Similarly, if an electronic monitoring device is installed at the accused’s place of employment and the accused subsequently ceases employment ...

Can the Attorney General explain the mechanics of this? If a bracelet is on the leg of the accused or the person subject to the order, what is the matter that will require installation at the premises, as outlined in the explanatory memorandum?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: This is to do with curfews and home detention. They will have the bracelet on their leg. When they enter their residence, there will be another unit. That bracelet will communicate with the home unit and the home unit will communicate back to headquarters, confirming that the person is at the place where the home unit has been installed by the officers.

Mr R.S. LOVE: But isn’t that known already because it is sending a constant GPS signal?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Sorry?

Mr R.S. LOVE: Well, it is not legal, but surely the device is sending a GPS signal all the time. Does the GPS signal not work when someone is inside a premises and is that the reason there has to be this additional equipment? Is it not simply a matter of a person who is meant to be at 17 Brown Street and is at 17 Brown Street? There does not seem to be a need for another device to be installed at 17 Brown Street unless the GPS device does not work when they are inside. I am wondering whether that is the case.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I am so grateful to have such knowledgeable advisers with me to assist me this afternoon, member. I am informed that once they enter the home and the device communicates with home base, the home base does the communication with the central base. It is then not draining the battery on the ankle bracelet. The ankle bracelet communicates with the home device and then the home device does all the work all night and all day to confirm that that is where they are. When they leave home, it will message that they are no longer at that place. The normal tracking will then occur from the ankle bracelet as they move around. When they are in the house where the home device is, the ankle bracelet will not transmit the signal to central; it will be the home device. A person who is ordered to remain on home detention will have their ankle bracelet charge last a long time because the home device will be communicating that the ankle bracelet is still there.

Mr R.S. LOVE: It is outlined in the explanatory memorandum that if the home device is not installed at a new residence or at the place of employment the person is about to start at, there would be a reason to suspend monitoring. Why would that particular aspect of the operation simply no longer being available be a reason to suspend monitoring per se? There would still be the same need to protect the victim of the accused in that circumstance.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: The intention is not to suspend the ankle bracelet monitoring, but to suspend the home base monitoring. We will suspend the home base monitoring whilst the home base monitoring is reinstalled at another location. Thank you, Leader of the Opposition.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 34 to 47 put and passed.

Clause 48: Section 5A amended —

Mr R.S. LOVE: This is under part 7, “Restraining Orders Act 1997 Amended”. Clause 48(1) reads —

In section 5A(1)(b) after “behaviour” insert:
or pattern of behaviour

Could the Attorney General explain the import of the insertion of “pattern of behaviour” in this case?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: With coercive control, any one action of an accused person or respondent might not of itself warrant the imposition of a restraining order. A clear example of this was cited in the report. A husband who ordinarily takes the train to work one day gets up and without informing his wife takes the car to work from Butler. Nothing in that behaviour would require the person to be restrained as part of a restraining order. However, if it could be a demonstrated pattern that the husband was trying to isolate his partner from a group of friends or from her mother, his mother-in-law, and it could be demonstrated that on this occasion he knew she was planning to travel to meet those people on that day and wanted to frustrate and control her, to stop her from visiting her mother or her friends, and he took the car to work, that would be part of a pattern of behaviour. None of the isolated incidents in that pattern taken by themselves would justify the imposition of the order, but cumulatively they could be part of a behavioural pattern that he is practising to control a wife or partner.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I think there is some explanation further down clause 48(2) about a pattern of behaviour. Proposed section 5A(1A) reads —

Behaviour or a pattern of behaviour referred to in 12 subsection (1)(b) —
(a) may occur over a period of time;

We are talking here about establishing a pattern of behaviour that exists prior to the consideration of bail and the imposition of any conditions, so how is such a pattern established? Is it something that the investigators have to establish? Is it something that the victim has to help establish? How is this pattern of behaviour over a period of time established?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: We are all as one at the minister's table! Prior to this clause, we were discussing electronic monitoring. This clause is about getting a restraining order, not electronic monitoring. In an application for a restraining order it is up to the applicant to establish the pattern, so she might say there had been a repeated pattern of stopping her seeing her mother and taking the car keys on this occasion was just one instance of it, but she goes back in time to put before the court all the things her husband has done to stop her having contact with her mother. It happens. She might say, "He stopped me having contact with a particular group of girlfriends". It happens, but it is up to the applicant for the restraining order to adduce the evidence to support the application.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I refer specifically to behaviour, or group behaviour, perhaps. It is the behaviour of the husband or the main person interacting with the person who is seeking the order, but the whole family might be involved. How does that work? In a family or group situation, the applicant is perhaps seeking to restrain the husband—the partner—and maybe some other person, such as a relative of some sort. Can they be part of a wider group of coercive behaviour, or does it have to be specifically that person and that person alone who is involved in the behaviour?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: It has to be that person, or that person has had somebody acting on their behalf. The husband might say to a friend, "Mate, why don't you take the car down and get me a packet of fags", acting to deny the wife the use of the transport, but getting someone else to do it on his behalf. It can be the direct actions of the person or the actions of somebody else performed on the husband's behalf. I use "the husband" in a generic sense for the purpose of the argument. It could be a partner or whomever.

Mr R.S. LOVE: That brings me to the next question. I refer to proposed section 5A(1A)(b) of the Restraining Orders Act, which states —

may be more than 1 act, or a series of acts, that when considered cumulatively coerces or controls the family member or causes the member to be fearful ...

For coercive control, there has to be a family relationship, so the applicant and the person they are seeking to restrain would have to be in some recognised family grouping. I am just thinking of diversity of relationships and the like. Can the Attorney General just explain what "family member" means in this particular context?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: Yes, and it is defined in the restraining orders. It has to be a family member.

Mr R.S. LOVE: That proposed subsection states —

... controls the family member or causes the member to be fearful ...

Can the Attorney General explain the difference between controlling a family member and causing them to be fearful? Does the fear not need to be related to control itself? Is causing the family member to be fearful not just another way of controlling them? I am just trying to understand what that actually means.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: That is right. I agree with the member that it is controlling someone through fear; it is causing the family member to be fearful of them.

Mr R.S. LOVE: So, why is it "or ... to be fearful"?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: They can control them not by taking the car keys but by causing them to be fearful of the consequence of going to see their mother. It is a pattern of behaviour that causes them to be fearful.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I refer to this matter of coercive control. The Attorney General said in the second reading speech that tranches of legislation are being brought forward around family violence, and he explained that further matters around coercive control are to be defined.

Could the Attorney General explain why these matters have not been included in this particular legislation at this particular time and why there is a need to revisit this at some point in the future?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: It will not be revisiting the Restraining Orders Act; it will be revisiting the Criminal Code to have a standalone criminal offence. Criminalising coercive control through the creation of a standalone criminal offence was a key focus during the consultation process of the *Legislative responses to coercive control in Western Australia: Consultation outcomes report*, which I will refer to as "the report". We recognise that criminalisation is important for many victim-survivors, and it sends a message that this behaviour is wrong. The report advises that the amended introduction of a new criminal offence without first implementing systemic reform, education and training would not be effective and could in fact lead to adverse impacts on victim-survivors. First, our people, processes and tools must adapt to capture patterns of abuse, record the evidence needed for court proceedings, and properly identify the victim to ensure that legal responses to coercive control will benefit victim-survivors and not lead to severe adverse impacts. We need to make sure that we have a justice system in place that can respond effectively and appropriately to these ongoing patterns of behaviour. A phased approach to criminalisation allows

the government to ensure that its response to coercive control will protect the victim–survivors and not harm them. As such, the phased approach to the criminalisation of coercive control will take the necessary steps to ensure our system is able to respond appropriately to the criminalisation before legislating. We need to listen to experts and the community to ensure our response to coercive control will protect victim–survivors, bearing in mind that the successful prosecution of someone on a standalone coercive control criminal offence will require the prosecution to prove all elements of the offence beyond a reasonable doubt. Here we are today, for example, talking about what may or may not constitute pattern behaviour of coercive control. If a prosecution were to be launched before the judicial system, and the policing system and victims are not up to speed on the collection and collation of evidence, there might be acquittals, which would send exactly the wrong message to perpetrators that the law is useless, it does not matter, and the court cannot convict them. It is important that we get this solid, stable and understood by the judiciary, the police and the community. That is what victims say they most want.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 49 to 75 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

COOK GOVERNMENT — PERFORMANCE

Motion

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Leader of the Opposition) [4.00 pm]: I move —

That this house notes that after seven years in power, the Cook Labor government has failed to prioritise the needs of Western Australians over ideological pointscoring and vanity projects, sacrificing better outcomes for political gains.

In doing so, I will point to a couple of examples. If members want to see no greater example of the Cook Labor government’s wrong priorities, they need only travel to the Causeway to look at the \$50 million project—it perhaps has some merit—to develop a bridge across the Causeway for pedestrians and cyclists. This \$50 million project has now turned into a \$180 million project and, no doubt, counting because all the projects the government seeks to develop seem to have cost blowouts; it is a continual pattern of this Cook Labor government. The midyear review showed more than \$700 million of project costs in excess of what the government forecast at a time when it surely knew that there were already escalating costs. So poor is its budgeting process that in that six-month period, it got it wrong to the tune of \$700 million. In the last financial year alone, cost blowouts amounted to \$2 billion. It is an absolute disgrace that the government is so hell-bent on developing some projects that it sees fit to blow \$2 billion of taxpayer funding while, at the same time, allowing vitally needed infrastructure in our health and housing sectors to go unfunded and unbuilt, with the needs of the community being unmet.

We know that the government has an ideological bent against the average Western Australian—the working people of Western Australia and the people of regional Western Australia who just seek to go about their business. The Minister for Police routinely spends taxpayer money on political stunts to push the government’s ideological messages. In the weeks leading up to the winter break, the government guillotined the debate on the Firearms Bill 2024 in the Legislative Council despite claiming that it would not do so and that it would allow it to run through all the parliamentary processes. It guillotined debate, with none of the substantive clauses being debated in the Legislative Council to any extent. That is the level of ideological determination this government has exhibited this term to push its own agenda at the expense of Western Australians.

The Labor Party’s first action after coming to government in 2021 was to overturn its stated position that electoral reform—stripping away the regional context of representation in the Legislative Council—was not on its agenda. I believe it set about on a pathway for the eventual destruction of the Legislative Council as a body of this Parliament because it is setting it up to fail with a whole-of-state election cycle that is all out after four years, with 37 members all representing a ragtag of people across the state, without any defined regional aspect and with no geography in mind. It is a farce that those people will be able to represent the whole state. They will not represent the whole state. They will represent issues or political parties. They will not be representing the whole state and they will not be representing particular areas of the state as they do now. It is a step backwards based on ideology.

This government also took upon itself the destruction of the forestry industry in Western Australia. The then Minister for Environment held a survey. It was purportedly on what people thought should be the value of the forests. It did not actually go to the people who live in forestry areas. It did not go to the people who work in forestry areas. It was a survey based upon getting an outcome. It was pushed towards people clicking on an email or a website to submit a couple of words. They were then logged as an opinion and, when enough people are egged on by groups like The Pew Charitable Trusts and Conservation Council of Western Australia et cetera, the opinion of a few thousand people then becomes the basis of a decision of the people of Western Australia. It was not the decision of the people of Western Australia. In fact, the previous Minister for Forestry, the member for Bassendean, Hon Dave Kelly had been down in the southern areas prior to this, spruiking the need for further investment into equipment by groups such as Parkside Forestry and others to further develop the forestry industry.

In 2019, he was the minister who first announced what is called *Djarlma Plan for the Western Australian forestry industry: A framework for action 2019–2030*. He said —

“I am pleased to announce the launch of the ... Plan which delivers an ecologically sustainable approach to transform the forestry industry and seize new opportunities for economic growth and job creation.

“The ... Plan prioritises healthy forests and woodlands, while driving innovative practices to secure the industry into the future.

He said, “to secure the industry into the future”. At the same time, the Minister for Environment was running a faux survey to destroy the industry. We know that the government has done just that. It set about to see the destruction of the native timber industry in Western Australia. The consequences of that for communities such as Manjimup, Nannup and others have been quite extraordinarily devastating. There are also consequences going forward for people who rely on native timbers for their industries, such as people in the furniture sector who are finding it increasingly difficult to get access to jarrah and marri et cetera from those forests. We know that small businesses in the sector have been devastated. The industry itself has come almost to a screeching halt. There is still the ability to take some wood from the forest clearing that goes on around the bauxite industry but, in effect, the useful use of our native forests in a sustainable manner has come to an end. As a result, there is an impost on Western Australian taxpayers.

The Minister for Regional Development indicated that \$11 million will be needed to assist with the Forest Products Commission’s costs as it transitions from being an active forest manager and timber harvester in native forests to losing that arm of its business. An additional \$24 million has been provided to help with the costs of ecological thinning. Instead of the forests being managed and harvested responsibly and with a scientific base behind them, we are now having to pay the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions and others to go into the forests just to cut down trees because they have to manage them. There are too many stems per hectare and they know they must be thinned.

The government knows that; it is spending tens of millions of dollars on ecological thinning to make up for the fact that it has destroyed an industry that was managing these forests for virtually nothing. It was not costing the taxpayer. It was, in fact, an industry. It was a base for an industry and a base for an economy in those towns, but it has been stripped away by an ideological decision of this government. In my view and in the view of many on this side, we will see those forests burn in the future because they are no longer being actively managed by the forest industry.

The government is seeking to buy thousands of hectares of farmland within a radius of the City of Bunbury for pine plantations. I do not know whether members take much notice when they go on trips down to Dunsborough or wherever, but landholdings in that area are fairly tightly held and it is a very expensive business to try to seek that amount of land. There is also competition from other land uses that are very important. Another matter that has been completely forgotten in all of this is that we had a forest industry that was responsibly managed. When we now go to Bunnings or wherever for hardwood, where is it coming from? I do not know where Bunnings gets its wood from, but we know that there is a worrying situation of a lot of illegal timber harvesting going on in many countries. I know that Indonesia has had problems with that in the past; it is working towards cracking down on it. The most sustainable forestry was being carried out in the south west of Western Australia, as opposed to other parts of the world that lack sustainable forest management systems.

Under this government, we see ideology taking the place of pragmatism. We are rolling over for the activists and touting environmental, social, and governance certification across the world. The Department of Treasury has a group that is dedicated to promoting the Western Australian government’s ESG credentials. I think yesterday the Minister for Environment was touting the fact that even more land was to be locked up in reserves and national parks in Western Australia, without any explanation as to why that is necessarily a good thing. When I was a child, I used to think national parks were wonderful and that we should have everything locked up in national parks, but as you grow and mature and you see how the world actually works, you understand that you need agriculture, fishing, food production and an economy that pays for people to live comfortable lifestyles in our cities. That is where most people reside in this country. We are the most urbanised state in one of the most urbanised countries in the world, but that comfortable existence can be sustained only by responsible use of our land. We should not just lock it all up, but use it responsibly, as we were doing with timber and in pastoral areas before many of those leases were bought up and converted into reserves.

The member for Roe is very familiar with the marine park situation on the south coast. Foreigners are being given as much say as Western Australians; groups like the Pew Charitable Trusts are involved in this. Local communities are not being given the opportunity to participate meaningfully and the department of fisheries is effectively locked out of the process. The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions is riding roughshod over the community, the fishers and the livelihoods of people in that area. Again, this is because the government has an arbitrary measure to achieve in terms of locking away millions of hectares, in both marine parks and land estates. The government is rapidly working its way towards those targets at the expense of the regional communities that

we on this side represent. We are seeing the devastating effect that has on local communities. The shadow Minister for Fisheries, the member for Roe, and the local communities down in the Esperance area have been speaking about it. We know that there are plans for Marmion Marine Park after the election, I would imagine, because the government does not want to tackle that problem before the state election. We saw this government withdraw some of its more troublesome legislation. We saw the debacle around the development of the Aboriginal cultural heritage legislation during this term of government. That was forced upon the communities in not just the far-flung regional areas, but on the doorsteps of Perth around Lake Claremont and Joondalup. We saw the unfolding train wreck the government caused by forcing through that Aboriginal cultural heritage legislation and not listening to the feedback from the community about the concerns it had. In July 2023, the government announced that the legislation would be withdrawn, and we saw its eventual demise later that year.

We are seeing from this government an established pattern whereby it is a little bit spooked about pushing some of its ideological bent at the moment. For instance, the Minister for Water had some water legislation that had been worked on for years. Only a couple of months before the minister announced that the legislation would be shelved, she was talking about how important it would be. If we look at the situation federally, we can see that the National Water Initiative is now up for review. I have looked at some of the documentation on the review that has taken place, and that makes the Aboriginal cultural heritage legislation look not at all problematic! Some aspects of that initiative will cause a lot of angst amongst the community. I suspect that elements of that initiative were contained in the water legislation that the minister had been preparing. We never got to see that legislation, so we can only surmise what was in it. That legislation has been shelved for now, but we know that it will come back either by the federal Labor government imposing its view of the world or by this Labor government post the election. Everyone who relies upon water in the community can be sure that a new law will be coming their way.

Disappointingly, at the same time, we saw the Minister for Fisheries withdraw support for the operation of the Aquatic Resources Management Act—ARMA, as it is known. That would have given greater property rights to the people who participate in fisheries and who are losing their occupations through the development of these national parks. It would have given them a greater entitlement to those fisheries. I believe that is the reason that the minister pulled the legislation. We know that it was a ham-fisted attempt. I have heard from the fishing industry that nothing was done about going through the matters that were required to make that legislation lawfully operational. That law was passed by Parliament in the last term of the Liberal and National government. Despite some of the misinformation that has been spread in the community, that is law, but the government has chosen not to allow it to become operational by not putting in place the substructures below that would make it work. By doing so, it has stripped away the property rights of many fishers in this state. I can tell members that they are not happy. I was talking about the forestry industry earlier. Hon Dave Kelly, the former Minister for Water; Forestry; and, I think, Fisheries at one stage, was quite infamous in the fishing industry because of his attempted nationalisation of some of the rock lobster quotas in the state when a scientific decision was made to lift the tonnage by quota that could be taken in Western Australia. Instead of doing what had always been the case—if the tonnage goes down, the fishers lose and they lose a bit of the quota, and if the tonnage goes up, they get a little bit more on their entitlements—he tried to take that and sell it. He tried to pinch it off the industry. That is the sort of mindset that goes on in this government, which has no idea about the industries that rely on our natural resources. The government fails to protect them by failing to develop the proper operations for the Aquatic Resources Management Act 2016, which would protect fishers' rights; instead, it seeks to strip them away with the development of these marine parks.

The minister stands up here and says he is protecting the pristine waters of the south coast. I can tell members that those waters were being used before settlement in Western Australia in a formal sense. Whalers, sealers and others were coming here and using those coasts for probably 200 years. If the waters are still pristine, I would hazard to say there was not that much risk and not that much need for the so-called protection. There is a need for a fishing industry that is properly regulated. We have a department of fisheries to do that, but it is not being listened to because this government's ideological methodology is not to listen to the science but to the crowd. Again, by its interactions with the crowd through its surveys et cetera, it has done just that.

I will talk about a couple of other issues very quickly. I do not have that much time, and time goes quickly in this place. I spoke earlier about the cost blowouts of Metronet, including \$2 billion in one year alone, and \$700 million just in the midyear review period when surely the government knew that prices were on the increase and costs were already getting out of hand. In the middle of that, Main Roads and other government entities took it upon themselves to increase their costs and to give extraordinary wage rises to a few select groups of people depending on what union they were in. That is very symptomatic of a government that is running to an ideology. It is making a statement to its union mates that the current leadership is right behind them. Our Premier did not become Premier after going to the polls as the Leader of the Opposition or the incumbent Premier; he became Premier because it was gifted to him by the union movement, and that makes him the puppet of the union movement. We have seen the situation in which he quite happily takes \$25 000 gifts from a union that has questions that it needs to answer. There was no response from the Premier when asked whether he would continue to do so in the future. The government is flawed at the very top in the sense that unions control the future of all members of the Labor Party. We have seen that play out in preselections as we head to the 2025 election.

We know that the delivery of Metronet projects has been slow; in fact, they have been delivered in a way that has been quite embarrassing for the government. The Minister for Transport has been talking recently about the Yanchep line, which was opened recently. The opening of the Yanchep line is hardly a matter of celebration for a minister. When the budget for that project was announced, it was something in the order of \$400 million but ended up close to \$1.3 billion—three times over budget and years late in its delivery. In doing so, it even managed to scrap a few little bits and pieces along the way that were originally part of the plans, such as some of the principal shared paths that were to be built along the rail lines.

At the same time, we are to believe that this government can deliver the Westport project. The Westport project has been touted as one of the signature projects of this government—its next big project perhaps after its disastrous delivery of Metronet. We know that that proposal is probably 25 years off at least and that the Fremantle port will have to suffice in the meantime, yet what did we see this government do? It has shut down the development of a road network to Fremantle, which means that over the next decades, traffic in the areas south of the river along Leach Highway and the like will be horrendous. The government cannot bury its head in the sand and say that that situation is going to be tenable over the next decades. There will be a need to spend money at Fremantle in the meantime.

The government needs to explain how it is going to maintain the transport networks into the Fremantle port—mainly containers of cars et cetera—at a time when it will be decades before Westport will be developed and it has no meaningful traffic systems in place for the port. The traffic systems at the proposed site at Kwinana are already badly constrained. I know that sections of the rail corridor are already constrained because of their proximity to residential areas. That is not a greenfield site. Kwinana is not necessarily the answer for freight in Western Australia. In the area that I represent, thousands of trucks head up to the Pilbara every day along Great Northern Highway, Brand Highway and North West Coastal Highway after their product has been delivered to Fremantle. It would be far more sensible for the state government to look at a number of first entry ports across the state rather than just concentrating on Fremantle or Westport. There would be a lot of merit in further developing Bunbury, Broome, Port Hedland or Esperance for those types of purposes. Esperance is a deepwater port and it has a rail connection already. It would be an ideal opportunity to do something other than what has been touted with Westport. It would save dredging lots of the seagrass meadows in Cockburn Sound. We are going to see nuclear submarines parked across the road at Garden Island. Suburbia is encroaching all around it already. I do not think Westport makes any sense whatsoever as the sole solution for a port for Western Australia, and the sooner this government wakes up to that and starts to invest in regional areas instead of putting all its eggs in the Westport basket—that is a recipe for disaster—the better.

There is no doubt that those matters are all very important, but we know that health and housing matters are also hugely important at the moment. I am sure that the member for Vasse will talk about this. Ambulance ramping is back up to record levels. The Minister for Health says that it is the aged-care system's fault, not hers. How about working with the commonwealth and coming up with some innovative solutions to the aged-care situation? Obviously, it is a commonwealth responsibility, but if the state government is the de facto provider of aged care because its hospitals are full of elderly people who do not have somewhere to go, the minister should go over to the embassy in Canberra, sit down with the federal minister for ageing and work on a plan to address that situation. Instead of bleating about it, actually do something about it. It is no good for the government of Western Australia to blame another sphere of government for an issue. I do not believe it is the full issue. We know that elective surgery lists are growing. We know that ambulance ramping is terrible. We see the failure of this government in regional areas. Despite blowing billions of dollars on projects in Perth, including allowing a footbridge and a cycle bridge to blow out from \$50 million to \$180 million, it still says that it cannot afford to build a hospital in Laverton. It is a big deal! I was in Kalgoorlie on Monday, and I was asked to comment on the big announcement about the Laverton Hospital. I said to the journo, "Mate, that's not a tender to build the hospital; this is just a tender to push a bit of gravel around and do a bit of preconstruction work. There is no tender."

Ms L. Mettam: Forward works.

Mr R.S. LOVE: There is just forward works. There is no tender for the hospital. That has not been released. There is no announcement there. It has been years since the former Minister for Regional Development—I think it was Alannah MacTiernan—demanded that the Shire of Laverton hand back the millions of dollars it had been granted towards the development of a community health facility, and instead it was promised a hospital, but now it is getting forward works. That will save a lot of people a lot of travel when they need to go to a decent hospital! Laverton Hospital is a disgrace. The situation at Meekatharra is similar. Why has that hospital not been built? In Mullewa we again have a long-promised hospital. It was funded under the previous government, but of course that funding will be inadequate now because nothing has been done and no further allocations have been made towards it. There needs to be a "1" put in front of the amount of money that has been put on offer to build the Mullewa Hospital, and this government can well afford to do that. If it can afford to blow \$2 billion on vanity projects, it can afford to build health infrastructure in regional WA, and there are numerous other examples of that. There was no commitment for Tom Price Hospital until Rio Tinto stumped up millions more than it had already stumped up in the first place.

The housing situation in Western Australia is absolutely dire. It is only now, in the eighth year of the government, that it has undone the damage it did in its first year of government when it got rid of a heap of social housing. We have only just got back to having as many social houses in Western Australia as was the case when Labor came into government. That is a disgraceful situation. We also know that the private sector housing situation in Perth is dire. Demand is red hot. A report from Domain is titled “Perth housing crisis nearing catastrophe with less than 2000 houses for sale”. Across Perth at the moment, if someone wants to buy a house now, they do not bother putting \$700 000 or something on it because houses are being put up for an end-point sale and people just bid and bid because there are few houses for sale. People are paying ridiculously inflated prices for these houses compared with what they were paying a short while ago, yet this government has allowed this train wreck situation to develop ever since it has been in government. It has done very little, if anything, to address the situation for those people who have fixed-price housing contracts with building contractors, but those contractors will no longer make money if they complete the house, so they just leave the house, at lock-up if people are lucky, and walk away. We know that hundreds of people are in the situation with Nicheliving, but many, many other customers are coming forward to us, saying that they are in a similar situation, and they are not getting any indication that they will get their houses built. This government has done nothing for them. Thousands of houses could be added to the housing stock if a solution were found, and it just shows this government’s lack of any concern for the people it governs.

The government is just concerned about media stunts; as we know, that is what the Minister for Police lives for. He wants his picture in the paper with the tactical response group or a tow truck full of firearms or whatever it is. It is like a boys’ own club. It really is embarrassing at times. We might start calling him “Biggles” or something. That is not going to solve the problems that Western Australians are facing. That is why I brought this motion to the house, condemning this government for its lack of concern. We heard the Minister for Health talking about the patient assisted travel scheme and the government’s miserable increase to 26¢ a kilometre. How much do public servants get paid to take their cars somewhere? Tell me that. If a person in New South Wales is travelling for medical services in a state that is much smaller than Western Australia, and the distance is probably less, they are paid 40¢ a kilometre. The government’s increase is abysmal. It just goes to show that it is completely out of touch with the needs of Western Australia.

This government is coming up to an election in March 2025, and I am sure that many Western Australians are very quietly waiting for the opportunity to pass judgement on the Cook Labor government, which is only a mere shadow of the McGowan Labor government. It is not doing any better and is in fact failing in many areas, even more than the McGowan government did.

MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Leader of the Liberal Party) [4.35 pm]: I rise to support the motion that has been moved by the Leader of the Opposition —

That this house notes that after seven years in power, the Cook Labor government has failed to prioritise the needs of Western Australians over ideological pointscoring and vanity projects, sacrificing better outcomes for political gains.

As I said, I rise in support of this worthy motion that points to significant windfalls and opportunities that this government has had since coming to power in 2017, inheriting a 70 per cent increase in revenue underwritten by the federal coalition government and getting a much better deal from the GST, as well as a booming resources economy. Although we are a wealthy state and are meant to be enjoying the largest boom this state has ever seen, these riches are not being used to help the increasing number of working families who are being forced to choose between paying bills, putting food on the table or attaining a roof over their head. The state may be rolling in money and this government may be receiving record royalties into government coffers, but most Western Australians are not. It is fair to say that while so many Western Australians are struggling to make ends meet, time and again we see examples of how this government has got its priorities wrong. It is appalling that in a state as prosperous as WA, with a government that continues to record multibillion-dollar surpluses on the back of the mining boom and record royalties, we are seeing Western Australians struggle so much to make ends meet. We are seeing a lack of investment and a failure of government across multiple portfolios. Basically, in Western Australia, if it is not Metronet, it is not a priority of this government. That is evidenced by yet another union taking industrial action today due to under-resourcing.

It is simply astounding that this government’s priorities are so wrong and that it has lost its way. Never has that been so evident as in the housing portfolio. It is unbelievable that this government fails to grasp the importance of the basic needs of individuals to have a roof over their head. A house is a basic need and without it the impact is far-reaching for individuals. Increasingly, some of our most vulnerable cohort are suffering as a result. According to the Real Estate Institute of Western Australia, Perth renters have faced a 13 per cent rise over the past 12 months alone. Rents are quickly increasing because there is an undersupply of housing, and Perth has a 44-year record low vacancy rate of just 0.4 per cent. The situation is exacerbated in the regions.

Women continue to live with domestic violence abusers because they cannot get a rental property. We know that is a leading cause of homelessness. Children growing up in abusive households with parents who are constantly quarrelling and unable to separate are being exposed to some very harmful situations and it is deeply disturbing.

Many members of this place would be familiar with the local refugees and the stories that we hear of them having to turn away hundreds of families every year. They cannot keep up with demand because the government is playing a desperate game of catch-up on an issue that it has not been across and has not properly supported.

We hear that young adults are forced to remain at home more than ever. Elderly parents are unable to downsize and move closer to family. Businesses cannot recruit migrants or interstate employees because there is no housing. As of March, the Cook Labor government added a net total of only 114 houses to the state's social housing stock. Until last year, the total social housing stock had gone backwards and in its first term the government's investment was less than Tasmania's. This government has consistently illustrated that it has its priorities wrong. At a time when WA's population has increased by 200 000 and the number of applications on the public housing waitlist has grown by some 20 per cent, a net increase of 114 houses again illustrates that this government is unable to govern. The resulting cost-of-housing pressures means 325 000 Western Australians, including 85 000 children, are living below the poverty line. We have a higher percentage than any other state of families experiencing mortgage stress.

This week is Homelessness Week. It is an annual event and this year's theme is "Homelessness Action Now". It should have been over the past seven years of this government. This government is failing after promising to end rough sleeping by 2025 and to end homelessness by 2030, as detailed in its own report *All paths lead to a home: Western Australia's 10-year strategy on homelessness 2020–2030*.

Shelter WA reported this week that numbers have almost trebled in four years. There are 943 rough sleepers on the by-name list, which tracks those living on the streets in key locations across our state. That is up from 345 four years ago. With only 21 weeks until 2025, Shelter WA chief executive Kath Snell said greater progress was needed. She stated —

Ending and preventing homelessness is completely within reach. We just need actions that match the goals and for leaders to act now with urgency.

We often hear the Minister for Housing and Homelessness talking about every lever being pulled; however, we saw an underinvestment in the first term. We saw the government remove a number of jobs from the state skills list, which was 178 jobs down to 18. There are significant skills challenges in attracting the right people to the construction industry. We have seen a lack of investment in those areas and I have talked about that.

The rental market in Perth remains under significant pressure and the median rent in Perth has risen to \$716 a week. That is 20 per cent above the increase year on year since COVID, which means it is very challenging and even more so in regional areas.

A new homeless cohort that has been identified and is ever-growing is those who are employed. At the last census, almost 16 000 people in WA experienced homelessness while employed, with some of them sleeping in their cars. This is a new and growing cohort of working poor. It is no longer enough to have a job in Western Australia. The employed homeless represent 17 per cent of clients seeking assistance from homelessness services. This government has been way too slow to act on this emerging, growing and very concerning issue. In the past year, 24 500 people sought help from homelessness services, with two thirds being women and a third being single parents. Demand is so high that only about a quarter of those needing help could be placed in accommodation.

On Saturday, the *Kalgoorlie Miner* reported that one particular woman has lived in her car with her young son for more than two years with no timeline in sight to get out of those conditions and end that obviously very untenable situation. The public housing waitlist in Kalgoorlie–Boulder has gone from an average of 174 weeks to three years and four months. How can this be acceptable? The mother, who did not want to be named, said she was priced out of the rental market, despite receiving government benefits, due to sky-high rental prices and cost-of-living pressures. In this place today, this government spruiked its plans to address the cost-of-living pressures, but we know that household fees and charges have increased by about \$1 000 since this government came to office, at a time when the state has enjoyed record royalties and surpluses and when WA is the wealthiest state in the nation and is enjoying the largest boom.

Going back to this mother, she is admirably doing her best, while having no fixed abode, to ensure that her son attends primary school. She talked about being attacked in her car after a window was smashed. The situation is absolutely tragic. That is just one story that I am sure other members are familiar with. This government had a budget surplus of \$5.1 billion in 2022–23. Where has it gone? A government with the right priorities would make sure that Western Australians had food to eat, a home, a safe community and efficient and reliable health services. Clearly, that is not a priority of this government.

The number of children and women sleeping rough to escape domestic violence has jumped by a third in WA in the last two years and has more than doubled in a decade. Homelessness Australia's latest report shows that family and domestic violence is the leading cause of female homelessness. That is something that members of this place understand but it is not being represented in the outcomes that we are seeing right now in WA. Of all women and girls who seek help, 45 per cent identify domestic violence as their cause for doing so.

Alison Evans, the chief executive of the Centre for Women’s Safety and Wellbeing, commented this week that housing is one of the biggest barriers to someone leaving a dangerous partner. She also identified that more help was needed for women to remain in their homes and to provide more transitional housing, which is urgently required. She said —

“It’s a bleak reality, but many women and children in WA face the impossible choice between violence and homelessness,” ...

...

“We must not ignore the fact that victim-survivors are being driven back to dangerous partners because of a woeful lack of safe accommodation,” ...

This is a clear failure of the Cook Labor government to provide safe housing for these women and children living in desperate and dangerous circumstances. An interrelated issue is the government’s clear failure to curb the rising rates of family and domestic violence. The domestic violence epidemic is shameful, with an offence committed every 13 minutes over the past 12 months. New statistics from WA police also reveal an increase of almost 10 per cent over two months, rising from 3 174 offences in April to 3 458 in June. There were almost 39 000 assault and threatening behaviour offences in the 2023–24 financial year, up more than 16 per cent over the previous 12 months. Breaches of family violence restraining orders have skyrocketed by 20 per cent, climbing to almost 17 000 across the same period, which equates to a breach almost every 30 minutes over 12 months.

Then we come to the government’s priorities. We have seen Metronet blow out by \$10 billion across the whole project so far. Let us reflect on the families who campaigned for an additional \$39 million in support of the parliamentary report into early childhood development to reduce waitlist times to see a paediatrician or child specialist, with kids waiting for up to two years. The blowout on Metronet so far has been \$10 billion. Last month, the Premier joined the Minister for Transport to spruik another milestone for Metronet—the completion of the track to the newly named Ballajura station. That was not the milestone that should have been recognised. The fact that it took twice as long and cost two and a half times as much as promised was not lost on many people. The Yanchep extension alone has cost WA taxpayers the equivalent of almost \$460 million per station, which is around three times more money per station than what the Cook government spent in its most recent budget on addressing ambulance ramping. Metronet is the biggest budget blowout in the state’s history. WA Labor promised that the Yanchep extension would open in 2021 and cost \$532 million. It is three years late and more than three times more expensive than what was promised.

While hundreds of millions of dollars continue to be pumped into Metronet, families are increasingly struggling to put food on the table. Foodbank estimates that 116 000 WA kids live in severely food insecure households, and that one in four households with a mortgage have experienced food insecurity.

[Member’s time extended.]

Ms L. METTAM: Last year, the Western Australian Council of Social Service reported that average single-parent families, unemployed singles and renting aged pensioners are now at a point at which their income is not covering the basic cost of living and food. A soaring number of families rely on services such as OzHarvest, Richmond Wellbeing and St Pat’s food bank. We have seen the demand for these services soar, with many seeking help for the first time. Members on this side would like to put on the record our gratitude to all of the volunteers and organisations that provide such valuable support. Despite this, the Cook government has neglected the frontline community service providers—it neglected them in its May budget while pumping yet more money into Metronet.

The cost-of-living package in the budget was a small percentage of the \$2 billion cost blowout for Metronet last year. The \$400 electricity credit is one thing, but the reality is that the Premier and his government give with one hand and take with the other. Since Labor came to power, the average WA family is handing over an additional \$1 000 a year to the state government in fees and charges. Half a million people are in debt to their energy provider. In the last financial year, under the Cook Labor government, the equivalent of the population of Geraldton and Bunbury combined has fallen into energy debt. That is an extraordinary number of people.

I will go on to health. Many know that Western Australia’s health system is in disarray, despite the swollen coffers of this government. The litany of failures in our health services is absolutely staggering. This Premier and government are well aware of this issue but have failed to act. As I said, the government’s misplaced priority is its pet project, Metronet. The Yanchep extension alone has cost WA taxpayers the equivalent of almost \$460 million a station. As I stated earlier, the money that has been spent on each station is around three times more than the government has allocated in the budget to address ambulance ramping. The July figure for ramping was 6 500 hours for the month. That is nine times more than the figure the government inherited in May 2017. Ambulance ramping has risen six months in a row. We were promised that the trend was moving downwards, but it has risen six months in a row, with July figures showing the worst ramping in WA since August 2022. Our current Premier is responsible for leaving WA’s health system in crisis. As the previous Minister for Health, now as the Premier, this is a crisis of his own making. When in opposition, the Premier stated that 1 000 hours of ramping was a crisis, but WA has now lived through 50 months in a row with more than 1 000 hours of ramping. Ramping figures of 5 000 hours is nothing short of a catastrophe of extraordinary proportions.

I turn to other areas of health. Elective surgery is another issue. Wait times have blown out by 55 per cent since 2017, with more than 30 000 people now waiting for surgery. There are 10 000 children waiting to see a paediatrician and some have been waiting for more than a year, yet these families had to petition for additional funds and focus and attained \$39 million in this year's budget only after a report late last year pointed out the urgency.

The latest Child and Adolescent Health Service annual report says that the number of children waiting more than the recommended month for category 1 surgery has doubled to 10 per cent in the past year. Two in five children needing category 3 surgery are having to wait more than a year. These surgeries are considered non-urgent, but these children still have pain and are suffering significantly. The Australian Medical Association's 2023 *Public hospital report card* found that seven of the country's eight worst-performing emergency departments are in WA. Increasingly, we are seeing patients being treated in hospital corridors because there are just not enough beds. In 2013, our current Premier said that placing patients in corridors was unacceptable, and quite rightly so, but a decade on, under his watch, during the largest boom in the state's history, this is becoming all too common.

A study by the AMA found that SAC 1 incidents have risen by 21 per cent since 2017. This includes incidents in which death or harm could have been prevented. We are seeing some really awful situations. Recently, Malcolm Sweetman, a Vietnam veteran, was forced to spend the night in a hospital corridor at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital while waiting for an urgent operation to remove a golf ball-sized brain tumour. His daughter, Carole Anderton, said —

“It's shocking”, ... “People are getting train stations and train lines, but the sick aren't getting proper beds in hospital.

...

“This is third world when people are sleeping in corridors.”

We are better than this. Mr Sweetman is not alone. Last month, a retired Esperance farmer, Ian Hay, who is 83 years of age, spent 24 hours in a hallway while battling mesothelioma. Quite simply, this is a disgrace. When the Minister for Health was asked about it, she conceded that it was not ideal but said that hospitals were stretched and blamed the federal government for not providing enough aged-care beds. It is never the minister's fault! She blamed wet weather and winter; there is always an excuse. Make no mistake, it is the Cook Labor government that continues to throw fistfuls of money in additional funding at Metronet. Let us not forget that the government promised \$3 billion to Metronet and it is now over \$13 billion. It continues to prioritise this single project over the many crises happening across this state in housing, homelessness, family and domestic violence, and the health system. Ensuring our health system is properly resourced to help vulnerable patients should be the number one priority.

Health care in our regions is a significant issue as well. My recent trips to the Pilbara, Gascoyne and goldfields regions underlined the reality of the Cook government's indifference to health care in regional WA. Karratha is the gateway to the Pilbara and record levels of royalties come from this region. In 2022, the Pilbara region contributed \$8.72 billion in state royalties, but the Cook government spent less than 0.01 per cent of that in the region. Karratha has been waiting for a step-up, step-down mental health facility since it was funded by the Barnett government in 2015. The health minister said people who need help with mental health problems could visit the Karratha Health Campus emergency department. The reality is that almost 50 per cent of people who go to that emergency department in Karratha wait more than six hours for a bed. Even our emergency departments are struggling to cope, particularly in our regional areas, which is far from an ideal outcome for a mental health patient who really needs support.

Kristie Grabenhofer knows this all too well after her 21-year-old son, Machlan Felix, sadly took his own life after repeated efforts to get help for his mental health issues failed. Having dealt with mental illness in her own life, Kristie knows the difference that appropriate care can make. A six-week rotation of visiting psychiatrists meant Machlan did not get the continuity of care he needed, and found himself continually having to re-establish a doctor-patient relationship. They are calling for a dedicated psychiatrist for that area.

In February 2021, we heard the then Premier announce that the state had committed \$12.8 million to a new Tom Price Hospital, along with a \$20 million contribution from Rio Tinto. Last month, we committed to fully fund and complete Tom Price Hospital within the first term of a Liberal-led government. It took our commitment for the Cook Labor government to backflip on its position of two days earlier, when the Premier said that that pledge was not possible. I welcome the commitment—at long last. The region was promised this much-needed hospital some time ago and it has been let down.

We saw the efforts of the Shire of Ashburton, desperate for the primary hospital in Tom Price that it was promised, forced to launch a campaign in Perth to remind the government of that commitment. I know the member for North West Central has done much work in this space and asked questions in this place on behalf of that community. The comments made by the health minister regarding the shire were very disappointing, given these extraordinary steps that the shire had to make on behalf of a community, which had felt so let down. There is no commitment of serious money for Tom Price and Paraburdoo Hospitals in the 2024–25 budget. It is interesting that it took the Liberal Party's announcement before the Cook government finally found some way of committing to this.

Meekatharra Hospital received just \$1.5 million in the last state budget, a tiny fraction of the funding required for the upgrades that it desperately needs and at a time when this government seems to find more and more funds to address major cost blowouts on Metronet. Carnarvon Health Campus will continue without maternity services, which is absolutely disgraceful. I am running out of time, and I appreciate that other members want to speak.

In law and order, our hardworking police officers have been severely let down. More than 1 000 police officers resigned from the Western Australia Police Force over the last two years, and more than 40 per cent of those resignations came from officers with more than 10 years' experience. Police officers are leaving because the conditions are so bad that they have lost faith; our light-touch court system is also letting them down. Ten Western Australian women have been murdered in family and domestic violence incidents since the Cook government announced that it would bring in coercive control legislation.

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [5.05 pm]: I, too, wish to contribute to the excellent motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition —

That this house notes that after seven years in power, the Cook Labor government has failed to prioritise the needs of Western Australians over ideological pointscore and vanity projects, sacrificing better outcomes for political gains.

I call it the Saffioti Labor government, not the Cook government. It is the Saffioti Labor government that is spending like a drunken sailor on the Metronet project. The cost has risen from \$2.8 billion to, supposedly, \$11.8 billion and rising, but I suspect it is closer to \$13 billion. The Treasurer has her hand on the chequebook for the biggest infrastructure project that this state has seen for a long time, and she is determined to finish it and go on regardless of the cost to taxpayers. That is why I call it the Saffioti Labor government.

The mark of this government will be the protests that have taken place since it came to power in 2017. I go back to the education cuts proudly made by the then Minister for Education and Training, Hon Sue Ellery. I am talking about cuts to Moora Residential College and Schools of the Air and her decision to relocate Perth Modern School to the inner city. Former education minister Hon Sue Ellery had a field day. Even Country Women's Association members protested in the front courtyard of Parliament House. That organisation has just racked up 100 years. Its members have never protested but there they were in the front courtyard of Parliament House to protest against the education cuts of former Premier Mark McGowan and Hon Sue Ellery. That protest resonated with a lot of people in the metropolitan area even though the issues were, as usual, cuts to regional education—as with cuts to anything regional.

As I said, the mark of this government will be the protests that have taken place over the last seven and a half years since it came to power. We have seen thousands of nurses rally in front of Parliament House. We have seen thousands of teachers protesting over at Gloucester Park. They had not protested since 2013. We have seen a variation of process for police. Right around the state, we have seen farmers protesting over the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Bill. I still recall that first briefing that I went to on the bill. Around 600 people, mainly farmers from the Esperance region, but also landholders and businesspeople, lined up outside the door at the civic centre. The line was about 80 yards long when the briefing started and people could not get in there. At least 600 people were inside and many more were waiting to get in. Speaking of Esperance, the Minister for Environment seems to want to press on with the south coast marine park to fill his five million hectares of conservation parks, regardless of what anyone at the coalface actually thinks. That is three protests for residents of Esperance; one of them was about 300 people when the Minister for Fisheries turned up; one was about 1 000 people on a Sunday morning; and another one was 400 or 500 people at an impromptu rally. That is the mark of this government—people having to protest.

We saw it again today with the question asked by the member for Vasse. Child protection workers now have to go on strike as well and protest their conditions when they are dealing with the most vulnerable people in the state. The government said, "It's not a problem. That'll be fine; the CFMEU can have a 25 per cent rise if they go onto a building site. But don't worry about the child protection workers, looking after our most vulnerable." When we look back on this government, that will be the mark—the fact that the people have had to rise up and protest about this government and the way it has treated the citizens in all of Western Australia, but especially regional Western Australia.

We see the photo opportunities with the Treasurer and the Premier out there, splashing our taxpayers' money with all their announcements, like Coldplay. I noticed today that we are potentially going to have an Indian Premier League match over here. We do not know what any of these things cost. There is no transparency but, of course, former Premier McGowan said gold-standard transparency was his number one thing. That is what concerns me. Regional areas produce 70-odd per cent of the state's income and the state government gives very little regard to the regions because there are no votes in it for this metro-centric government.

We can then talk about debt reduction. Funnily enough, there is no money in the special purpose account for debt reduction, even though we have had the best royalty income for forever, basically for any government, and the GST fix. This government has had fantastic conditions for debt reduction.

I want to go back to a speech made by the then future Premier McGowan, which he made on 6 December 2016, just before he became Premier. These are the promises he made. He spoke about how the coalition government —

... blew out to \$27.3 billion last financial year—a rise of 658 per cent. It is predicted to jump to \$40 billion in 2019–20.”

The second point was his party’s bizarre plan to link the salaries of senior public service directors general and CEOs to measured performance. If they did not meet their KPIs, they would face the prospect of a 20 per cent cut to their annual pay. Not only was the government going to keep wage rises to \$1 000 per year, it was going to cut the pay of its directors general and the like by 20 per cent, even if market conditions were impossible to navigate to meet their KPIs. I do not think that happened because, as we know, the salaries of the directors general of Health and Education are over the \$600 000-odd mark—nearly twice that of the Premier—and we have not seen anything like that.

The former Premier’s premise was that debt was predicted to jump to \$40 billion. It now appears that this government’s forecast is for debt to rise to \$40.9 billion by 2028. That is fine; this government thinks that is not a problem, but it was happy to use that back in late 2016. It has had more income than any other government, but we do not hear too much about that, and we have no money in the special purpose account.

All this government does is base its performance on the performances of other states. For example, Victoria’s state debt is expected to rise to \$187 billion by 2027–28; New South Wales, \$106 billion; and even South Australia’s state debt will rise to \$44.2 billion by 2027–28. Our Treasurer seems to think that these are targets we should be working on—that we should base our performance on other states, despite the fact that we get massively more income. That is not a problem; the government will not pay off any debt. There is no money in the special purpose account, but it will just keep sailing along and spend money willy-nilly on Metronet and other projects. That, to me, is a real issue.

The Leader of the Opposition talked about the Causeway bridges. I still remember the Treasurer criticising the former Minister for Transport about the Matagarup Bridge being built up in Malaysia somewhere and all the rest of it. I seem to recall that that bridge cost around \$54 million, but it is not a problem that the Causeway bridges project has blown out from \$50 million to \$180 million. We are not hearing much about that. The Treasurer is very quiet on that one. You cannot have your cake and eat it; you cannot criticise the former government on the Matagarup Bridge and then have the Causeway bridges project blow out by more than four times and stay silent on it. That is just not on.

I want to look at some of the other issues that have occurred under this Labor government. For me as a farmer by trade and regional representative, I think agriculture has been the biggest loser when I look at the way the government has basically remained silent on live sheep exports. The Premier and the Minister for Agriculture and Food have come in after the event with the live export ban. I know that it is a federal decision, but the state government has not fired a shot. It came in after the decision had been made and said, “Oh, look, we agree with the fact that the industry wasn’t going too badly and it should’ve continued”, when it knew very well what was happening and had absolutely no impact on the Albanese government to influence what happened.

I think the state government has totally underestimated the effect this has had on regional areas. The effect on morale is something that I am seeing out there, and it is not just farmers. It is actually also people in the towns—supply chain people, truckies, pallet makers and stock agents. The income of some of those stock agents will be sliced by anything up to 80 per cent with the downturn in the sheep market. It is very unfortunate that we have a Premier and an ag minister who do not seem to understand the effect it is having. Quite frankly, they did not stand up and advocate. Anthony Albanese, the Prime Minister, bragged about how he has come over to WA at least 10 times a year, if not more. Not once, despite the many questions that we asked, did Premier Cook ever actually bring up the issue of live exports with the Prime Minister or stand up and be counted and advocate for the WA sheep industry. I was at the Livestock and Rural Transport Association of Western Australia’s conference on the weekend. Matt Daghlish from Episode 3 gave a very interesting presentation on the projections for the WA sheep flock. I have tried many times in here to explain that around 12 million sheep is the critical mass for self-replacing the merino sheep flock. If it gets much below 12 million, it will not self-replace and will start spiralling downwards. His prediction was that over the next year or two we could end up with around only 7.5 million to eight million sheep. Bizarrely, the federal government made a decision whereby Western Australia has to process, package and send more boxed meat to the Middle Eastern markets and other markets but, by the way, the federal government forgot that its decision to ban the live export industry would take a lot of sheep growers out of the market and create a downward spiral in the number of sheep we have. I predict that at about this time next year, abattoirs will be asking, “Where are the sheep? We’ve made all these alterations to process more sheep, but they’re not there.” That is what is happening. People are getting out of the sheep industry. A lot of them have not mated all their sheep, some have not mated any at all and others have just said, “I’m out. I’m selling all of my sheep. I’ve had enough of government intervention in my industry”, and they have got right out of the sheep industry altogether. That is what has happened. The most bizarre thing of all is that the federal government and former federal agricultural minister, Murray Watt, have said that we must process more sheep and send the boxed meat to the Middle East

and other markets while at the same time when Catherine King, the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, was over here, she said that Qatar Airways could not fly more planes to the Middle East. Those issues are directly related.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: We would think that one side of government would talk to the other and say, "I'm over here intervening in a perfectly viable industry and telling the people that we need more processed and boxed meat in Australia to export", but over here the transport minister would not have a bar of it and is protecting Qantas by not letting Qatar Airways fly more planes to the Middle East. That is the standard of the federal government that we have in place. It could not give a damn about Western Australia, Western Australian regional people or Western Australian regional farmers. Quite frankly, the people of regional WA have had enough. I have spoken many a time about the likes of the member for Warren–Blackwood, who is the sacrificial lamb of this government, because it has had to close down the forestry industry to placate the government's inner-city voters, Fremantle voters and the like. That is more important to the government. It is a metro-centric government.

Someone once told me that it is called the fight against the centre, and that is exactly what it is. This government is a perfect example of what it is all about. It is all about metro and it is metro-centric. The government says, "We will sacrifice whatever regional industry we like. We will sacrifice regional people. We do not care. There are not enough votes there." People like the member for Warren–Blackwood are trying to do their job. The member has been sacrificed because of the closure of the forestry industry with absolutely no warning. The Leader of the Opposition was exactly right. We had the former minister, Hon Dave Kelly, encouraging Parkside Forestry: "Come over here and spend \$50 million and come across to Manjimup where there is a massive set up and invest all this money in 2019. Come across, come across." What does this government do? It closes it down. It is unbelievable. When we look at the scenario, as the Leader of the Opposition said, we ask: where is the timber coming from? We have this beautiful chamber with jarrah timber, but the government says, "It is not in my backyard. We will close down this timber industry. The families, the 100-year-old timber mills, family mills and furnituremakers from all over the state are not in my backyard. We will import Indonesian rainforest timber and South American timber. That is not a problem because it does not happen in the south west, so that makes me feel better."

This is exactly the same argument as for the live export industry. Labor does not care if they go over to South Sudan, Ethiopia and other places where they just put the sheep on the boat and count them out at the other end. Labor could not care less what happens in between. "We do not care what happens over there as long as it is not in our backyard and as long as the Animal Justice Party give us their preferences on the eastern seaboard, that is all that matters to us." The people of regional WA have had enough. I tell members that I saw the passion of those recent protests with the convoy driving down the freeway and then going out to Muchea where about 3 000 people turned up. I was on one of those bridges that cross over the freeway and all the metropolitan people who were in the lane next to the convoy were encouraging them with their thumbs up and tooting their horns. They understand what this government has done to Western Australian people. But the classic thing was that, as usual, the Minister for Agriculture and Food could not quite make it out to Muchea, which is about 20 kilometres out of Perth. Neither could one single member of the 53 members who sit opposite. Not one of them could drive the 20 kilometres to Muchea to front up and talk to the sheep growers and those people out at Muchea who were trying to demonstrate their support for the live export industry. Members can imagine how upsetting that is for the people of regional WA.

Speaking of Muchea and Bullsbrook and areas like that, we have heard a lot of talk about homelessness, and we have seen stories in *The West Australian* and other publications about women sleeping in cars with their families and whatever. I have asked the Premier on several occasions, "What about the Bullsbrook quarantine facility?" There are 500-odd units out there that could be used for homeless people. The Premier said, "Oh, no, no. That is no good because it is too far away from the CBD." Can the 53 people sitting opposite seriously tell me that they think it is better for a mother, her two children and their dog to be sleeping in their car out at a beach car park or any other car park overnight? Can they seriously tell me that is a better scenario than moving some of these homeless families, mothers with their children, out to that Bullsbrook facility? I do not honestly believe that one person here could stand and look me in the eye and tell me that they would find that to be a better solution. Frankly, this government's priorities are quite upsetting; they do not seem to add up. The only thing that does add up is its treatment of regional people.

We saw the disgraceful response from the Minister for Police today when he was asked about the stunt that he performed on the weekend at taxpayers' expense. A front-end loader or a bobcat was used to fill a truck trailer with guns and then he got a photo. Then they were tipped out on the ground and no doubt had to be picked up again and put somewhere else. When the Leader of the Opposition asked the minister what was the cost of that to the taxpayer and what was the reason for it, he got attacked. This is about the third stunt that the police minister has pulled with firearms. He is trying to cash in on fear. There are 90 000 licensed firearms owners out there and I would say that 99.9 per cent of them are doing the right thing, but this police minister somehow wants to portray them as the criminals. Do not worry about the bikies or some of the associates of some of the groups that the Labor Party seems to love to mix with. Apparently, it is the licensed firearms owners who are doing the illegal activities.

Now the police are starting to target people, even before these particular laws have come into effect. That is very disappointing and upsetting. Once again, it shows the regional divide and the metro-centric approach. A lot of firearms owners live in the metropolitan area.

I have spoken about the south coast marine park many times. This is another scenario in which the Labor government is being directed by the likes of the Pew Charitable Trusts. That \$7 billion outfit is based in Boston and Washington. One of the most bizarre things I have ever seen was the statement from its CEO saying that it could not make any changes to conservation parks and the waters off the shores of the United States because that would not be acceptable to the American people. What did it decide to do? It decided to go over to Australia. It was going to force its will on the people of Australia and try to make changes in those areas. There is absolutely no doubt that there have been contributions behind the scenes. The Pew Charitable Trusts is trying to throw its weight around, and the people of Esperance, Bremer Bay and Hopetoun are suffering. They have had only minimal consultation. There have been nearly 20 000 submissions, but this government is already advertising for positions, even though the consultation and submission periods have not finished. There are 20 000 submissions to go through. I would like to think that it would take a lot of time to siphon through all those submissions. The Labor government is already advertising for positions for the south coast marine park. It has made up its mind. At one stage, even the Minister for Fisheries and his department were trying to stand up for the people of Esperance and apply some logic to the argument about some of the changes that were not necessary. I thank the Minister for Fisheries for that, but the people of Esperance, especially, are very upset, and that has been demonstrated. This is another blight on this government. It is concerning that when the government was originally looking at the sanctuary zones, it asked the fishers of the south coast where they caught their fish. The fishers told the government, thinking they were doing the right thing, then funnily enough some of the sanctuary zones were exactly where they fished. That sort of stuff really upsets people.

In summary, I certainly agree with this motion. I am very disappointed at what I call the assault on the regions by this government and, quite frankly, the federal government. I do not know whether the federal government is better or worse because I think it has lost its way on many issues, whether it is the cashless welfare card or letting people out of detention with no safeguards in place. The federal government and this state Labor government have their priorities wrong. They penalise regional Western Australians who are just going about their daily business. It is not good enough.

MS M. BEARD (North West Central) [5.35 pm]: I also rise to support this motion. I will not cover the ground that previous speakers have, but I will raise the issues that I have continued to raise in this house, specifically relating to areas in my region in the north, which is one-third of the state. I can also confirm that as I travel around more and more people feel that the government is blatantly abandoning the regions. I do not think it is necessarily one thing in particular, but people feel that they have been let down. They want no more than the basics. The Minister for Transport had a crack at me, saying that I am against Metronet and investment in the city, but that is absolutely not the case. What is the case is that people in the regions see an overspend on these big nice-to-have projects—footbridges, as we have already mentioned—yet they cannot get to their medical appointments, and they struggle to pay for accommodation when they travel for medical reasons.

The government is making life in the bush more difficult, and people are feeling it. The law and order crisis that we are experiencing in the regions has never been worse, and crime rates are as high as they have ever been. There is no law and order accountability or consequences as far as people on the ground are telling me. They feel that this needs to be strengthened.

There is a housing crisis in the regions, as there is throughout the state, and the cost of living is exacerbated the further north one goes where there are increased fuel and freight costs. Everything is exacerbated. In terms of people doing it tough, I think they are feeling left out and they are struggling to validate when they read about what is happening in the metro areas. Therefore, it is not about being against what people want in the metro areas; it is about equity. At the moment, in the view of a lot of people in the regions, the scales are unbalanced.

People in the regions are asking for things like the patient assisted travel scheme. Unfortunately, the minister is expecting a card from me. That will not be happening! It is nothing more than what people have been calling for for a very, very long time. A constituent came in to ask about what the PATS 26¢ was about and why it was not more. I explained that it had doubled, to which his response was, “You’re killing me!” He is one of those people who has to travel regularly. I spoke to another person who is 73 years. He drove his father, who is 95 years, to Geraldton and back in one day, which is a four and a half hour drive each way, for an appointment because they cannot afford to pay the accommodation fee on a pension. I do not know how many people in here travel regularly, but it is really difficult to get anything reasonable at the rate of \$110. People are finding it increasingly difficult to do that. I think that the standard rate for anyone who travels within a company or an organisation is a lot higher than that. These are just some of the things that people are struggling with. I also want to acknowledge the frontline health workers, volunteers, police and the fireys—everyone who does an incredible job. They are doing more and more with a lot less.

We really need regional managers back in our regions. It is a long way from the offices where they work. There needs to be guidance and structure and we need those people back in the service centres in our regions to help their teams

combat some of these issues. I came home on a plane last Friday with a family of two children, a nine-day-old baby, a mother and her mother, who had to take five weeks' leave to go with her daughter to support her other two children who were out of school. The issues go on and on. The hostie on the plane said that every time he flies, there is always a baby coming home. We need birthing services back in our regions, sooner rather than later. It is definitely causing issues.

I refer to the Royal Flying Doctor Service report. I spoke to a person on the weekend who was flown down to Perth. He had nothing but admiration for the RFDS, the hospital staff, the vollies and the ambulance drivers. As one of five people who had been flown in by the RFDS, he was queued up on a stretcher waiting to be shipped out. There is clearly an issue with hospital ramping. It has exacerbated, and issues are kicked down the line.

Going back to PATS, the fewer services we have in the regions, the more reliant people are on PATS, because more of them have to travel. The Royal Flying Doctor Service laid bare in its report that regional communities are forced to do more with less and people in those communities often have to travel great distances to metro areas to access basic health services. It is not just an inconvenience, but also a significant barrier to timely and effective medical care. The Royal Flying Doctor Service's *Best for the bush: Rural and remote health baseline 2023* report highlights the alarming health disparities between the 30 per cent of the Australian population living in rural, regional and remote areas and those living in the cities. Again, it comes back to equity in the spend—basic services versus nice to have. It is not a lot to ask.

The increase to the fuel subsidy for PATS needs to be a lot more. Patients in New South Wales, a much smaller state, receive 40¢ a kilometre. WA is a massive area. I think people are at risk because of this. They are not travelling when they should be travelling. It is the largest health jurisdiction in the country, and we are in the middle of a state boom in terms of income.

The member for Vasse touched on Tom Price Hospital and some very disappointing comments. It has now got the tick. We are just hoping that will go ahead, as is the case with Paraburdoo Hospital. People will be suffering immensely until these projects get up and running. On top of that, around 20 000 people would potentially utilise that hospital. They are fly-in fly-out workers and family members of people who live in the metro area who spend six months of the year working in these areas. It puts enormous pressure on these small regional hospitals. Meekatharra Hospital is the same. That area has a growing mining industry that is increasing all the time, and its hospital is still no closer to being upgraded. It is the same with the nursing posts. There have been calls for a long time to upgrade some of the nursing posts and increase the number of staff. They are left there alone much of the time. Coral Bay in the north might have one nursing staff member for 3 000 people. It is really staggering and quite distressing if a person is in need of help. The shires have been calling for minimum numbers for these regional nursing posts for some time now. Not having these facilities in place is of great concern, especially given the volume of tourists who travel through the northwest. Until someone is impacted by it, it is pretty tricky and difficult to understand just how devastating it is when those services are not available.

Sorry, I am aware of the timeframe. I touched on crime and law and order earlier. There is a level of leniency when it comes to law and order. It has almost come to the point that people on the ground are taking things into their own hands. They are not bothering. They are remediating. They are getting back their own stolen goods because they believe that is the best way to do it. They do not believe it is the right thing, and if the person gets caught, nothing will happen to them. We desperately need to strengthen law and order and make people more accountable and implement consequences that will deter people from going down that pathway. It is imperative. There is a lack of accountability for perpetrators and that is contributing to ongoing issues in our communities. It is breeding increased levels of discontent.

Wraparound services and facilities are imperative. We are desperate in the regions for safe houses for children. Children are running the streets. I could repeat some dreadful stories that those kids tell me in the middle of the night when I see them on the street and I speak with them. The police are doing an amazing job. They are doing what they can do. They are under-resourced as well. They tell me they are short staffed. We know and understand that, but we need wraparound services to help police and the people who need the services.

We need drug and alcohol services. We need women's and men's refuges. There is nowhere for people in a domestic violence situation to go if they want to go somewhere. Across our region we have one women's refuge with five bedrooms. We need to provide much better resourcing. I do not think that has happened. It has been promised, but we still have not seen it.

Drug and alcohol centres and rehabilitation are really important, as is transitional housing for people coming out of the justice system. Transitional housing is also important for people leaving domestic violence or family women's refuges back into that scenario. They really need transitional housing. With the implementation of liquor restrictions and the banned drinkers register, there is definitely a need for increased drug and mental health services. The use of drugs is apparent in the regions and there are no wraparound services to address that. It is a complex puzzle with lots of moving parts. We need to expedite it. I think it has been promised and has been in the pipeline for the past few years, but we have not seen a lot of it come to fruition. It is getting to a crisis point.

It is paramount that we break the cycle and the only way we are going to do that is to have adequately resourced wraparound services in place. It is unacceptable that victims, including children, are sometimes forced to return to unsafe environments. It is devastating to see some of those children and the conditions and situations they are in; however, there are no support services such as safe houses or transitional housing available.

Drugs are another issue that everyone is struggling with. I understand that, but in the regional towns it is very evident. The other day a little boy told me that he was not going to school; he had been smoking hooch. That is what he said to me. He would have been seven or eight years old. It is quite devastating. Putting everything aside, we need to do something, and we need to do it quickly, because there is a lost generation, and they need help. They are crying out for help. In the last few years, we have not seen the help that these people need. The broader implications and the public health and safety of those regional communities are driving good people to do and say things that they probably would not otherwise. It is a crisis. It is heartbreaking to hear stories of kids who are missing school, who have not been to school for a long time or who are taking up drugs or selling drugs on behalf of adults. It is as simple as that.

I do not think enough has been done. That is one of my criticisms. I think we need to work closely with communities to try to break the cycle sooner rather than later because wraparound services are critical. I cannot express that more clearly. We know that the police are short staffed, but without those services they are really going to struggle. It is going to be difficult for them to do too much.

I commonly get complaints about the housing department. Again, there is a call from people on the ground in my space in the north for regional managers to return to these core roles within our service centres. The other day, the Minister for Housing inferred that I wanted people to be homeless. That is absolutely not the case; it is completely the opposite. I was suggesting to him that people are actually complaining; they are feeling unsafe living on streets in which there has been nothing or little done to hold people in some of these social houses accountable. The consequences are not there. In some cases, people are returning to houses three or four times and the houses are being fixed three or four times. They are not being held to account. It is not about making people homeless; it is about making people accountable. There are plenty of people without a house. This is a common complaint that I get coming through calls to the electoral office. Getting people back into their homes and feeling safe is something that we need to quickly address as well.

On the housing issue in the north, one of the other issues is the provision of infrastructure and headworks, which is preventing people from actually developing blocks of land. It is cost prohibitive, and they are not able to do that. We need to somehow find a way to unlock some of these blocks of land to allow people to build homes and houses. Another issue that is causing a lot of grief in the north is the insurance aspect. People cannot get insurance. Some of the quotes coming in for full insurance for commercial buildings in parts of the north are \$150 000 a year. That is a lot of money for very small businesses. It is staggering to think what might happen further down the track when these businesses are not sustainable and cannot be sold because to borrow money from a bank, someone has to have insurance. It is just becoming prohibitive. That is a looming issue that is already very well underway, as well as the number of houses in the north that contain asbestos. They are becoming harder to insure. In a nutshell, housing insurance is a big issue in the north west. I have no doubt that everyone is aware of it, but we need to ask the government to consider working through some strategies on how we might be able to combat some of these issues. I am unaware of the implications that will have on government housing. I am sure there will be some.

The other issue that we have is the cost of doing business and of actually living in the regions. There was a question asked today about Rex Airlines. For people living in the metro area, I suppose a good way to portray it is like a taxi in the air. Without it, doctors, dentists, lawyers, property valuers and agronomists—whoever it might be—are unable to get into these towns and people going to health or business appointments are also unable to get out.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms M. BEARD: It is absolutely crucial that this issue is dealt with and that we find a solution no matter what happens at the end of the day. It is the case that people living in the area will not be retained if there are no air services. People will not be able to function as they do now in terms of doing business and living in the regions.

The other issue that we have is that the planes that service some of these airports are small. The reason they are small is that the airport infrastructure is unable to cater for the bigger planes. We have an infrastructure issue in some of these locations. We need to look at this as a priority and to maintain air connectivity for people to maintain their lifestyles and to access health services—for one of the main reasons. It is critical that we have a reliable workforce coming in and out of the region, which will actually facilitate that.

Many small businesses are also experiencing a decline in revenue. That is attributed to several factors, one being the fact that the cost of doing business is so high in those regions. Other costs that are on the rise in attracting workers to these regions are wages and freight.

Despite efforts to attract customers, like everyone, we are crippled, with people not travelling or spending, and it is a double whammy. The shires with a smaller rate base are under financial strain, and some of these small shires are doing a whole lot more with a whole lot less. The logistics and challenges they face are enormous. We need to

find ways to assist some of our smaller local governments to spread the load of what they need to do. In Meekatharra the justice office was closed down. It has morphed into the police station, which causes issues. All these towns are being squeezed, which is putting undue pressure on some of these small local government councils to maintain essential services and infrastructure.

The Leader of the Opposition mentioned national parks. One of the scenarios about national parks that gets raised is that at some national parks tickets get clipped when tourists arrive, but the upkeep at some of them is not as people would have hoped. Giralda Station is a classic case. It has been let go to rack and ruin to some degree. Hopefully that will be rectified. With the massive areas of national parks, it is concerning for a lot of people that they will not be maintained in the same way that people previously looked after and cared for the land. It is just a massive area. There is an enormous amount of space to look after. There is the need to keep the water points running. Years ago when I was a child—three decades ago—I remember driving home and there were green budgerigars swarming all over the road. There were ruts on the road where cars had driven through. That was the result of an inland property that had been taken back by the government. All the water had been turned off and the property locked up, so all those birds and wildlife were trying to escape. That is just an example from a long time ago showing that it is very difficult to look after large portions of land. Although I think it is great to preserve the land, we need to be careful to make sure that we look after it in the way we plan to and need to and that we have the resources to do that.

In closing, I reiterate that there is a feeling in the bush that people have been short-changed. They are not looking for freeways or high-rise buildings, but they are looking for support and assistance to get the basics they need, such as health.

MS S.F. McGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Training and Workforce Development) [5.57 pm]: I am pleased to speak on this motion. I have to give the opposition some credit because this motion in private members' business as we come back from the winter break is sufficiently broad for the rambling contributions the opposition makes—at nearly every private members' business, I have to say. They are usually very stream of consciousness and they talk about anything they can think about, and they usually cut their cloth. This time the opposition has given us a motion that is broad enough for members on the other side to cover a whole lot of topics in their contributions, which they have done. I have to give the opposition that little bit of credit.

I want to take the opportunity to talk about this government that has been in power since 2017, and particularly some of the focuses we have had under Premier Cook, all of which I am very proud. If they are vanity projects—I will go through some of them—I for one, as a minister, am very proud of them. I think they are actually about contributing to the community, thinking about what individuals and our communities—people and families who are struggling—and our economy need to keep people in work and take us forward in the twenty-first century. I will try to keep in mind the timeframe that we have, because a few others want to make a contribution.

Generally, of course, we have been a competent government. One cannot underestimate the importance of having a good, stable government. I refer particularly to our management of the finances. This did not just happen. Under the previous Premier and now under Premier Cook, we have been very disciplined about our cabinet processes and financial management. We were in a deficit. I remember sitting on the opposition benches and hearing then Premier Colin Barnett say, "I will never have a deficit under my government." A year later, that is exactly what he had. We have had to turn that around with the rating agencies and the like, and we are now able to invest in our community. We have had difficult headwinds. Internationally, there has been uncertainty in economic markets, but, in many respects, we are considered to be in rude health, and I give credit to the current Treasurer for some of her work in that regard.

Today, 300 000 jobs have been created under the WA Labor government. That is not to be disregarded; that is massive. We are looking at not only the industries that we do well in, but also diversifying our economy, and we are doing the hard work needed to achieve that diversification. It is a fact that we have a healthy budget and good budget management. It is not only our claim; it has also been recognised by rating agencies and other observers, including the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia, which does not usually hand out bouquets to Labor governments. This means that we have been able to give not only record investment in infrastructure and better services, but also cost-of-living support, which we know is necessary not just in Western Australia but around the country. We are facing post-COVID pandemic economic challenges and there are cost-of-living pressures. We have made the student assistance payments, which we talked about in question time today, and the \$700 electricity credits in cooperation with the federal government. I do not know about the opposition, but government members and I have been out doorknocking and talking to the community, and a \$700 credit is meaningful for anyone, let alone families who are struggling. Between us, the federal and state governments have been able to offer this meaningful amount. We have provided regional travel assistance and KidSport vouchers—the list of targeted assistance that we give families goes on. Of course, we have health spend in community services.

I refer to family and domestic violence. It is so frustrating to hear the other side just say, "You need to do more. You need to do more on homelessness and domestic violence and on these difficult juvenile justice issues." We acknowledge that these are difficult issues, but the opposition needs to come up with solutions. Members opposite

are taking a salary as the alternative government. They need to come up with solutions, and they do not. I am looking at the member for North West Central, and I know she was not here, but her side's record in family and domestic violence was absolutely shameful. When we came in, I was the first minister to take that dedicated portfolio, and I saw that for eight and a half years, her side had done absolutely nothing. The former Attorney General was a disgrace. There was just one initiative of law reform in the former government's final last gasps, but apart from that, there was absolutely no investment, let alone any strategic approach to such a complex area. Yes, there is a lot to do—there is no question about that—but at least we are providing extra resources. With an investment of \$422 million, a dedicated minister and cooperation across a number of portfolios, there is a real effort to turn that particularly challenging area around. But I digress.

I want to talk about some of the investments in my portfolio, particularly in training and workforce development, but we are also putting a real focus on vocational training in Western Australia. As a Labor government, we have done that from the beginning. We recognise that if we are going to have the skills to meet our current demands in the resources sector—if you like, business as usual—in Western Australia, we need people training and getting the skills to do that, as I said, and particularly vocational training, let alone the need to develop those industries that are coming at us at a rate of knots. The clean energy transition, the diversification of our economy and defence contracts are all areas where we need to really lean in to the challenge. As I said, businesses can usually see the skill demands for housing construction that are in front of us. I will talk a little bit about that.

When we came to government in 2017, I think Hon Sue Ellery was Minister for Training and Workforce Development and Minister for Education. Our first initiative was to freeze TAFE fees, which had the immediate impact of giving some certainty to the vocational training sector, not only for the TAFE colleges, but also the private providers that often use publicly funded subsidies for their training provisions. As we moved into post-budget repair, we were able to put in place a lower-fees, local-skills program, which started to strategically reduce the cost of vocational training in a number of targeted areas by up to 72 per cent. There was an enormous increase in training places. As we have gone forward, as people would know, we introduced fee-free courses, first in 2023, and again in 2024. We have that commitment with the federal government, and that program has been very successful and important. I talked about it in question time today.

If I get time, I will talk a little bit more about fee relief, but I spoke about that in question time today. I want to concentrate on the talk about vanity projects. Does the opposition consider our investment in TAFE colleges to be a vanity project? What exactly is it saying? This has been an enormously important program that includes capital and equipment projects, and over a quarter of billion dollars in TAFE college upgrades. In some cases, this is the biggest injection of funds that some of those colleges have seen in decades.

I will do a quick tour around the state. I will try not to take too long, because I really want to emphasise that 60 per cent of those upgrades—nine out of the 15—have actually been in regional WA. It is really important that we train people in regional Western Australia. When the opposition—the member for North West Central and the member for Roe—say that regional Western Australia has been forgotten and is completely ignored, the facts do not bear that out. That is just not the case. They continue to talk down the importance, vibrance and investment in their communities, and it is just not right. I will talk about the investment that we are putting into TAFE colleges as an example. I go out to those colleges and I see the difference that it is making in training local people for local jobs. That is exactly why we do this. We want local people to train to be childcare or healthcare workers, or to work in hospitality and trade jobs as well.

I will quickly move around the state, starting in the Peel region. We invested \$16.9 million in Mandurah TAFE, an amazing state-of-the-art tourism and training centre for hospitality, hair and beauty, and personal services. It is an amazing facility. If members have not been out there, they can go and get a meal in the new facility. It is an absolutely beautiful facility put together by commercial builders EMCO Building and Hunt Architects. There is also the beautiful facade by Noongar artists Maitland Hill and Kerry Jetta-Stack, and the glass is by Nick Mount. It is a really striking building. I think they do lunch and dinner, and it is booked out all the time because of the quality. I am not sure of the amount, but I think it might be \$35 for three courses; people absolutely love it. All the locals go to try to get a meal there. The person in charge of the kitchen there used to work at Wildflower in the Treasury building and he decided that he had had enough being a chef. He was still quite young, but decided that he wanted to teach. He is out there doing his thing teaching at Mandurah TAFE in the new facilities, and they are sensational.

In all the new facilities in which we have done hospitality upgrades, we have included the capacity for remote students to Zoom in. There are screens above the cooking equipment et cetera so that lecturers can teach and show what they are doing to students in the facilities and those who Zoom in. They have some sophisticated equipment; in fact, world-class equipment has been included in some of these upgrades. The government invested \$16.9 million in the beautiful Mandurah facility.

I move to Armadale, member for Armadale. We have not formally opened this facility, but \$39 million was spent on a consolidated campus for industry relevant training across business, child care, community services, education support, general education and information technology. It is amazing. The architectural practice responsible for

this facility was Armstrong Collective, with PS Structures the company responsible for its construction. I am looking forward to formally opening the facility with the member for Armadale soon. It is very exciting. In my electorate of Fremantle, the government invested \$2 million in the refurbishment of the maritime simulator in which people can drive—is that the right expression?—or captain a container vessel. I did it not that long ago through Sydney Harbour in a snowstorm. It can simulate all of that. I am glad to say that the ship and its containers survived. Again, world-class equipment is available to train seafarers and the like to attain some very important skills. They can do that right there in Fremantle.

North Metropolitan TAFE's Balga campus has received an upgrade, but because it is not quite finished, it has not formally opened. The \$47.9 million upgrade is amazing and includes a specialised teaching block that will be used for construction, trades, electrical, and the adult migrant English program. I am wondering whether the opposition thinks that spending \$47.9 million on Balga TAFE is ideological pointscoreing. Is that what the opposition is saying? That investment is the result of a thoughtful government that thinks about its budget management and then has money to invest in vocational training. As I said, this is not just infrastructure for the sake of it; we are liaising with local employers to see what equipment and skills they need to train young people or people who want a job change. I have met hundreds of such people since I have been in the training portfolio.

We have done Peel, Armadale, Fremantle and Balga. The trip is now taking us to Joondalup, and I am now talking about the \$20.4 million that the government invested in an automotive workshop, which will be really important for the northern suburbs, particularly when we consider hybrid and electric vehicles and up-to-date automotive equipment. It will be so important for the northern suburbs. It will include high-tech training on electric vehicles and in-house specialist training facilities for technological innovations in the horticultural industry that are needed for the northern suburbs, which rely on Wanneroo and some of the growing areas.

I move to regional areas, which opposition members have said are so sadly neglected. Let us see whether they still hold that view after I work through the list. Some of the more modest increases are in Geraldton, but they are still quite important. There is the \$2 million refurbishment of the visual arts building and an additional \$2 million refurbishment of a maritime simulator, including the *Master Class* boat upgrade. This will provide really practical skills for those in the maritime industry and fishing, who can get their qualifications on fantastic equipment. In fact, all the work involved in the upgrade to the *Master Class*—physical training is provided on this vessel—was done by a local company. It employed people and was given all that contract work.

Mr D.T. Punch: We're building fishing boats in Geraldton.

Ms S.F. McGURK: Right, okay. There will be people who have trained in TAFE going on to build that. I cannot remember the name of the company.

Mr D.T. Punch: Dongara Marine.

Ms S.F. McGURK: Dongara Marine, yes. Certainly, some of the people being trained at TAFE courses and on *Master Class* in the TAFE college will be used.

I will move on to Roebourne TAFE where there is \$7.9 million for a new classroom block. Again, I wonder whether opposition members consider that investment and other significant investments in Roebourne to be vanity projects. There is also an almost complete rebuild of the high school in Roebourne, which is really important. For the TAFE college, there is a multipurpose training facility right there in the community. It will help people work on their IT skills and there are some arts facilities. When the facility was put together, it was designed with local people to make sure that people feel comfortable there, and feel like it is their facility and they can use it, and they feel comfortable enrolling in courses. For the Roebourne facility, 200 workers were used throughout construction, including apprentices and trainees, and I thank construction company Devlyn Construction, which carried out that work.

Another project that I wonder whether opposition members will call a vanity project is the Pundulmurra campus in South Hedland. There is \$43.2 million for a magnificent upgrade of the heavy engineering facilities at what is known as "Pundy" campus. It is amazing. It was so good going to that upgrade. It is a big college and they are big, new sheds. All the apprentices I met there came from Hedland Senior High School in South Hedland. They were local kids or BHP employees, who had gone on to get apprenticeships. As I said before, that is exactly what we want—local people getting training opportunities. Some were out of school and others had come from operator or trades assistant jobs to get apprenticeships. They were all local people, which is fantastic. There will also be some upgrades to some hospitality training facilities at South Hedland. In total, there is \$48.9 million but \$43.2 million is for the heavy vehicle and mechanical engineering facilities. I met apprentices like Jess and Jackson when I was there. They are local young people who are second-year BHP heavy vehicle and mechanical engineering apprentices. All these apprentices are paying 50 per cent less for their qualifications now than they would have under the previous government. I wonder whether these are vanity projects or priorities according to the National and Liberal Parties.

I will quickly continue going through the state. Our travels have now taken us to Broome TAFE where we see the \$11.8 million hospitality and student services centre. Again, it is world-class. It is really good that local people are

getting hospitality experience. Members can think of other personal services, such as hairdressing and beauty, that are really suited to the tourism industry in Broome. Upgrades made to the student services area will make sure that staff have good facilities and places where students can congregate in common areas. We want people to feel at home in their local TAFE colleges.

For Kununurra TAFE, there is \$6 million for the health and hospitality training centre. Again, I went to the opening of that upgrade. It is a fantastic facility for nursing, aged care and disability care. These are really sensational upgrades, as is the equipment going into some of these upgrades. I was with the Minister for Health when we saw enrolled nursing students able to train remotely in classes via Teams. The equipment is all set up for them to be able to do that effectively.

There is \$10 million for the heavy engineering workshop at Kalgoorlie TAFE. Again, this is fantastic. I would have thought that the Nationals WA in particular would appreciate a \$9.5 million upgrade for Muresk's agricultural machinery and training centre. That is \$10.3 million in total, because it also includes an industry-standard shearing shed and two state-of-the-art combine harvester simulators. I did a bit better on the maritime simulator in Fremantle; when I tried to drive a combine harvester, I decided I probably needed a TAFE course to improve my skills! It did not go quite so well. Again, we can see that this has been an absolutely sensational program of work around the state. There is also \$22 million for an upgrade of the facilities in Albany, some of which have not had any upgrades for 50 years. There is now state-of-the-art equipment, including investment in a couple of electric and hybrid vehicles. There is also now capacity in Albany to increase the number of students.

I will finish there. There is so much more I could say about my training and workforce development portfolio, but I can assure the opposition that these are not vanity projects. These are not indulgences; these are investments in not only the current generation, but also generations to come. I am incredibly proud of the work we are doing on vocational training and I am always happy to shine a light on what we are doing and on what the opposition did not do when it was in office.

MR H.T. JONES (Darling Range) [6.21 pm]: It is always a pleasure to follow the Minister for Training and Workforce Development, with a very positive tour of WA, as opposed to what was provided by members opposite. I would not like to be on their tour bus, going around! That was very depressing. The member for Roe spoke earlier about how low morale was in the live sheep export industry. I acknowledge the people in that industry, but the opposition spent the last two hours running down just about every state government department and everyone who works in them, for its own political gain. The member for North West Central talked about parks being shockingly run down, without thinking about the people who actually work in those parks and how they feel about being criticised for the work they do.

Members opposite cannot just offset that sort of criticism by saying, "Oh well, health's in crisis, but nurses do a great job." I was in the Navy and someone would not say, "Oh, by the way, guys: you're on the worst ship in the fleet, but as sailors, you're pretty good! But it's the worst ship in the fleet." How does that impact on the people who work in those areas? Members opposite need to have a think about that when they try to score political points.

I want to talk briefly about Metronet. The Liberals and Nationals fail to understand that the availability of public transport is a fundamental cost-of-living measure. It also provides accessibility for people with disabilities, people who are too young or too old to drive, or people who are unable to afford a car. It is not a vanity project; it is a once-in-a-lifetime investment for our state, and it is unprecedented. The scope has actually changed since 2017; we were originally going to remove four level crossings, but it will now be 15. There were to be 18 new train stations, but now there will be 23, some of them elevated. We were also going to build 78 railcars locally, but it will now be 246, which is a great achievement.

Metronet will deliver 72 kilometres of new track and 23 new stations and remove 15 level crossings. Nine projects have been completed. The Morley–Ellenbrook line, the tenth project, is set to open later this year. The Yanchep rail extension was opened last month.

The Bayswater station has been completed recently, with all platforms and trackwork ready to be connected to the Morley–Ellenbrook line, and the first C-series trains were introduced back in April. I was privileged to ride on that train. It is a great achievement for manufacturing in WA. I am very proud about what has been achieved. By the end of next year, all the new rail lines that we committed to in 2017 will be completed.

I represent Darling Range, and within Darling Range is the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale, which is one of the fastest growing local government areas in the country, with the population of Byford expected to reach 35 000 by 2036. Only 4.1 per cent of people in Byford use public transport. The extension will increase that number and it should also alleviate the pressure on roads and the costs associated with households running transport because 16 per cent of the household budget is spent on transport. That rail extension, the cheap rail two-zone cap, and the free travel for students going to school and travelling on Sundays will be a great boon for the people who live in my area. In Byford, the first columns of the train extension have now been installed. Members can visit me in my office and we can go out the back and see the Byford station taking shape with the columns going up. The member for Armadale and I will be out there on Friday to look at the works in Armadale and Byford.

I do not have much time left. What did the opposition do? It closed the Fremantle line, decimated regional rail services and closed the Midland railway workshops, which is where a good friend of mine got his apprenticeship back in the 1980s. The opposition sold the Westrail freight business, privatised the rail network and failed to deliver the Ellenbrook rail line, despite its promises in 2008 and 2013. It did not do even one bit of planning, apparently. It also failed to deliver the Metro Area Express light rail project and closed the tier 3 rail network—a great regional network. Of course, the people of Darling Range do not buy into the negativity of the Liberal and Nationals WA Parties. They welcome the transformation of the area, which is finally bringing in investment, business, jobs and accessibility to the area. It is not only the opposition that is trying to undermine the project; the media is having a bit of a go too. There was a post on one of the local chats yesterday. A journalist who was writing a story about what is happening around the Armadale station wanted to talk to people who had been negatively impacted by the works. I do that all the time when I am out doorknocking. It is not hard to find them. It is because of the rail corridor. The people who are negatively affected by the works are those living along the rail corridor. I talk to them all the time. They explain to me what the issues are and I try to resolve what I can, but with works like that, inevitably there will be people who will be adversely affected. We are getting on with the job, on time, to get it done. Once the job is done, they will have access to public transport.

Mr P.J. Rundle: You said on time. What about on budget?

Mr H.T. JONES: I just explained that the scope has increased. The member would not have any expenses because he would not do anything.

Dr A.D. Buti: Except for their vanity projects.

Mr H.T. JONES: That is right. The Facebook post I referred to was interesting. The first comment was from a lady called Kate who channelled Kylie Mole from *The Comedy Company*. She said, “Tell the journalist to rack off and write positive stuff instead. It’s common sense that people have been affected. Sometimes things have to get worse before they get better.” Someone commented on that and said, “Too right. Put me down in the extremely happy about it and thank you to the planning and workers category.” The next comment said, “Some would rather nothing be improved”, then there was an expletive, “forget the fact that there will be no level crossings in Armadale.” Even the people who live in the area see the benefit of the rail extension and do not buy into the negativity. They appreciate the unprecedented investment in the south-east corridor, which is something that has not been done for years. All the people in that area have paid their taxes and rates over a number of years and are finally getting some investment in the area. Of course, the other vanity project that we are getting is the Tonkin Highway extension, finally, after 20 or 30 years of promises. Next year, in 2025, we will start work on that. The Byford health hub is a \$42.2 million project—another vanity project—that will deliver great health outcomes for the people of Byford. Another vanity project is the Cardup career fire and rescue station, which is just about finished. That \$12.5 million project will deliver professional and career fire services to the area, and it is much appreciated by the local community. They are not vanity projects. They are providing essential services to people in the south east, and they appreciate a Cook Labor government and a local Labor member delivering these projects. With that, I oppose this motion and will sit down.

DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale — Minister for Education) [6.30 pm]: It is great to follow on from the great local member for Darling Range. I echo his comments about the Metronet project, which is also very well supported by constituents in my electorate. We understand there will be some disruption. There will always be some disruption when trying to make progress.

The motion put forward by the Leader of the Opposition was that this house note that after seven years in power, the Cook Labor government has failed to prioritise the needs of Western Australians over ideological pointscore and vanity projects, sacrificing better outcomes for political gains. Even for the member for Moore, what a ridiculous motion to put forward today. We are dealing with the first private members’ business after the long winter recess, and the opposition comes up with this ridiculous motion.

I will go through a few areas in my ministerial portfolios. I start off with public school infrastructure. We have over 830 public schools in Western Australia, from Kununurra down to Hopetoun and Esperance, through the metropolitan area and across to Kalgoorlie et cetera; it is probably the largest geographical education district in the world. It is a very challenging exercise to try to fund school facilities in these areas, but the Cook Labor government has a \$4.4 billion program of works to invest in our public school facilities. Since 2017, the state Labor government has opened 30 new primary schools and nine new high schools, and many more are already under construction or being designed. We have just completely rebuilt two other primary schools from the ground up. Investment in education and building infrastructure are not vanity projects. If the opposition believes that they are vanity projects, that tells us what it considers to be important in politics and public service. If investing in public education infrastructure is a vanity project, I hope the member for Roe and the member for Moore never have the chance to be on the Treasury bench.

We have also delivered major upgrades and additional facilities across Western Australia with general classroom blocks, performing arts centres, industrial arts and design workshops, gymnasiums, visual arts and music schools, libraries, information and communication technology centres and specialist STEM facilities, plus other infrastructure

project upgrades in education facilities at 180 public schools. That is one school out of every five across Western Australia having active, fully funded infrastructure projects currently in design, with forward work in progress or already under construction. Surely the opposition does not think that is a vanity project.

We have also invested heavily in science and STEM facilities to ensure that our young people are equipped with the skills of the future. Since 2017, when the Labor government came into power, 315 primary schools have received upgrades to deliver specialist science teaching facilities, as well as equipment grants to make sure primary school students across Western Australia have access to current technologies. An additional 13 primary science classrooms are currently under construction. We have also upgraded, or are building, new facilities to deliver STEM labs at 75 metropolitan and regional secondary schools to ensure a specialist classroom or laboratory is available to every single public secondary school in Western Australia. Surely that is not a vanity project.

I now move on to the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement. As everyone knows, on the first day of the first term this year, which was at the end of January, we signed a joint statement with the commonwealth that committed us to increasing funding for Western Australian public schools from 95 per cent of the schooling resource standard to 100 per cent by the end of 2026. We were the first state to sign that statement of intent. Interestingly, the day before, the member for Roe, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, wrote an op-ed in which he said that we were not investing in education. May I also say that it was a very personal attack, which I thought was not something that an opposition education spokesperson would do in an opinion piece about education. It was probably written by one of his advisers, because I am sure that he would not have done that himself. That was a landmark deal in Western Australia.

As a result of having sound financial management in Western Australia, we have been able to commit to increasing our funding. The opposition needs to understand this because it will put paid to any thought that we do not have our priorities right or that we are ideologically focused here. The schooling resource standard is also colloquially known as the Gonski index, which I am sure members are aware of. It is the standard of funding that Gonski determined has to be injected into the education system so that it is properly resourced for a child to receive a proper education. Under the National School Reform Agreement, the commonwealth pays 80 per cent of the funding for every student at a non-government school and the state and territory governments pick up the remaining 20 per cent. All students at private schools in Australia, and in Western Australia in this case, receive 100 per cent of the funding under the Gonski index. That is not the case for public school students, and the member talked about the federal government. The member for Roe also talked about ideology. There are no more ideologically focused and driven politicians than conservative federal education ministers. They always attack universities because they think universities are against their ideology. The problem is that they do not want people to be educated because if people are properly educated and they open their mind, they will see how silly conservative politicians are. We can understand why they do that. Under many years of conservative federal government, no federal minister wanted to tackle the incredibly unjust situation in which private school kids received 100 per cent of the funding under the Gonski index but public students did not.

To his credit, when Jason Clare came on board as the federal Minister for Education, he said, “This is going to change; we have to close the five per cent gap.” His view was that it would be fair for the federal government to increase its 20 per cent to 22.5 per cent and for the states to increase theirs by 2.5 per cent. A couple of years ago, every state agreed that they would go to at least 75 per cent, and now they have to agree to go to 77.5 per cent and the commonwealth will go to 22.5 per cent, and that will give 100 per cent funding. However, that will be attached to very important reforms. Most states have not committed to it because their financial position is not as good as ours and we also have a focus on ensuring that all students receive proper funding for school. It has nothing at all to do with vanity projects. Minister Jason Clare offered to increase the commonwealth funding by 0.5 per cent every year from next year, when the new agreement will start, until 2029. It will not get to 22.5 per cent until 2029. He said that the states should increase their funding by the same amount—0.5 per cent.

We said to Minister Clare that we were prepared to sign, but, as a result of us being the first to sign, we wanted our increased funding to happen over a shorter period. Therefore, as of next year, the commonwealth will increase its funding by 1.25 per cent in 2025 and 1.25 per cent in 2026, which will mean that it will get to 2.5 per cent at the end of 2026. We will do the same so that by the end of 2026 every public school in Western Australia will be 100 per cent funded according to the statement of intent. This means that there will be an extra \$1.6 billion in the public education system over and above normal funding. As a result of us getting to full funding by the end of 2026 rather than 2029, there will be roughly an extra \$227 million. I know the member for Roe will not congratulate us for that, but I believe that even he would say that is a good outcome.

The increased funding will be tied to reforms that focus on equity and excellence in schools to support the wellbeing of students and teachers, and provide a strong and sustainable workforce of teachers and non-teaching school staff. The funding will drive real improvements for students from low socio-economic backgrounds, regional students, students with disabilities, First Nations students and students from language backgrounds other than English. It will attack deficiencies in the areas of our education system in which our most at-risk kids are involved. Surely that is not a vanity project.

I will not say too much more as I want to hear the contribution for the member for Mount Lawley, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health, and give him sufficient time because he always makes an outstanding contribution. Therefore, I will quickly talk about the WA student assistance payment. I think enough has been said about it for now. How that could be considered a vanity project is beyond me, but opposition members were hoping for it to fail. They would not go out and promote it and did only one Facebook post on it. Surely the shadow opposition spokesperson for Education should have been championing it, as the payment provided cost-of-living relief. Whether members opposite thought it should have been done another way is immaterial to the fact that this was the system the government decided on and members opposite should have promoted it, but they did not. The member for Roe stands condemned as not only the shadow opposition spokesperson but also the local member. Members opposite all stand condemned. As I said, members opposite complained about 80 per cent when they had only 66 per cent of their members here today, and now they have 33 per cent of their members here, so 80 per cent under any scheme is a really good outcome. That \$75 million was dished out to WA families is a really good outcome. How that can be a vanity project is something that I really do not understand.

I am not sure what the opposition speakers in favour of the member for Moore's motion are on about because they know a lot about vanity projects. They spent a considerable amount of money to design a toilet building that played Burt Bacharach singing. Talk about a vanity project! Members opposite spent a phenomenal amount of money building musical toilets that played Burt Bacharach.

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Excuse me; we did not interrupt you! I am not taking interruptions.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members!

Dr A.D. BUTI: I am not taking interruptions. We had the courtesy to listen to their diatribe for two hours, so I think they should give us the courtesy to speak without comment from the member for Moore, whose contribution was shameful.

Members opposite built musical toilets at the same time as they cut funding in health and education and increased some TAFE fees by up to 500 per cent. If members want to know about priorities and blown out budgets, go to the Langoulant report and the Public Accounts Committee report on the children's hospital. I will leave it there.

MR S.A. MILLMAN (Mount Lawley — Parliamentary Secretary) [6.44 pm]: I will pick up on a point that the member for Armadale raised. Before I do that, I will say this. As members know, I will be retiring and so I am incredibly grateful to the opposition, and the Leader of the Opposition in particular, for bringing on such a broad motion, because it gives me a chance to road test some contributions that I will make in my valedictory speech if I get the chance to make them.

I should start by picking up from where the member for Armadale left off with the Langoulant inquiry. Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. I think this opposition is finally starting to get the hang of being an opposition after eight years. Members opposite saw what former Treasurer Ben Wyatt did with his laser-focused attacks on the economic mismanagement of the former government and his criticism of its vanity projects. Shadow Treasurer Wyatt, as he was in those days, had a full set of vanity projects that the previous Liberal-National government had embarked upon that he could scrutinise, critique and call to account. We know what they are because, as the member for Armadale said, we have the Langoulant inquiry. We have, for example, the singing toilets, an aquarium that has no water in the fish tank, a gymnasium that floods every wet season and numerous other money-wasting vanity projects under a royalties for regions program that sent the WA budget spiralling into deficit.

It is all very well for the member for North West Central to say that we need to get in there, work collaboratively, do the right thing and all the rest of it, but she was asked by the Minister for Training and Workforce Development, "How would you train the workforce if you cut TAFE places and increased fees for TAFE by 500 per cent? How would you have the people necessary if you were not making investments in education, infrastructure and housing?" Members opposite are more than happy to spend the budget surpluses that the McGowan and Cook Labor governments have achieved. The member for Vasse spoke a shocking mistruth that is regularly repeated by the opposition, one that should be called out time and again. For all the years of the Barnett government, from 2013 until 2017, it had a federal Liberal government. If ever there was going to be an opportunity for the state government and the federal government to work together to achieve a GST deal, it would have been at any time during that period. Shamelessly, the member for Vasse tries to claim credit for that change. The fact is that the GST deal was delivered by Mark McGowan in the first term of a WA Labor government because the Liberal Party leaders in Canberra during that period, Scott Morrison, Tony Abbott and Peter Dutton—not so much Peter Dutton; he is opposed to the GST deal—freaked out when they saw the power of the WA Labor movement and its effect on the election result in March 2017. They were falling over themselves to get that GST deal done. The opposition will continue to claim credit for the GST deal, but history will show that the party and the government that delivered that for the benefit of Western Australia was the WA Labor Party.

The opposition says that we are spending money on vanity projects. I say that we are sensibly managing the state's finances so that we can afford to invest in training, education and infrastructure development. Do members know

why we want to do that? It is because we want to provide economic opportunities for our kids and for the future. We want people going to school in world-class facilities that have been refurbished, whether they are in Paraburdoo or Padbury. We want people in Broome and Balga to have the opportunity to go to TAFE. We want people to progress from university through to jobs in our health and education sectors. We definitely want people progressing through trades as plumbers, electricians, painters, carpenters and plasterers so that we can build the schools, hospitals and houses of the future. We would not have that if we blew money on illegitimate vanity projects like the projects those opposite were responsible for the last time they were in government.

As I say, imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. Maybe members opposite are getting the hang of being in opposition, because they are looking at what Ben Wyatt did when he was the shadow Treasurer, and thinking, “All right. He did a good job. He worked hard as the shadow Treasurer. He put together policies and he put together a program and he put together a platform and he and the then Leader of the Opposition, Mark McGowan, took that to the electorate, and it was resoundingly endorsed.” We had a fantastic result. In 2017, 41 members were elected and we did not think that we could beat that. This is the interesting point: I love that every time the members for North West Central and Moore get up and speak on the same motion, they desperately try to outdo each other because they will be competing for the same seat at the 2025 election—the Mid-West.

The member for Churchlands is in the house. We know, because we heard about it in question time, that the stalking horse is the Liberal candidate for Churchlands. He wants to be the Leader of the Opposition. He wants to take this Leader of the Opposition and put him out of a job. I know that the member for Churchlands will prevent the Liberal candidate for Churchlands from doing that. However, when I look around the chamber and see the members for Riverton, Dawesville and Scarborough, I think that we in the Labor Party are fantastic at removing Leaders of the Opposition. The member for Riverton replaced a Leader of the Opposition, the member for Scarborough replaced a Leader of the Opposition and the member for Dawesville replaced a Leader of the Opposition. I wonder whether the member for North West Central is thinking about whether, having changed from the Nationals WA to the Liberal Party, she might want to join the Labor Party and also defeat a Leader of the Opposition!

Everybody else has talked about investment in facilities such as community education and training facilities, and infrastructure on the rail line to Byford and the rail line to Ellenbrook, which we would not have seen without the Labor Party. In Mount Lawley, we were twice promised Metro Area Express light rail. People made investment decisions and put in real money on the basis of promises made by the Liberal Party that were then broken. Not only that, these people were already paying hand over fist as a result of not one, not two, but three land tax increases imposed by three separate finance ministers during the course of the previous government. The opposition is completely irresponsible when it comes to managing money, yet it has the temerity to come in here and accuse us of investing in vanity projects when all our projects are designed to keep the wheels of our Western Australian economy ticking over and diversifying.

Everybody else has spoken about investments in infrastructure. I want to talk about our legislative agenda, because I think this motion captures and talks to the priorities of the WA Labor government. It mentions the Cook Labor government, but refers to seven years; therefore, it includes the period when Mark McGowan was Premier. It gives me an opportunity to recite some highlights that I have had the pleasure of being here to see. One of the things the Deputy Speaker would have seen, being a member like me here since 2017, was the work the WA Labor government and former minister put in to harmonise our work health and safety laws. I am glad that the three members opposite are here, because they all represent rural parts of Western Australia. The most dangerous industry in Western Australia is agriculture. These opposition members ought to know the importance of harmonised work health and safety laws better than all other members. These law reforms brought our work health and safety regime into line with the federal regime. It was an undertaking that should have been completed 15 years ago, but it was completed only four years ago, and completed only because of the election of the McGowan Labor government. It was a great privilege for me to be a member of the Ministerial Advisory Panel on Work Health and Safety Reform with representatives from Unions WA, the Chamber of Minerals and Energy and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia. We worked collaboratively and constructively to try to tailor our work health and safety regime for the particular circumstances of Western Australia and to make sure that we have a modern and effective work health and safety regime to prevent workplace accidents and deaths.

The second thing we did was very important to me because of my previous career as a lawyer, a career that I am somewhat excited about returning to, as I have probably shared with most people here. I often had the opportunity to act for injured workers who were subjected to the vagaries of the workers compensation system. We had the opportunity, and we did, as had been promised, to pass changes to the workers compensation regime to streamline and expedite workers compensation claims. This was the result of a review that had been done in about 2008 and that had not been acted on for the entire time of the previous Liberal–National government. That streamlined workers compensation process will be better for not just workers but also employers and insurers. I think that is a sensible priority and I also think that it is not a vanity project.

Thirdly—this one is very important to me—over the course of the last 10 to 15 years, we have had the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Some of that was the hardest reading someone could possibly

imagine. As a government, we have lifted the statute of limitations and put in place several recommendations from the royal commission to enable victims of institutional historical child sex abuse to now bring claims for compensation. These are nation-leading laws. I have had solicitors from around Australia contact me to commend the government for introducing these laws.

This is very important to me again because of the work that I used to do. Vale Robert Vojakovic at the Asbestos Diseases Society of Australia. Just last month, we introduced a new modern regime for properly compensating victims of asbestos-related diseases. If someone does not have a malignancy but is suffering from pleural plaques or asbestosis, they can make a claim, have that claim be successful and not be precluded from bringing forward a second claim should they develop a malignancy such as mesothelioma or lung cancer. This will make a material difference. This is legislation that we have promised and implemented. It will make a material difference to people who are struggling after having just been advised that they have an asbestos-related disease diagnosis. Nothing could be more traumatic or surprising. Oftentimes for these diagnoses, they are at a late stage of their life. There is a long latency period for exposure to asbestos-related diseases. There is now just a small glimmer of hope for these people. They know that they can pursue a claim for compensation, and that will not preclude them from coming back in the future and pursuing a second claim for compensation.

My great wish, if you would, is to get back on the tools, go back to practise and see the material effect that these new harmonised work health and safety laws will make out in the real world. What effect will these new streamlined workers compensation processes make in the real world? What will be the ability of lawyers, advocates and supporters to seek compensation for victims of historical child sex abuse and to make claims of compensation for asbestos victims? I ask the opposition members: are any of these vanity projects? If any of them are, shame on them for supporting the legislation, which makes them either hypocrites today for calling them vanity projects or hypocrites then for voting for them. If they say they are vanity projects, where is their apology to victims of historical child sex abuse? Where is their apology to injured workers? Where is their apology to victims of asbestos-related diseases for the circumstances that they have suffered? This Cook Labor government and the former McGowan Labor government have made it an absolute focus of our legislative reform agenda. It is an agenda that will continue and speaks to the specific ideological imperatives of our WA Labor government, which is to serve the interests of the whole Western Australian community.

Moving on, in the short time that I have left, I want to talk about health.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

House adjourned at 7.00 pm

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Questions and answers are as supplied to Hansard.

HEALTH — COMMONWEALTH HOME SUPPORT PROGRAMME

1092. Mr P.J. Rundle to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the State Government health facilities offering the Commonwealth Home Services Program (CHSP), and I ask:

- (a) Which state government health facilities offer CHSP services up to the end of July 2024;
- (b) Which state government health facilities will no longer offer CHSP services from July 1 2024;
- (c) Which state government health facilities will continue to offer CHSP services after July 1 2024;
- (d) If services have been stopped or changed, on what basis has this decision been made;
- (e) Did the WA government complete a business case as the basis for any decision to stop or change CHSP services offered by the WA state government:
 - (i) If so will the Minister table the business case; and
 - (ii) If no business case was used as the basis for this decision, on what grounds has the government chosen to select sites for closure of the service and select other sites for maintaining the service;
- (f) Can the Minister table any select data that in any way supports the decision to close some services and maintain others; and
- (g) What discussion has the Minister had with the Commonwealth Minister in respect of any changes to WA Government delivered CHSP services?

Ms A. Sanderson replied:

Where a viable and sustainable market exists with alternative, non-government organisations able to provide aged care services such as the CHSP, WACHS' position is to transition out of service provision to providers selected by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care (AGDoHAC).

- (a) Laverton, Leonora and Norseman, Denmark, Jerramungup, Plantagenet/Cranbrook and Ravensthorpe, Dongara/Eneabba/Mingenew, Exmouth, Geraldton, Morawa, Perenjori, Mullewa, Murchison, Northampton and Kalbarri, Beverley, Boddington, Bruce Rock, Corrigin, Cunderdin/Meckering/Tammin, Dalwallinu, Dandaragan/Moora (including services in Jurien Bay), Dumbleyung Multi-Purpose Site, Kukerin, Kellerberrin; Kununoppin, Merredin, Wyalkatchem, Narembeen, Southern Cross, Goomalling, Kondinin / Kulin, Lake Grace, Mortlock–Wongan and districts, Pingelly, Quairading; Wickepin, Williams and York. Additionally, multiple communities in the Kimberley are serviced, by the local WACHS Aged and Community Services staff.
- (b) Denmark, Jerramungup, Plantagenet/Cranbrook and Ravensthorpe following a transition of services to non-government service providers.
- (c) All other locations continue, excluding those listed in (b).
- (d) The Great Southern was identified as an appropriate region for WACHS to transition out of CHSP service delivery in 2021. This was due to growth in the active service provider market and followed a competitive tender process by the AGDoHAC.
- (e) No.
 - (i) Not Applicable.
 - (ii) The role of WACHS in the delivery of direct aged care services in the community is responsive to the varied needs across the different regions. WACHS will actively partner with and support alternative service providers to enter regional markets where the demographic and market profile justify viable service delivery, in line with Commonwealth Government policy direction.
- (f) No.
- (g) The Minister or Health continues to advocate to the Commonwealth Government for better Health and Aged Care outcomes for Western Australians.

CORRECTIVE SERVICES — VIOLENT INCIDENTS — WORKERS' COMPENSATION

1094. Mr R.S. Love to the Minister for Corrective Services:

Please detail the following information, since 8 June 2023, in relation to the Corrective Services Division:

- (a) Total number of violent incidents reported within the Corrective Services Division;
- (b) Youth Custodial Officer claims on workers' compensation as a result of violent incidents;
- (c) Prison Officer claims on workers' compensation as a result of violent incidents;

- (d) Total dollar value of workers' compensation claims against the Corrective Services Division;
- (e) A breakdown of the categories of workers' compensation claims and the dollar value of each category; and
- (f) The number of workers' compensation claims that are unresolved more than 12 months since the first claim?

Mr P. Papalia replied:

Please note the term 'violent incidents' has been interpreted as violent assaults for the responses for items (a), (b) and (c).

- (a) The total number of violent (incidents) assaults reported within the Corrective Services Division is detailed below:

Number of Violent Assaults			
Serious Assaults	Assaults	Other Assaults	Total
39	216	539	794

Source data: Assaults on Staff 08 June 2023 to 31 May 2024: Western Australian Office of Crime Statistics and Research as at 17 June 2024.

- (b) 4.
- (c) 55.
- (d) \$25,057,442
- (e) The breakdown of the category of injury of workers' compensation claims and the total dollar value of each category is as follows:

Claim Category	Claim Number	Total Dollar Value
Physical Injury	183	\$24,059,479
Psychological Injury	8	\$997,963

- (f) When considering claims lodged since 8 June 2023, no claims have remained unresolved for more than 12 months since lodgement date.

HOSPITALS — BEDS**1097. Mr R.S. Love to the Minister for Health:**

I refer to Budget Paper 2, Volume 1, page 307, "Significant Issue 2: Over 700 beds have been added across the system, with a further 550 beds in the pipeline", and I ask:

- (a) Can you please provide a breakdown of these beds including:
 - (i) Where are the 700 located;
 - (ii) Are all 700 in use (Osborne Park);
 - (iii) When will all 550 be online; and
 - (iv) Where are the additional 550 beds going to go?

Ms A. Sanderson replied:

- (a) (i)

SITE/LOCATION	Additional beds
Royal Perth Hospital	116
Bentley Health Service	93
Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital	92
Fremantle Hospital	76
Joondalup Health Campus	67
Osborne Park Hospital	56
Mental Health Transition Unit	40
Fiona Stanley Hospital	38
Rockingham General Hospital	30
Bunbury Regional Hospital	30
Perth Children's Hospital	22

Carnarvon Aged and Palliative Care Facility	22
Selby Lodge	8
Armadale Hospital	6
Dongara Aged Care	6
Newman Health Service	7

- (ii) Bed capacity changes on a daily basis. All new beds are available for operationalisation.
- (iii) All 550 beds will come online progressively over the next 4 financial years.
- (iv) Additional beds by location.

Project Title	Total
Peel Health Campus	111
Joondalup Health Campus	102
SJOG Midland Public Hospital	70
Bunbury Health Campus	59
Graylands	53
Geraldton Health Campus	40
Fremantle Hospital	40
Bentley Surgicentre	24
Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital	18
Bentley Health Campus	12
Rockingham General Hospital	10
Armadale Hospital	9
Laverton Hospital	3

HEALTH PRACTITIONER REGULATORY SETTINGS — FUNDING

1098. Mr R.S. Love to the Minister for Health:

I refer to Budget Paper 2, Volume 1, page 305, and I ask:

- (a) Regarding the \$4,610,000 for Health Practitioner Regulatory Settings:
 - (i) Please outline what this relates to; and
 - (ii) How the funds were expended?

Ms A. Sanderson replied:

- (a) (i)–(ii) The Western Australian Government has allocated \$4,610,000 towards the implementation of recommendations made in the Final Report of the Independent Review of Health Practitioner Regulatory Settings, led by Ms Robyn Kruk AO.

Implementation of the 18 recommendations that will require immediate cross-jurisdictional input is \$86 million, with the funding allocated reflective of Western Australia's cost share towards the implementation of the recommendations.

The implementation of recommendations and associated budget will be overseen by the Health Workforce Taskforce, reporting to the Health Ministers' Meeting.

CORONAVIRUS — HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS — LONG COVID

1099. Mr R.S. Love to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and I ask:

- (a) How many COVID admissions presented in public hospitals in:
 - (i) 2020;
 - (ii) 2021;
 - (iii) 2022;

- (iv) 2023; and
- (v) 2024 to date; and
- (b) How many Western Australians are estimated to be suffering from long COVID?

Ms A. Sanderson replied:

- (a)
 - (i) 150
 - (ii) 30
 - (iii) 11,591
 - (iv) 7,847
 - (v) Due to admitted activity coding delays, separations are not yet available for 2024.
- (b) Long COVID is a multisystemic disease that affects each individual uniquely, some mild, others complex. Long COVID diagnosis is a diagnosis of exclusion which is predominantly managed in the primary care sector. As such, estimates of those currently suffering from long COVID cannot be obtained.

MENTAL HEALTH — CO-RESPONSE AMBULANCE PILOT — FUNDING

1100. Mr R.S. Love to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the \$7.9 million investment to support Stage 1 of the Mental Health Co-Response Ambulance Pilot, and I ask:

- (a) When will the Co-Response Ambulance Pilot trial begin, and for how long will it run;
- (b) How many staff and ambulances are involved in the trial and covering which location/areas; and
- (c) What are the performance indicators that have been set for the trial to measure its success?

Ms A. Sanderson replied:

- (a) Anticipated commencement from late 2024. The Pilot funding is for 18 months.
- (b)–(c) The model of service and performance indicators are in development which will inform the number of staff required, and the locations that will be covered. Two additional ambulances were funded through the state budget process.

HEALTH — ELECTRONIC MEDICAL RECORD

1101. Mr R.S. Love to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the on-going progress made to establish a statewide Electronic Medical Record, and I ask:

- (a) How much money has the state invested to date in developing this record;
- (b) When will the system be operational; and
- (c) How is this different to the digital medical record?

Ms A. Sanderson replied:

- (a) \$265 million.
- (b) Implementation of the Electronic Medical Record (EMR) is anticipated to be completed in stages with timeframes subject to completion of procurement processes to determine a vendor.
- (c) The EMR is a more complex, smart, intuitive, consumer-focused system. It will provide clinical guardrails that put safety and quality at the heart of care for every consumer including clinical decision-support and patient alerting. An EMR will enable real time sharing of patient information and analytics by supporting clinical decision making, patient flow, and new virtual models of care. It has a patient portal allowing consumers to be partners in improving their health outcomes.

WA COUNTRY HEALTH SERVICE — CRITICAL STAFF ACCOMMODATION PROGRAM

1102. Mr R.S. Love to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the \$7.7 million allocated in the budget to continue the WA Country Health Service Critical Staff Accommodation Program, and I ask:

- (a) How does this program differ to Government Regional Officer Housing (GROH);
- (b) Does the Government own the properties:
 - (i) If not, how is market rent determined;
- (c) Please provide a list of accommodation location(s); and
- (d) Are staff charged rent as part of this program?

Ms A. Sanderson replied:

- (a) WA Country Health Service (WACHS) maintains its own property portfolio of staff accommodation.
- (b) WACHS accommodation portfolio consists of owned and leased properties.
 - (i) Rental determinations in WACHS accommodation are aligned to employee Industrial Agreements; in accordance with the GROH rent calculator.
- (c) WACHS property portfolio includes all service delivery regions.
- (d) Refer to (b)(i).

HEALTH — COCKBURN MENTAL HEALTH FACILITY

1103. Mr R.S. Love to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the 3 year agreement that WA Health entered into to lease the 75-bed Cockburn Mental Health facility, and I ask:

- (a) Why has the facility only been leased for 3 years;
- (b) Will all 75 beds be utilised every year going forward;
- (c) Does the facility have a full complement of staff; and
- (d) What areas of mental health support will the facility be utilised to address?

Ms A. Sanderson replied:

- (a) The Cockburn facility has been leased for three years to enable sufficient time to assess the efficacy and sustainability of the site and service delivery model being employed.
- (b) Yes.
- (c) South Metropolitan Health Service is undertaking a large scale recruitment drive to recruit staff across all disciplines.
- (d) Inpatient mental health and eating disorder treatment (women only), and inpatient alcohol and other drug withdrawal.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT SERVICE — STAFF

1104. Mr R.S. Love to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the \$39 million to increase the required specialised, multidisciplinary workforce for Child Development Services, and I ask:

- (a) Can you provide a breakdown of staff and the location they will be employed at;
- (b) How many staff have been employed to date; and
- (c) When is it anticipated that all positions will be filled?

Ms A. Sanderson replied:

- (a)–(c) The Child and Adolescent Health Service will be employing an additional 94.9 FTE across a range of disciplines by the 2025–2026 financial year, with over 40 FTE already commenced. This FTE will be employed across the metropolitan area, with flexibility for movement between sites in response to operational need.

The WA Country Health Service will be employing an additional 19.4 FTE across a range of disciplines by 2025–26 financial year. Specific allocation of FTE to country WA regions will be determined following a review of current referral numbers and service wait times.

MENTAL HEALTH — INPATIENT UNITS — RECTIFICATION

1105. Mr R.S. Love to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the \$27.8 million allocated to rectify ligature risks within WA Public Mental Health inpatient units, and I ask:

- (a) How many units require rectification; and
- (b) When will the work be completed?

Ms A. Sanderson replied:

- (a) Following an independent audit, 63 Public Mental Health Inpatient units require rectification across 17 sites.
- (b) Scheduled completion by the end of 2026–27 financial year.

HEALTH — CHILD IMMUNISATION

1106. Mr R.S. Love to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the percentage of immunised children within WA, and I ask:

- (a) What specific initiatives have been funded in the most recent State Budget to address the dangerous slide in immunisation rates in our children; and
- (b) When will the 2024–28 Immunisation Strategy be released?

Ms A. Sanderson replied:

- (a)–(b) ‘Don’t Assume You’re Immune’ is a new immunisation campaign launched by the Western Australian Government. The 12-month campaign encourages people to get the facts about vaccine-preventable diseases. In addition, WA Health is funding local projects aimed at increasing immunisation rates and is currently seeking proposals from government and not for profit immunisation stakeholders.

The WA Immunisation Strategy 2024–28 is anticipated to be published in 2024.

MINES AND PETROLEUM — KOOLYANOBING MINE — FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

1112. Dr D.J. Honey to the Minister for Mines and Petroleum:

I refer to the Koolyanobbing Mine financial assistance program, and I ask:

- (a) Can the Minister explain the \$6.587 million estimated actual for 2023–24 given the budget for that year showed no expense against this item indicating the arrangement ended in 2022–23; and
- (b) Has the arrangement ceased now?

Mr D.R. Michael replied:

- (a) The \$6.587 million shown in the 2023–24 estimated actual relates to the assistance provided for the last quarter of 2022–23.
- (b) Yes.

HOSPITALS — NURSES — ON CALL

1113. Dr D.J. Honey to the Minister for Health:

I refer to public hospitals and hospital staff being on call, and I ask:

- (a) Could the Minister provide the following information for the 2023–24 year:
 - (i) Were nurses paid to be on call during the year and if so, how many nurses were paid to be on call;
 - (ii) What was the total cost for nurses being on call;
 - (iii) How many of the nurses paid to be on call were in the metropolitan area;
 - (iv) What was the total cost of on call payments for nurses in the metropolitan area;
 - (v) What was the daily average number of nurses on call for metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas;
 - (vi) On how many occasions were on call nurses called into work during the year in the metropolitan area;
 - (vii) What was the total payment for agency or non-government employed nurses being utilised in the metropolitan area for the year; and
 - (viii) How many shifts were filled by agency or non-government nurses in the metropolitan area?

Ms A. Sanderson replied:

- (a) Please note this information may include the following occupations; Registered Nurses, Midwives, Enrolled Nurses, Assistants in Nursing, Aboriginal Health Practitioners, Aboriginal Health Workers and Ethnic Health Workers.
 - (i) 3,390.
 - (ii) \$6,869,846.
 - (iii) 1,390.
 - (iv) \$2,906,537.
 - (v) Data on averages is not available at a daily basis. 152 nurses per fortnight for metropolitan areas and 778 nurses per fortnight for non-metropolitan areas.

- (vi) 9,447 occasions.
- (vii) The total payment for agency nursing shifts supplied by NurseWest for the metropolitan area in the 2023–24 financial year was \$10,932,071. Data on the number of shifts filled by non-government agency staff would require a manual review of rosters across health service providers due to the structure of invoicing arrangements.
- (viii) There were 16,368 agency nursing shifts supplied by NurseWest metropolitan area in the 2023–24 financial year. Data on the number of shifts filled by non-government agency staff would require a manual review of rosters across health service providers due to the structure of invoicing arrangements.

HOSPITALS — STAFF — ON CALL

1114. Dr D.J. Honey to the Minister for Health:

Could the Minister provide following information for public hospitals for the 2022–23 year:

- (a) total number of doctors paid to be on call for metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas;
- (b) total cost of on call payments to doctors;
- (c) average daily number of on call doctors for metropolitan and non-metropolitan hospitals; and
- (d) total number of occasions that doctors were called in during the year for metropolitan and non-metropolitan hospitals?

Ms A. Sanderson replied:

- (a) 5,998 doctors for metropolitan areas and 629 doctors for non-metropolitan areas.
- (b) \$55,350,375.
- (c) Data on averages is not available at a daily basis.
- (d) 67,384 occasions for metropolitan hospitals and 12,328 for non-metropolitan hospitals.

GRAYLANDS HOSPITAL — SECURITY

1121. Dr D.J. Honey to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the escape of a patient from Graylands Hospital on 27th May 2023, and his subsequent threatening behaviour on the day, and I ask:

- (a) What were the security measures at the Hospital for involuntary patients as at 27 May 2023;
- (b) How did the patient bypass those security measures;
- (c) How long was he gone from Graylands Hospital before his disappearance was noticed; and
- (d) What changes have been made to the security measures and monitoring systems at the Hospital since 27 May 2023 to:
 - (i) prevent the escape of involuntary patients; and
 - (ii) identify such an escape quickly and report to police immediately?

Ms A. Sanderson replied:

- (a)–(d) Security measures for involuntary patients, who are not a remanded or sentenced prisoner, on a Hospital Order or under the *Criminal Law (Mentally Impaired Accused) Act 1996*, are assessed on an individual basis. It is not correct to characterise the events the Member has referred to as an ‘escape’.

The policies and guidance for staff regarding patient access to the Graylands Hospital grounds are currently under review.

HEALTH — RECRUITMENT

1122. Dr D.J. Honey to the Minister for Health:

With regard to recruitment of foreign health staff for the 2022–23 year, can the Minister provide the following information:

- (a) Number of foreign trained nurses by country of origin; and
- (b) Number of foreign trained doctors by country of origin?

Ms A. Sanderson replied:

- (a)–(b) The recruitment systems do not capture this level of information as a mandatory onboarding question.

WATER — AVAILABILITY

1126. Dr D.J. Honey to the Minister for Water:

- (1) Does the Department produce an annual report on total water availability by region, estimating total water yields, environmental allocations and calculating the sustainable water resources available for human consumption?
- (2) If so, will the Minister table the latest available report, and if not, why not?
- (3) If such analysis of water resources is not undertaken, why not?

Ms S.F. McGurk replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) The Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) prepares water allocation plans which establish how much water can be abstracted for consumptive use from a water resource. This is an annual allocation limit. This planning includes consideration of water that needs to stay in the environment for ecological, social and cultural needs.

Water availability information and copies of water allocation plans are publicly accessible.

TRANSPORT — ZERO EMISSIONS VEHICLE REBATE

1134. Mr R.S. Love to the Minister assisting the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Will the Zero Emission Vehicle rebate continue beyond 10 May 2025?
- (2) What plans does the government have to install associated charging infrastructure to keep pace with e-vehicle sales?
- (3) What moves are there to develop a nationally compatible alternative to fuel excise for e-vehicles?

Ms R. Saffioti replied:

- (1) As part of the 2024–25 State Budget, the WA Government has announced an additional \$5.2 million investment to meet expected demand for the ZEV rebate. The ZEV rebate scheme was previously available to the first 10,000 applications for eligible vehicles licensed in WA, or for three years following the announcement (Saturday 10 May 2025), whichever comes first. With this additional investment, the application cap has been removed, and all applications will be accepted until midnight on Saturday 10 May 2025.
 - (2) Synergy and Horizon Power are working with the State Government to create Australia's longest EV charging network (the WA EV network). This \$23 million investment includes 98 charging stations across 49 different locations connecting Perth and regional WA. The State Government's Charge Up Workplace EV Charging Grants initiative also makes it easier and more cost effective for small to medium enterprises, not-for-profit organisations, and local government authorities to install EV charging equipment at the workplace.
 - (3) I refer to the answer provided by the Minister for Transport in QWN 784.
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