

Ms Libby Mettam; Amber-Jade Sanderson; Mr Mark Folkard; Mr Terry Healy; Ms Alison Kent; Mrs Robyn Clarke; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Geoff Baker; Hon Dave Kelly; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Peter Tinley; Mrs Magenta Marshall

APPROPRIATION (RECURRENT 2024–25) BILL 2024
APPROPRIATION (CAPITAL 2024–25) BILL 2024

Amendment to Motion

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: For clarification, we are dealing with a reasoned amendment. During the second reading debate on the appropriation bills, the question before the chair has been that the bill be now read a second time. The member for Roe is proposing a reasoned amendment to this question in accordance standing order 170. The amendment states —

To delete “now” and insert after “time” —

after the Minister for Health tables a plan to address unacceptable level of ambulance ramping, blowouts in elective surgery and lack of services in regional communities

Therefore, the question now before the chair is that the words to be deleted be deleted.

MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Leader of the Liberal Party) [4.04 pm]: I rise to speak to the reasoned amendment. The Minister for Health asked what we saw as the priorities in health. We have taken every opportunity in this place to raise the issue of ambulance ramping, which has become out of control and dangerously high under this government’s watch. We have talked about elective surgery cancellations and the elective surgery waitlist, which has blown out. We have highlighted our priorities in better supporting patients and healthcare workers, and we have also touched on and talked about the child and adolescent waitlist. Hon Donna Faragher in the other place has supported a petition that has led to a parliamentary inquiry about those excessive waitlists for early childhood development services. We are on record and committed to providing a women’s and babies’ hospital at the only location that is recognised as world class, which is the QEII site. That is supported by over 200 clinicians in this state.

On the issue of ambulance ramping, in March 2024 we saw ambulance ramping increase by five per cent to over 3 409 hours. That is the highest reported figure for 2024. In the first three months of this year, the Cook Labor government has already exceeded the annual figure for 2017, when this government first came to office. Last year, ambulances spent more than 52 000 hours stuck outside our hospitals. When the government first came to office, it was fewer than 10 000 hours. The Labor Party promised to address ambulance ramping as a priority and when in opposition it cited over 10 000 hours as being a horror story. I ask the Premier, the then shadow Minister for Health, what he calls these figures now. It certainly is a crisis.

When we look at elective surgery, we can see the blowouts in the elective surgery waitlist. That is another key priority of this side of the house. The elective surgery waitlist has blown out by over 50 per cent. In March 2017, the waitlist was just under 20 000 hours but now sits well over 30 000 hours. In March this year, over 5 400 people fell outside the boundary, waiting in pain and discomfort. I get emails every day from patients who are seeking support and the urgent attention of the hospital system, which is under incredible pressure. Our healthcare workers do an extraordinary job, but they continue to do more with less under a government that has its priorities wrong. Of the 5 400 people, 400 were category 1 urgent patients. By definition, they could deteriorate rapidly and should be seen urgently. They were waiting longer than necessary. When it comes to the hospital bed shortage in this state, 80 surgeries were cancelled in the last three months of 2023 on the day that the operation was scheduled because of a shortage of hospital beds. Another 63 surgeries were cancelled the day before the operation. The reason given for that was that a bed was unavailable. The government is overseeing a situation in which bed block and a shortage of beds is an ongoing issue. The 143 cancellations on the day the operation was due or the day before it was due is up from 101 that were cancelled due to a bed being unavailable in the same three-month period in 2022. Throughout the year, 240 were cancelled on the day of the procedure, again, because of a lack of capacity in the system. That is the result of a government with the wrong priorities.

One of our other priorities is better supporting our health workers. Our frontline health workers regularly go above and beyond by working long shifts to maintain patient care. Under this government, our frontline health workers are continually being asked to do more with less. We all remember when nurses and midwives gathered outside Parliament House, chanting, “We’re not going to take it anymore!” The government’s response to their request was that the surplus was a one-off thing and would go down, yet some two years later the surplus remains strong. Our dedicated hospital staff are the key to caring for the sick and vulnerable. They do an outstanding job and are undervalued by this government.

We have an inability to attract nurses and health workers to WA. Forecasts report that the state will need an extra 5 000 healthcare workers over the next decade. Since 2016, our full-time nursing and midwifery workforce has increased by about 2 800 workers. We should compare that with Queensland, which has employed an additional 5 900 workers over the same period. As we know, the Minister for Health took a trip to India to fill the gap, targeting

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doctors and nurses. We have no doubt that the minister will try to spin the figures as a record investment. Although we spend more on health for each person than any other state, WA's average cost for each presentation to an emergency department is \$822, well above the national average of \$692 and a 22 per cent increase since 2017–18.

It also raises a question about the highest recurrent expenditure for each person of all states. WA spends an additional \$500 above the national average, but we have poor outcomes. Seven of the eight worst-performing emergency departments in the country are in WA. We saw the poor outcomes earlier this year. In January, a letter from 50 clinicians from St John of God Midland Public Hospital said that the clinicians were desperate and exhausted. They were working in what they described as a ticking time bomb, and they warned that another tragic incident could happen under their watch. They spoke of a hospital that had been at capacity for almost a month, with patients left in corridors and ramped due to a lack of beds. Staff were considering bunking two beds in each ED bay to try to address the significant demand. The state government announced funding to buy an additional 60 private beds in the facility, but they are not expected to come on until 2026 at the earliest. An Australian Medical Association survey last month revealed that one-third of on-call junior doctors in WA are so exhausted and overworked that they feel unsafe returning to work after being on overnight standby. AMA WA president Dr Michael Page said that many junior doctors were close to breaking point, and public hospitals were struggling to staff their facilities because they were losing people to private institutions that have higher morale. A survey of more than 1 100 junior doctors discovered that morale had increased at St John of God hospital and had hit 90 per cent. The lowest morale was at the Child and Adolescent Health Service, mostly at Perth Children's Hospital, where it was 53 per cent. Ramsay Health Care, Australia's largest operator of private hospitals, had the biggest improvement from 63 per cent last year to 76 per cent. Doctors are working shifts upwards of 24 hours without any sleep and are working many weeks in a row without a single day off. This government is letting down our frontline health workers, who are doing their best but can only deal with what they have.

Emergency departments are another area of the opposition's focus. Data the Productivity Commission released in February 2024 showed that WA patients continue to experience some of the longest emergency department wait times. Only 48 per cent of patients are seen in the clinically recommended time, which is the worst for all jurisdictions and well below the national average of 65 per cent. One in three patients who were deemed urgent, or category 3, and half of patients who were deemed semi-urgent, or category 4, were seen in the clinically recommended time frames. This is a poor outcome for patients who need care in a clinically appropriate time. Again, it is a poor reflection of a government that has its priorities wrong.

Another priority of members on this side of the house and of me as the shadow Minister for Health is child development services. The Select Committee into Child Development Services released a report in November last year. It made a clear recommendation about what could be done immediately to reduce unacceptable wait times and expand service provision. In Perth, nearly 10 000 children are waiting to access a paediatrician, as highlighted in figures obtained last month. Of those children, 8 308 are primary school age. For those primary school-age children, the waitlist has jumped by about 2 200 children. The median wait time has ballooned from 17.8 months to 21.3 months in February 2023. Five months after the recommendations—following a petition and numerous calls from the opposition, led by my colleague in the other place Hon Donna Faragher—the Minister for Health has finally committed \$39 million for these under-pressure services. It certainly took a long time and a significant effort to get the additional \$39 million, which was raised last year. It took so long to petition for an inquiry in the first place, but then to wait such a long time on such an important issue illustrates a government that is again not listening to the people of Western Australia.

In a recent article, Perth doctor Andrew Leech urged higher spending on children's health. He underlined how GPs are feeling the pressure of demand. He suggested investing more in children's health and early intervention to maximise long-term benefits on the entire health system. He expressed concern that the current investment and demand trajectories would only lead to further burnout in an already overworked workforce.

Another priority of members on this side of the house is the women's and babies' hospital. A year ago, the government announced that it was moving the proposed women's and babies' hospital from the desired QEII location to Murdoch, 20 kilometres away. Quite clearly, the Premier and the Minister for Health made this decision behind closed doors. They forged ahead with an unnecessary move, despite warnings from over 200 clinicians about the increased clinical risk associated with the decision. As has been stated, international best practice is that a women's and babies' hospital can only be world-class if it is alongside an adult tertiary hospital and an equivalent children's hospital.

We heard numerous stories from not only clinicians who are deeply and gravely concerned about this move, but also patients and families. Angela Courtney's story demonstrates a lack of forward thinking. When Angela had her son Hunter at 25 weeks, he was considered very high risk and required surgery at a nearby hospital. Angela had to wait anxiously until Hunter was stable enough to travel a very short distance for surgery. As she described, this kind of travel can be touch and go. The widely supported QEII location proves that the decision does not reflect the

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reality of patients' experiences, and it certainly does not reflect the overwhelming feedback from clinicians. Whether it is responsible clinicians or staff from the Child and Adolescent Health Service and Perth Children's Hospital, many have spoken out against this decision.

We are also committed to regional health and regional health infrastructure. The minister touched on the Geraldton Health Campus today in question time. In 2017, the community of Geraldton was promised that their local hospital would get an expanded emergency department, a new intensive care unit and a new integrated mental health unit. We have gone forward seven years and all that has been delivered are some car parking bays. We have finally seen a commitment to progress this project, with \$43 million allocated in this year's budget, but in 2017 when it was first promised, the price tag was \$73 million. The delay has resulted in the price tag soaring to \$166 million. As I have stated, there has been little action on the ground apart from those parking bays—very different to what was promised in 2017. The state Auditor General found that the Geraldton Health Campus upgrade had suffered the longest delay of any government project. According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, presentations at the Geraldton Health Campus ED are at a record high, while staffing levels are critically low. For context, attendances at Geraldton Health Campus ED jumped by 28 per cent between 2020–21 and 2023–24. Only 55 per cent of patients presenting to Geraldton Health Campus ED for emergency incidents were being treated within the recommended time. In comparison, the data collated from peer hospitals of a similar scale and operation show that those hospitals were seeing 74 per cent of patients in the recommended time.

We are running out of time, and I appreciate that I have much more to go through. The Tom Price Hospital upgrade is another broken promise. The upgrade to the 57-year-old Tom Price Hospital was promised in 2021. This regional hospital services around 3 000 residents in this community, as well as workers from across the region. It is a minimum 45-minute trip under lights in an ambulance, as long as there are not lengthy waits. There are other issues with crossings to Paraburdoo Hospital, which is also very dilapidated as well. If a patient requires treatment there or the Royal Flying Doctor Service, they must make the journey, and residents often travel to Perth for healthcare services not available locally, which is emotionally and financially very difficult for the community. Locals are rightfully very angry, saying it is a slap in the face, given the region's mining exports are estimated to be worth more than \$35 billion to the WA economy. Samantha Robins goes to Perth, more than 1 400 kilometres south, every six months due to her son's congenital heart disease. In 2021, the government promised \$32.8 million for the hospital, in partnership with a \$20 million contribution from Rio Tinto. The Shire of Ashburton has been left asking where that money has gone, as millions of dollars of funding for Tom Price Hospital has seemingly disappeared from the books. I could go on. In the 2023–24 budget there was an allocation of \$25.5 million, and it was to be spent in 2024–25. The government's *Government mid-year financial projections statement* released in 2023 showed the government would not spend anything in 2024–25. Of the original \$25.5 million allocated in the May budget, \$4.9 million seems to have been designated for 2026–27. Despite the significant \$3.7 billion surplus in 2024–25, the plan is now not to spend anything over the next two years, which is damning. I leave my comments there.

MS A. SANDERSON (Morley — Minister for Health) [4.23 pm]: I rise to speak on the amendment moved by the opposition. The government will not support the amendment. The opposition has made a range of completely unsubstantiated claims in the course of its contributions, and I am more than happy to outline in detail why they are unsubstantiated. This government has undertaken an incredible record investment in our health system. The amendment claimed that the government had the wrong priorities in health care, and I am interested to hear at some point in the near or distant future what the Liberal Party priorities are. So far it just seems to oppose everything that the government does. I take it from the lack of actual health policy coming out of the Liberal Party that Nick Goiran has not written it yet, and that is why the Leader of the Liberal Party has not been able to articulate it.

Under this government, the health budget has grown by 45 per cent, and the Leader of the Liberal Party is criticising us for spending more per capita than any other state, saying that that is somehow wrong and we should not be doing that and we should be spending less per capita. Has she looked at the state? The state of Western Australia is the largest healthcare jurisdiction in the entire world. Of course we spend more. We spend more than Victoria; we are several times larger than Victoria. Of course we spend more than other states. We deliver remote and regional healthcare in Western Australia to some of the remotest areas and communities in the world—communities that have a number of health and social challenges that require intensive supports. This government supports those communities, and we do that by increasing the nursing workforce by 4 400 FTE. That is not the figure of 2 000 that the Leader of the Liberal Party gave, but an increase of 4 400 FTE—in nursing alone. There has been an increase of 1 800 FTE medical staff and around 1 700 allied health workers under this government. That is a massive increase in our healthcare workforce. We have added more than 700 beds over the last three years. The Leader of the Liberal Party keeps saying it is about the beds. We have added 700 beds in the last three years in the metropolitan area. Those beds are the equivalent of another Fiona Stanley Hospital. Ambulance ramping hours are coming down.

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We are one of the only states where ambulance ramping hours are not going up but coming down. I will outline why they are coming down.

It is really bizarre. I see that the Leader of the Liberal Party wants me to table the ambulance ramping strategy. I will not write her policies for her, and I will not do her homework for her.

Ms L. Mettam: I did not ask you to do that.

Ms A. SANDERSON: The Leader of the Liberal Party clearly said in her contribution that she wanted to see the strategy, and she said it again when she stood up. I give an update almost every question time on the ambulance ramping strategy, every week that the Parliament sits. The difference between the Cook government and the Liberal and National Parties is that the Cook government has a plan for WA health. We have a plan for WA Health. We are implementing the plan. We are increasing resources, we are increasing staff, we are increasing beds, and we are reforming the way that the system works and operates. We know the government has a plan and that the opposition has no plan—no plan, no priorities.

Let us go through some of our priorities and our plan. When we came to government, despite being about to open the borders and in the midst of a pandemic, the priority was to bring ambulance ramping down. Every health system in the world has experienced ambulance ramping and no system will go back to pre-pandemic levels. That is a fact. It is an accepted fact that no system will go back to pre-pandemic levels. What matters in the system is how we recover, and the recovery in Western Australia is strong, with a month-by-month decrease on the previous year on those ambulance ramping hours. We have done that hand-in-hand with the clinicians. We developed the plan with the Australian Medical Association and the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine. I met with that organisation, as I meet with it readily, and the WA chair said to me, “I spoke to my faculty before I came and I said I am meeting with the minister, what do you want me to tell her?” The overwhelming response was thank you. I met with the organisation. The overwhelming response was, “Thank you for listening, thank you for resourcing and thank you for supporting us. We can see the difference.” That is from the mouths of its members. Even the AMA has supported the efforts. That is why the opposition has nowhere to go on this.

Ms L. Mettam: Doing more with less.

Ms A. SANDERSON: I do not know how the member can say that a 45 per cent increase in the budget is less. The Leader of the Liberal Party cannot count and cannot read a budget paper.

One of the things that we have implemented that came from emergency department physicians was the concept of the WA Virtual Emergency Department. It was developed by emergency medicine experts and is employed around the world. The platform started off as virtual emergency medicine and is now at Fiona Stanley Hospital. We have scaled that up and resourced it to cover the entire system in the metropolitan area. Under this government it has doubled in size. People experiencing mental health crises are now brought into WAVED for a mental health co-response with a paramedic and a mental health practitioner who will support them. This is an important co-response that will refer directly into the community or inpatient services away from emergency departments. This is an investment on top of many other measures, including helping patients who are medically fit for discharge into more appropriate care settings.

This government has made a record investment in aged care. Over the next 10 years, the state government will spend \$1 billion on aged-care services to discharge elderly patients. No other state is spending that much money. We do that by working with our partners in aged care. We are also funding health practitioners to work overnight and on weekends to enable more timely discharge of patients. We have seen the impact of a seven-day hospital at Sir Charles Gardiner Hospital, which has reduced its ramping hours by more than 50 per cent just by keeping those episodes of care moving. It is not even just about discharging people. It is about keeping that episode of care moving. When someone is in a hospital on a Friday, they do not have to wait until Monday to see the allied health specialist or to get particular imaging because those allied health specialists do not work on weekends. We are providing the opportunity for more hours of work, which is what healthcare workers say they want. Healthcare workers say to us, in all the bargaining rounds, that they want access to those extra hours, so we are providing them.

We are also establishing the state health operations centre to provide better overarching system coordination, which for the first time will track the patient journey from the point of call, when they call 000, to the paramedic dispatch, to the emergency department, into the hospital and then into a hospital bed or out of hospital or transferred to another hospital. Again, that was developed alongside clinicians. The Liberal Party likes to criticise these initiatives, but they are developed by clinicians.

We are slashing the elective surgery waitlist. We had to suspend elective surgeries to enable hospitals to respond to COVID presentations. Every single jurisdiction had to do that. In Western Australia, we stopped for only six weeks. We had the shortest stoppage of elective surgery to allow our health system to recalibrate and focus on the

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emergencies coming through. We knew our community needed support for COVID, and that we needed to support our health workers to ensure that they could focus on that. We did it in a very short and sharp way. That means that our elective surgery waitlist has not grown as much as other states by any stretch at all. In fact, the increased beds, staffing and theatre capacity and the flexible use of theatres on weekends, doing multiple morning and evening lists and different ways of anaesthetising patients allows us to do record amounts of elective surgery in Western Australia. We do more elective surgery now than the opposition ever did.

Let us talk about women and newborns. Let us talk about the risk to women in Western Australian who need maternity care if the Liberal Party and National Party being elected. Labor's plan will provide new midwifery group practices across regions; a new midwifery-led birthing centre at Bentley, which was closed under the Liberal Party; a new family birth centre at Osborne Park Hospital; and a brand new women's and newborns' tertiary hospital. It will not be just a maternity hospital; it will also be for women with gynaecological oncology needs, of which there are many thousands in Western Australia. They need access to theatre time and specialists. Currently, those gynaecology oncology specialists have to call and negotiate their theatre time with their tertiary hospital colleagues. The Leader of the Liberal Party wants that to continue for another 20 years. She thinks that is fine and that they can wait while we concentrate all the services in one area, take longer to build the hospital and cause enormous disruption. Our plan will impact the next generation of maternity care in Western Australia. The Leader of the Liberal Party wants to tear it up. Let us go through some of the claims that she has made about the women's and newborns' hospital. Some of them are frankly outrageous. She has actually said on the record, "babies could die as a result of this decision". This is a baseless claim with no evidence.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

Ms A. SANDERSON: Table the evidence. Table the evidence that babies will die as a result of this decision.

Ms L. Mettam: This is what they've said.

Ms A. SANDERSON: No one has presented me with that evidence. In fact, we had the evidence examined, and it has not corroborated that opinion. It is an opinion; it is not based on evidence. We know what she thinks of clinicians who work at Fiona Stanley Hospital because there are neonatologists who work around the state—they do not just work at Perth Children's Hospital or King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women. They work around the state. I facilitated a visit to Fiona Stanley Hospital, thinking that the Leader of the Liberal Party might ask an intelligent question every now and then. She did not ask the clinicians once about the move to the Fiona Stanley Hospital site.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

Ms A. SANDERSON: Acting Speaker, the tedious repetition—

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, minister. Member for Vasse, the minister listened to your contribution in silence.

Ms A. SANDERSON: The Leader of the Liberal Party is easily rattled this week! She is feeling very sensitive.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members, please. I cannot hear the minister.

Ms A. SANDERSON: I am feeling a lot of sensitivity coming out of the Leader of the Liberal Party, and I do not blame her. She should be worried because she has made some serious blunders. She has made outrageous claims about the move of the maternity hospital, which is actually supported by a huge number of clinicians. She should go to Fiona Stanley Hospital and talk to them. She should talk to neonates at St John of God, Joondalup Health Campus and St John of God Midland Public Hospital. We know the Leader of the Liberal Party does not talk to a wide range of stakeholders. This is the best decision for Western Australian women. The Leader of the Liberal Party continues to undermine clinicians in Western Australia who do incredible work. She will tear up those plans for expanded maternity services at Osborne Park Hospital. We will double maternity services, which would be scrapped under the Leader of the Liberal Party. We will give better access to regional women, which would be scrapped under the Leader of the Liberal Party.

What is the position of the Nationals WA? We have yet to hear what its position is. The Leader of the Liberal Party will scrap the extra parking at Fiona Stanley Hospital and all those moves and concentrate those services in a highly and densely packed and overdeveloped hospital site, creating enormous disruption to people trying to access Perth Children's Hospital and Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital. We know that she will do that. She is an enormous risk to the health system of Western Australia. We know that the Liberal Party lacked any serious plans for the

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system when it was in government. The only thing it wanted to do with the health system was privatise it. That was its only plan. That is absolutely what it did. It privatised Fiona Stanley Hospital with a \$4 billion contract and zero business case. There was no business case at all. That hospital was privatised, but we brought it back in-house. The former Liberal–National government privatised Midland hospital and built it too small. It was given advice in 2013 that the hospital would be too small, but it still built it that size. We now see the result. It also privatised it. It is this government that is bringing services back in house, with Peel Health Campus and Fiona Stanley Hospital.

This government has seen a huge uplift in child development services and an acute crisis response team for mental health to support children with both developmental and mental health challenges, many of which coexist. They do not live their lives in clinical lanes or in a clinical silo; they have a multitude of coexisting developmental challenges and mental health issues. That is why we are also implementing the Perth Children’s Hospital hub and the infant, child and adolescent mental health service hubs. The fantastic ICAMHS hub in Bunbury received a \$25 million investment from this government. I urge the member for Vasse to visit that ICAMHS hub to see the incredible work being done, the incredible investment and the difference it is making to that community. We know that the hub is making a huge difference in that community, and we will continue that investment.

I do not have enough time to outline all the investment that we are making, other than to say that we are making a record investment in regional infrastructure. We have doubled access to cancer services for regional Western Australians, and we continue to increase the number of our staff. We continue to innovate and do things differently. We listen to clinicians. We know that the Leader of the Liberal Party likes to quote the Australian Medical Association when it suits her. I will quote the AMA(WA)’s response to the state budget, noting that the Leader of the Liberal Party did not do much quoting of that. The formal response to the state budget states —

Health and Mental Health account for 30% of the State’s recurrent spending, by far the highest expenditure of all sectors.

...

The Government believes it is tracking well in starting to turn around chronic ambulance ramping and reducing elective surgery wait times.

...

Investing in digital capabilities for the future with a \$200 million package was welcomed by Dr Page.

“As the Government has acknowledged, the digitisation of the health system is recognised as a critical enabler of a safe, high-quality and sustainable system that meets modern standards.

The investment of \$7.9 million to support stage 1 of the mental health co-response was also welcomed. Dr Page also stated —

“The Government’s ongoing progress to establish a statewide Electronic Medical Record, including \$104.1 million to prepare and undertake procurement planning and design initiatives, brings us a step closer to realising this vision.”

We know that the Leader of the Liberal Party does not like to listen to the AMA when it comes to the kind of divisive, hurtful and nasty commentary that we have heard from her. We have seen two health policies from the opposition. The first is to scrap the expansion of Osborne Park Hospital, scrap the maternity hospital in the southern corridor, scrap family birthing centres and scrap an expansion of family birthing centres—to scrap the spectrum of hospitals. The other health policy that she has released is to ban puberty blockers for children. That was not even part of the Cass review recommendation. She went way beyond that recommendation because she is appealing to the right-wing extremists of her party.

Several members interjected.

Ms A. SANDERSON: She was roundly condemned by the AMA for that.

Ms L. Mettam: No, not roundly—absolutely not.

Ms A. SANDERSON: Yes, absolutely. Dr Page came out and said that these are clinical decisions.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

Ms A. SANDERSON: These are clinical decisions made by highly trained clinicians in a family setting.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

Ms A. SANDERSON: There is no recommendation to block them. A small number—60 children—across the state are undergoing that treatment.

Extract from *Hansard*
[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 14 May 2024]
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Ms L. Mettam interjected.

Ms A. SANDERSON: That policy is hurtful and divisive.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

Ms A. SANDERSON: Madam Acting Speaker!

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members, please; we are coming to the end.

Ms A. SANDERSON: I listened in silence and courtesy. All I have had is just rabid and repetitive interjections from a very rattled Leader of the Liberal Party. My question to her is: what other clinical services will the Liberal Party ban under Nick Goiran's leadership?

Division

Amendment put and a division taken, the Acting Speaker (Mrs M.R. Marshall) casting her vote with the noes, with the following result —

Ayes (6)

Ms M. Beard	Mr R.S. Love	Mr P.J. Rundle
Dr D.J. Honey	Ms L. Mettam	Ms M.J. Davies (<i>Teller</i>)

Noes (42)

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

Amendment thus negatived.

Second Reading — Cognate Debate

MR M.J. FOLKARD (Burns Beach) [4.48 pm]: I rise in support of the Appropriation (Recurrent 2024–25) Bill 2024 and Appropriation (Capital 2024–25) Bill 2024, and the 2024–25 WA state budget. My response will be based on how this budget will impact my electorate of Burns Beach through the impact of energy concessions, financial support for seniors and cost-of-living rebates for my constituents. Through a detailed examination of these measures, it will become evident that they will play a crucial role in enhancing the quality of life of residents in my electorate. I will examine the benefits and future considerations of these initiatives, highlighting their significance in promoting social welfare, economic stability and overall wellbeing.

Burns Beach is a vibrant and diverse community with unique needs and challenges. As part of this state budget, various measures have been implemented to support the residents of Burns Beach, including energy concessions, financial assistance for seniors and cost-of-living rebates. These initiatives aim to alleviate financial burdens, improve living standards and enable equitable access to essential services. According to Australian Bureau of Statistics data, Burns Beach has 45 594 residents, 31 231 electors and 17 230 residences. Note that the source of these numbers is reliable. They are not anecdotal make-believe numbers like members opposite are prone to use.

Since coming to government, we have maintained several years of surplus. It is a fact that with all those surpluses, we have been able to reduce our debt and we have managed government income sensibly. We have paid down our state debt, while looking after the vulnerable within our community responsibly. The Cook government is a responsible regime. We have achieved six operating surpluses and created over 300 000 new jobs since Labor has come to office, and I believe 100 000 of those have been since the start of the Cook government. We have reduced debt by over \$15 billion since taking office. This is not me talking like someone who has drunk the Kool Aid. Standard and Poor's and Moody's gave back our AAA credit rating, which was lost when those opposite were in charge. I wonder why that was! Restoring the state's AAA status has saved this government hundreds of millions of dollars in interest, which we have been able to invest back to the mums and dads, grandparents, kids, the sick, the infirm and the homeless. This claim that the National–Liberal coalition was better at financial management than

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the Labor Party is just make-believe and wrong. We get criticised about our management all the time, but the evidence is that we care for small business. A thriving economy means small business can excel. Guess what? It is happening.

In the past, I would have commented on how the opposition incompetently spent its budget. I would have referred to the Langoulant inquiry for evidence of its incompetent spending. Do members know what? It is not worth wasting the oxygen. What is the point, as our opposition has no policies to articulate? The opposition is just a disappointment; it thrives on division and members opposite are so entitled they think that their views are the only ones that matter. The coalition alliance cum backstabbing combination cum whatever you want to label it is a policy-free zone. We know this. It hates the LGBTQIA+ community. It has openly stated that it wants to intervene between doctors and patients and interfere with individual medical treatment plans. Just look at the Liberal Party's policy on puberty blocking drugs—seriously! We know that its members hate people in the community who are different from them and are different from white, gender-phobic men. Just look at their preselection processes as evidence to this statement. They just want to rule over us. They will hate me. I am openly disabled. I have my post-traumatic stress disorder. I have my service dog, Chey. I am different, and do members know what? I am disabled and proud. I have fought for the rights of the queer community, the weak, the infirm, the youth, the sick, the mad and victims of domestic violence. I have not seen those quitters opposite standing by at three o'clock in the morning protecting my community or my constituents. Where are they now? We see no policy, absolutely nothing. But I have not forgotten and I will continue to fight for those who cannot defend themselves from those opposite. Do not get me started about the women's hospital move. Did members think that a couple of rich, misguided, self-interested doctors would change my mind? Walk on. Do not get me started on those opposite who want to have nuclear-powered energy. I wonder how they would feel if we were to build a nuclear power plant in the seat of Vasse or maybe Cottesloe—that would be a laugh!—or Roe or Moore. Do I continue?

Energy concessions are critical components of the state's efforts to support vulnerable households and reduce energy costs. In Burns Beach, these concessions have a significant impact on the residents, particularly those on fixed incomes or who are facing financial hardship. By providing discounts on electricity and gas bills, energy concessions can help alleviate that financial strain and ensure that residents can afford essential utilities. This not only improves household budgets, but also contributes to a better quality of life by ensuring access to heating, cooling and lighting. In this budget, the energy concession scheme is \$400 per household, which will be split over two periods, just after July and the second one around Christmas. This will save my constituents \$6 892 000. Since the Labor government has introduced this energy concession scheme, my constituents have saved over \$31 million. What has this meant for mums and dads? I can tell members. A young mother by the name of Jane told me that it saved her Christmas when she received the last payment. She was able to afford a couple of small presents for the kids and a ham on Christmas Day. Why was she in this position? It was because of interest rates and her partner was in between jobs. The small, targeted rebates matter and work.

Seniors form a significant proportion of the population of Burns Beach. They make up over 11 per cent in my electorate, like Ken and Selfie, who I meet in my office regularly to chat about some of the issues that our seniors face. Many may face financial challenges in retirement. The financial support provided to seniors throughout the state budget addresses these concerns by offering pension concession increases, rebates and other forms of assistance. This support will allow seniors to maintain their independence, cover essential expenses and enjoy a dignified standard of living in their golden years. Additionally, it acknowledges the contributions that senior citizens made to our community and will ensure that they are cared for and respected in their later stages of life. For Ken and Selfie, this budget means \$400 for the household electrical credit, \$334 for the energy assistance payment, \$107 for the senior cost-of-living rebate, a \$750 concession for local government rates, up to a \$600 concession for water service charges and around \$180 in savings for vehicle licences. In my electorate that means over \$12.6 million in savings for our seniors alone.

Before I go on, I need to recognise the Minister for Seniors and Ageing, Hon Don Punch. The work his people have done on the WA's Seniors Card discount directory has been outstanding.

For those who are not aware, over \$3 000 worth of savings alone are set out on page 16. This book and its information and discounts saved the dignity and self-respect of many seniors in my electorate. Great job, minister. Every bit helps.

The cost of living in Western Australia, including in Burns Beach, can be high, placing strain on households, particularly those with limited incomes. Cost-of-living rebates provided through the state budget help offset these expenses, including housing, transportation and health care. By providing financial relief, these rebates enable residents to stretch their budgets further, reduce financial stress and maintain a decent standard of living. Moreover, they contribute to local economic activity by increasing disposable income and supporting small local businesses. These concessions probably mean nothing to those who are wealthy—chances are they will just bank them with their savings. But for those who are poor or battling, the money is invested into a plethora of small business,

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such as those run by Tracey Murray, the award-winning “Glasses Lady”, or Roger, who owns my local pharmacy at Ocean Keys. These small businesses are excelling in the current environment.

Local money can be spent in local business owned by mums and dads who live locally. Increased disposable income from rebates and concessions stimulates local economic activity, supports businesses and creates jobs. The implementation of energy concessions, financial support for seniors and cost-of-living rebates bring numerous benefits to the residents of the electorate of Burns Beach. These measures reduce the financial burden on households, freeing up funds for essential needs such as food and health care. Residents can afford basic necessities such as heating, cooling and health care, leading to a better quality of life and improved wellbeing.

By ensuring that vulnerable groups such as seniors can afford essential services, these initiatives promote social inclusion and reduce inequality within the community. Access to affordable energy and financial assistance for seniors contributes to improved health outcomes and reduces the risk of social isolation and unsafe living conditions. That statement might sound a bit flippant but as a copper, I have investigated sudden deaths in the coldest winters. I once found a senior who was alone and who had died. Upon investigation, there was minimal food in the fridge and the cupboards. There appeared to be no heating in that residence, as evidenced by the senior wearing numerous jumpers and lying under multiple blankets in the middle of winter—a needless, lonely death for someone who should have been able to put food on the table and warm their home and themselves. A Labor government that can run a financially responsible budget and that cares for the community can reduce this. We cannot stop it because no-one can cure loneliness but we can work to improve it.

I stated previously that I believe in service. As I have stated in the past, my usual summer is spent on the beach as a surf lifesaver. I spent the last hot summer working as a volunteer firefighter. I have spoken to several firefighters, both volunteer and career firefighters, who have spoken highly of the extra 60 career firefighters and the \$9 million support for volunteer emergency services announced in this budget. I saw with interest the provision of \$8 million to improve facilities at our existing fire stations. I have been led to believe that on top of this, an extra \$5 million—a significant addition to this expenditure—will go towards improving facilities for our women firefighters. Who would believe that in this day and age our heroic women firefighters still have to share facilities with their male colleagues? Seriously! This is not the only spend. A further \$30 million has been allocated for additional bushfire mitigation and frontline resources at priority locations throughout the state. I have been led to believe that that may include half a dozen additional fire appliances. More bells and whistles on the fireground is absolutely a good thing.

A further \$12.6 million will go to continuing helicopter patrols, which are vital for surf lifesavers. This money will keep our community safe over the next four years, protecting beachgoers along with \$17.3 million to boost shark hazard mitigation, which is a good thing. I am sure that Scott Anderson, who was recently awarded the prestigious Quinns Mindarie Surf Life Saving Club Person of the Year award, will absolutely endorse this expenditure. I know that Scott will absolutely endorse the 1 600 beach emergency number signs and the new moneys for maintenance and growth of these vital communication signs on our beaches.

In the last government, prior to the COVID pandemic, one of our biggest issues was youth unemployment.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr M.J. FOLKARD: The Australian Bureau of Statistics census indicated that unemployment in the locality of Clarkson was over 20 per cent and in the locality of Kinross, it was 19 per cent. Unemployment is always on my mind. If someone does not have a job, the pain of mortgage or rent increases must drive them out of their mind. I have a family member living in a shed trying to save enough to buy their first home. All I can say is that this government does listen and care and it is doing all it can to help. The increases to the first home owner grant is evidence of this. Hopefully, that will help my family member.

Under this budget, a student studying at TAFE will get a \$400 household electricity credit. Okay, that is great but it also means that the \$21 000 for their diploma fees will no longer be charged. That is outstanding. Does this include the \$5 000 in rent assistance from the WA rent relief program, fee-free transport on Sundays or the flu immunisation, which is currently free? It all adds up. The small concessions and rebates all help.

I have spoken about youth unemployment and senior support. I have also discussed electricity credits and what sort of impact that will have on mums, dads and families. These rebates and assistance will also help another section of our community. All members know that I am a former police officer. The number of domestic violence cases that I have dealt with over a number of years is significant, and the circumstances were horrendous. One of the key triggers of domestic violence is financial stress. The nearly \$50 million worth of concessions and rebates that will be pushed into the finances of vulnerable families in my electorate may not stop domestic violence, but it might stop those families from tipping over the edge. If we add that to the \$96 million for the family and domestic violence prevention and reform initiatives and the nearly \$500 million allocated since 2021, which includes

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\$54 million to expand interagency family and domestic violence response teams with a focus on early intervention, I hope we see some improvement in that environment.

I have not spoken about our health budget. Money has been allocated for 4 000 new FTE nurses and 1 800 new FTE doctors. Those numbers probably do not mean much to a mum and dad who has a sick child in need of urgent care. I can speak about the success of the urgent care clinic in Clarkson. Between 300 and 500 patients present at that clinic each week, and the numbers are growing. After six years of continuously lobbying, we finally got one. I recently sent a person there from the beach to get stitches on their foot after being cut by glass. The direct feedback from this person is that they walked straight in, huddled onto a bench, received 10 stitches to their foot and was gone within 45 minutes of presentation.

That is a great outcome. Guess what? That was all free because it was covered by Medicare. Since 2021–22, we have seen a \$14.3 billion spend in the health and mental health space. That probably does not mean a lot to some because the numbers are so large, but it means that we have reduced ambulance ramping across the state by 27 per cent. Here is the real kicker and the one I love: it has reduced ambulance ramping in the northern suburbs by 35 per cent. I know that our friends in the Australian Medical Association do not like urgent care clinics, but the numbers I have mentioned have had an impact on the wait times at Joondalup Health Campus. I say to the AMA: the numbers do not lie—jog on.

Members have heard my comments about protecting the vulnerable in our community. If they think I was passionate in my earlier remarks, that is nothing compared to my absolute belief in the early child environment. From birth to five years of age, I believe, is the most critical time for any young child. I am so impressed with the minister's \$39 million for the expansion of child development services within the health community. That means 114 health professionals, including paediatricians, clinical nurse specialists, speech pathologists, occupational therapists, psychiatrists and audiologists. We know that every dollar that we spend in that zero to five space has an \$18 return on investment. Let us do the numbers. From this single item, in time, we will get a return of nearly three-quarters of a billion dollars. The actual number is \$702 million. That is a multiplier of 18. It is not me making up that figure; this information comes from the Telethon Kids Institute, the Minderoo Foundation and, more importantly, proper peer-reviewed literature. The real numbers matter.

Energy concessions, financial support for seniors and cost-of-living rebates provided in this state budget will play a vital role in improving the quality of life for the residents of Burns Beach in WA. By alleviating these financial burdens, promoting social inclusion and stimulating economic activity, these initiatives will contribute to the overall wellbeing and prosperity of my community. Moving forward, it is essential to address these challenges and consider further the issues outlined in my speech. With that, I commend the bills to the house.

MR T.J. HEALY (Southern River — Parliamentary Secretary) [5.12 pm]: I rise to make a contribution on the Appropriation (Recurrent 2024–25) Bill 2024 and the Appropriation (Capital 2024–25) Bill 2024. In the first part of my contribution, I will discuss for my constituents of the Southern River electorate—the glorious people of Canning Vale, Southern River, Huntingdale and Gosnells—the differences between the choice of a strong team led by Roger Cook, which is a government I am very proud to be a part of, and the Liberals. The stark contrast is very, very clear.

I will first of all speak about the importance of the \$400 energy credit that will be delivered. The first chunk will be delivered from the July billing cycle this year and the other half will be delivered later in the year. As I speak, I believe that the federal Treasurer is getting ready to deliver Western Australia even more support. I commend Treasurer Rita Saffioti for the budget. In real terms, because of the ridiculous price increases in fuel, milk and groceries, the energy credit means that families in my electorate will have genuine cost-of-living relief. I believe that the Liberal Party and Nationals WA coalition does not support that initiative.

The majority of my community is eligible for the WA student assistance payment. Like me, they have at least one child enrolled in kindy to year 12. They will receive \$150 per primary school student and \$250 per high school student. That means hundreds of dollars in funds being directly deposited into bank accounts, in addition to the energy credit. I commend the government for that.

The Fiona Stanley car park build is included within this budget. The Liberal Party seeks to cancel the two new multistorey car parks that will be built at Fiona Stanley Hospital. Members will be aware that as part of the women's and babies' hospital build. There is funding now for the planning and the relocation over some time from King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women to Fiona Stanley Hospital, which is fantastic for all our communities, but particularly mine. The addition of two new multistorey car parks there is absolutely key. Labor will build the car parks. Although the Liberal Party and Nationals are not being very clear to the electorates south of the river—they are not telling Jandakot, Bateman and the other communities the truth—they plan, if they form government in a few months' time, to cancel those contracts. Labor will build health infrastructure; the Liberals will cut it.

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I also commend the seniors cost-of-living rebate. A deadline is coming up at the end of May for the annual payment. Last year, it was \$104 for a single Seniors Card in a household and \$156 for two Seniors Cards in a household. That cost-of-living relief is absolutely key.

Last week, I presented a petition. The very good Gosnells council built the fantastic dog park in Bracadale Park in Canning Vale. It is a wonderful facility. Unfortunately, at present, there is not enough car parking. The council built a beautiful dog park that is very popular, but it does not have adequate parking. There is about 30 or 40 metres of space. Although I was a high school English teacher, not an engineer, I believe that the mulched verge space could be concreted and paved over relatively simply to create numerous car bays that would resolve the dilemma of residents being fined for parking on the road or on the existing verge space. That would resolve a number of issues in my community. I tabled a petition last week. The first tranche of that petition includes about 80 online petitions and about 40 hard-copy petitions. Members will be aware that this is the first historic “pawtition” whereby the dogs—the fur babies of the adults—also signed that petition. Although the dogs’ paws were not officially counted, 20 dogs were very happy to add their paw prints to that petition. The council is building a beautiful facility. It put a couple hundred thousand dollars toward the larger Bracadale facility. The inclusion of some lighting and some parking along Shreeve Road is a doable infrastructure project and is a reasonable ask of the community. I will continue to work with the council and with its wonderful CEO and directors to make sure that that facility is added to the capital infrastructure works of the City of Gosnells. I will keep working with the local community, and I thank everyone for signing our petition.

I am very happy to report that we will enter the final stages of construction very soon for the youth plaza at Sutherlands Park. The 100-metre-long shed, the first of its kind in Western Australia, to which I was very proud to contribute \$2 million from the Western Australian government, includes a skate park, a pump track, a playground, a multipurpose court and the first teen youth facility at Sutherlands Park and in my community. The playground and car park are complete, and the fences are now up for the final build. All is going well to complete that.

I would like to mention that a number of people have raised with me the importance of an outdoor water park at the youth plaza, and that is a very key part of the local infrastructure. Numerous residents have raised with me its importance and how much they like the Ellenbrook facility, the Whiteman Park outdoor water park and, particularly, the Maylands water park. The youth facility with its shed roof, skate park and pump track will be completed soon, as promised. I am very proud to have contributed funds to this project, along with the City of Gosnells. I would like to hear whether my community would support the future pool in Sutherlands Park—perhaps we might call it stage 1. Would they support an outdoor water park being built next to the youth plaza and being available for all the families and children of our community? If they would like to be a part of that consultation, I ask them to let the council and me know. We will do our best to make sure that we continue to push forward with that as an important infrastructure project.

I would like to briefly mention a couple of significant events. I would like to commend and acknowledge the service of Cherie Toovey. The Speaker mentioned her in Parliament last week on her retirement. Cherie was one of the tour guides who has looked after hundreds if not thousands of tours, and hundreds and thousands of young people as they traversed these halls. I say thank you to Cherie for being so kind to me as a member. We had a bit of a dual act for the last seven years. I always say hello to every school group that visits here, and Cherie told the beautiful story of a teacher from Gosnells who was not happy with his community or his school and entered this Parliament to try to make things better. It has always been a great dual act, and I am not sure what I will do now without her introductions when we have those tour groups. On behalf of the Parliament, I would like to say how much we appreciate Cherie and all our educational tour guides. Thank you, Cherie, for your 24 years of service.

I would like to acknowledge 20 years of Urban Quarter and, therefore, the Bletchley Park estate in Southern River. When I was growing up, Southern River was just farms. Bletchley Park estate was developed when I was in high school and now forms a large portion of Southern River. It is one of the estates that is managed very well by Urban Quarter. I would like to acknowledge Jason Wallis and his team at Urban Quarter who have built an incredible community in Southern River. It is an estate that, I think, is more than just a developer building blocks of land, parks and facilities. At Bletchley Park estate, Urban Quarter has really built some amazingly connected homes and communities through community events. The team has worked very closely with me while I have been the councillor for the area and a member of Parliament. It has invested significantly in our community, and I would especially like to shout out to Stuart Reside and the team: Fiona, Jamie, Nicole, Fraser, Geoff, Sofia, Zoe, Tom, Renae and Sarah. On behalf of all of Southern River and the Bletchley Park estate residents who are very happy in their homes, I say congratulations on 20 years. We look forward to many more years of building beautiful and wonderful communities together.

I would like to acknowledge two members of my community who have recently stepped down as volunteers and coordinators at POOPS. POOPS, of course, is Pets of Older Persons, a great local organisation that is all around Perth and Western Australia, in the regions and metropolitan areas, and assists older people to walk their dogs and

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care for their pets. It makes sure that even though people are unable to be active anymore, they can still ensure that their animals get to have the active lifestyles they seek. I would especially like to give a shout-out to Jim and Beth Wright who recently stepped down from their roles. I join POOPS in congratulating and thanking them for their many years as volunteers. They walked dogs for POOPS for over 10 years. Recently, they made the hard decision to call it a day. I also acknowledge Beth for her role as one of the coordinators for over eight years. Their recent retirement was due to a sad reason. The very first dog they walked and have been walking for 10 years passed away recently. Buddy was a surrogate family member to them, and they experienced a deep bond and a common joy. Buddy was a beautiful dog that had a wonderful and genuine connection with Beth and Jim. The reason I particularly would like to point them out is that Buddy was the pet of my mother, Rosie. Jim and Beth formed a wonderful friendship with Buddy and my mother, and they made sure that my mum could have her wonderful friend with her. Very recently Buddy passed away, which was a very great shock to our family and to Jim and Beth. On behalf of Buddy Healy and many grateful people around the Gosnells, Thornlie, Southern River and Huntingdale community, I say thank you to Jim and Beth for all their work looking after many animals.

I would like to mention a Southern River constituent, Haroon Parwani. Haroon is a wonderful local member of my Southern River community and is now the president of Multicultural Labor Organisation. Haroon and his family are regular volunteers in numerous community organisations, multicultural associations and religious groups. Haroon is a wonderful advocate for my community. I was very proud that he recently took up a leadership role within one of our Labor organisations, but Haroon has been a community leader in his own right for many years. I would like to mention in Parliament how much I appreciate his support. We greatly appreciate all that he does for our community.

As I draw my contribution to a close, I would like to again emphasise how very proud I am to be one of the local members of Parliament in the chamber. I would like to acknowledge the Treasurer, Rita Saffioti. I am very proud to be part of her team, with Roger Cook, that is delivering cost-of-living relief, easing housing pressure and ensuring that there are health services and facilities for everyone in my community. I appreciate the opportunity to make a contribution.

MS A.E. KENT (Kalgoorlie) [5.28 pm]: I rise today to discuss the Appropriation (Recurrent 2024–25) Bill 2024 and Appropriation (Capital 2024–25) Bill 2024, and the outstanding 2024–25 state budget. As my colleagues have already mentioned, the budget is commendable for many reasons. Western Australia’s responsible financial management provides the opportunity to make significant investments in what matters to all Western Australians, while keeping the budget in a strong position for future generations.

The Cook Labor government is doing what is right for the goldfields region, with the 2024–25 state budget delivering significant cost-of-living relief. The budget is focused on WA’s regions, with a record \$12.8 billion investment in regional infrastructure and billions more to fund regional service delivery. This budget delivers measures that will drive regional economic growth, diversify regional economies and create jobs for our kids in the regions. In addition, \$4 billion in royalties for regions funding will go towards projects that enrich regional communities, ensuring they remain great places to live, work and raise a family. I want to highlight a number of measures that are important for the goldfields region. We know country pensioners face extra costs for travel in regional WA. That is why the Cook Labor government is increasing the Regional Pensioner Travel Card amount to \$675, putting an additional \$100 back in their pockets every year from 1 July 2024. The Regional Pensioner Travel Card is an important tool to bridge that gap, and we hope the additional funding for the program will go a long way to easing the burden on pensioners across regional WA. Tackling the cost of living is our number one priority and we are proud we are providing this extra assistance to support pensioners in the goldfields. Everywhere I go, people thank me for the extra money towards this card.

The budget includes a \$20.8 million investment to expand Anzac Drive industrial estate in Kalgoorlie–Boulder. The funds will be used to develop 22 new industrial lots, enable utilities and build a new highway intersection. This expansion aims to support growth in the resources sector, especially gold, rare earths and lithium processing. Over the next decade, Anzac Drive West will deliver 61 general industrial lots, attracting more than \$200 million in private sector investment and creating more than 700 construction jobs. Once completed, the estate is expected to support more than 850 permanent jobs and inject more than \$300 million into the Kalgoorlie–Boulder economy annually. This is a massive boost for local industry. I have been advocating for this for some time. We know how important the economic impact of Kalgoorlie and the goldfields is, and this is a significant investment.

As I mentioned when I asked my question of the Premier today in question time, there is another major announcement in the massive \$500 million to unlock strategic industrial areas across the state. This includes the Mungari strategic industrial area in the goldfields. This will drive investment in job-creating clean energy industries in the regions.

An amount of \$16.8 million has also been provided to increase housing supply and support significant regional development projects to help build strong and vibrant communities in Kalgoorlie–Boulder. This new investment

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to supply more development-ready land for housing in Kalgoorlie will unlock 32 residential lots in stage 5 of GreenView at Karlkurla.

Future upgrades will also go to the goldfields and agricultural water supply scheme, and that is being prioritised, with the Cook government investing \$15 million to help support long-term economic development in the goldfields. The goldfields pipeline has supported regional development and prosperity in the goldfields since opening in 1903. It is important to industry, residents and the community in general. This \$15 million investment will help deliver significant upgrades, ensuring that the water pipeline will continue to provide vital and reliable water supply to the region to meet future demand, including for the goldfields strategic industrial areas. The goldfields pipeline has a rich history. These upgrades will ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the community and industry for years to come and that Kalgoorlie–Boulder continues to be one of the industrial heartlands of the state.

How much do people in the regions love capped airfares? This much: almost 40 000 fares in the goldfields! A huge \$64.5 million in additional investment has been included in this budget to continue the popular regional airfare zone cap scheme. This caps airfares at \$199 one way for regional residents and includes travel to Perth from Kalgoorlie, Leonora and Laverton. This incredible Cook Labor government initiative is the first of its kind in Australia and has been a major success. Tackling the cost of living is the Cook Labor government's number one priority, and our commitment to continuing these cheaper flights will provide significant relief and peace of mind for regional residents.

Another big cost-of-living initiative that has been well received in the goldfields is the \$147.3 million to provide free regional school bus services. I hear every day from parents how grateful they are to have this project.

A total of \$29.3 million has been allocated for upgrades to regional and remote airstrips, and this includes a long-awaited \$3.3 million commitment toward much-needed upgrades to the Eucla airstrip. It is a major investment milestone for the region. This area is renowned for its location as the eastern-most site in Western Australia. Eucla's airstrip is 1 400 kilometres from Perth, but it provides vital air access for services into and out of the remote region, including WA police, Royal Flying Doctor Service and health services.

For years, I have been advocating for those who experience family and domestic violence, especially the families in Leonora. A long-term solution and support for those who experience family and domestic violence is desperately needed. I have heard firsthand horrific stories from local women who have been so terrified that they had to run into the bush to escape because there was no safe space in Leonora, including from a wonderful advocate, Colleen Berry from the Nyunnga-Ku Women's Group, who has been a loud and consistent voice to get more help for women in Leonora. The budget announcement of \$1.7 million to deliver emergency accommodation for victim-survivors in Leonora will provide much-needed safe accommodation for our women in the community. This project delivers one of the key areas identified in the *#SaferLeonora plan 2022–2027*—that is, strategies to facilitate opportunities for crisis care accommodation for women and children. Naomi Santos, chair of the #SaferLeonora working group said, according to my notes —

I would like to express my gratitude to the Cook Government for the funding. Also to the strong advocacy received from Leonora local government and Shire employees. Leonora community members have long been concerned about the lack of a safe and supportive family and domestic violence facility.

I am glad that the Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence is in the chamber today. She stood alongside me in Leonora, heard those stories and has worked with me to advocate for it. I thank her so much; it meant so much.

I also want to touch on a couple of other important initiatives for the Kalgoorlie electorate. We have \$11.6 million that has been provided to expand the driving access and equity program to help disadvantaged people in remote and regional locations access a driver's licence, which is very important in the goldfields with all the mines requiring it. I have heard a lot of stories about some lovely people who are grateful that we have that program. It means they can get their licence and do not have to rely on friends and families or get taxis to work.

The \$12.6 million new heavy plant and engineering trades workshop at Central Regional TAFE's Kalgoorlie campus was recently opened by the Minister for Training and Workforce Development. This will help my electorate take advantage of the \$8 million to extend the highly successful fee-free TAFE program through the 2025 training year. We also have \$1 million for a science, technology, engineering and mathematics classroom upgrade at Kalgoorlie–Boulder Community High School, which is currently underway.

Also underway are \$250 million upgrades to Great Eastern Highway between Coates Gully and Coolgardie, with widening and sealing of 11 kilometres of highway between Southern Cross and Ghooli, plus \$20 million to upgrade 130 kilometres of roads in the goldfields region through the regional road safety program.

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Then there is \$23.4 million to extend Operation Regional Shield, which allows the WA Police Force to rapidly deploy officers to the regional areas where they are needed most, and we were most grateful to get those officers in Kalgoorlie with the support of the Minister for Police. An amount of \$46.3 million has been provided to continue the successful Home Stretch WA program, which provides support for young people leaving out-of-home care, with the Goldfields Indigenous Housing Organisation to deliver the program in the goldfields region to 20 young people. Again, that is another initiative from the Minister for Communities.

There is also \$3.1 million being provided to deliver the Aboriginal community connectors program to provide place-based support to street-present community members, including in Kalgoorlie and Laverton. There is also \$10 million to provide safety at warden-controlled school crossings across the state, including electronic speed limit signs at Boulder and North Kalgoorlie Primary Schools.

The Cook Labor government is truly the party for regional Western Australia. We have more representation now than we have ever had before in any Parliament. It was not luck that we managed to gain a surplus; it was because we created our own amazingly good financial management. The government's financial management is the envy of the nation. That is because we have the best Treasurer in the nation.

This budget clearly demonstrates the Cook Labor government's continued support to keep regional Western Australia and the goldfields strong. I commend the bills to the house.

MRS R.M.J. CLARKE (Murray–Wellington) [5.40 pm]: The Cook Labor government delivered its eighth budget last Thursday, handed down by our Treasurer, Hon Rita Saffioti, in the presence of her very proud children and sister, who watched history being made with our first female Treasurer handing down the 2024–25 budget—a budget for all Western Australians that does what is right for WA and our regions. I am pleased to see that the government is continuing to provide cost-of-living support for Murray–Wellington while investing significantly in health, housing, quality jobs, targeted training programs and Western Australia's transition to cleaner, stronger, reliable and affordable energy.

The 2024–25 state budget is focused on WA's regions, with a record \$12.8 billion investment in regional infrastructure, and billions more to fund regional service delivery. Also included is \$4 billion in royalties for regions funding, which will go towards projects that will enrich regional communities and ensure that they remain great places to live, work and raise a family. Regional Western Australians will benefit from the Cook Labor government's \$762 million in cost-of-living relief, with \$492.4 million to provide a \$400 electricity credit for every WA household and small business, including small businesses in Murray–Wellington. Additional energy relief will be provided to those most in need, with \$734 of support for pensioners and at least \$1 086 for eligible families. There is \$103.5 million in WA student assistance payments to ease the pressure of school expenses, with payments of \$150 for WA kindergarten and primary school students and \$250 for secondary school students. My staff both applied for this payment and have stated that the process was very easy to navigate and they received the funds within 10 days. There are 8 508 eligible students in Murray–Wellington and, so far, 4 803 students have received payments totalling \$899 450 flowing to families in Murray–Wellington. This ensures that all regional Western Australians are once again benefiting from the Cook Labor government. For example, a pensioner with eligible concessions could receive assistance of more than \$3 000. A family with two school-age kids could receive a total assistance of \$1 460.

There is \$147 million for free regional school buses or transport subsidies. There is \$706 million for regional water and electricity subsidies as part of the government's commitment to keep water and power affordable for all Western Australians. The Cook Labor government will spend \$3 billion over the next four years to subsidise the cost of providing water and electricity to regional communities. There is \$20.3 million to increase the value of the Regional Pensioner Travel Card—formerly the Country Age Pension Fuel Card—by \$100, bringing a total amount of \$675 from July 2024. Many of our older constituents have contacted me to express how much this extra credit will help them. Improving the affordability of transport not only eases the burden of high fuel prices, but also encourages travel within the community, enabling residents to attend events and participate in social activities and reducing social isolation. There is \$8.2 million to provide free flu vaccinations to all Western Australians in preparation for the 2024 flu season, which is another welcome addition to the many ageing populations within regional communities. The Cook Labor government is also providing a further \$3.6 billion in 2024–25 for a range of social concessions such as rebates on local government rates and water charges, vehicle licence discounts, KidSport vouchers, and many other great concessions that help and support our communities—another example of how the Cook Labor government is working hard to assist families.

The 2024–25 state budget strengthens the Cook Labor government's record investment into housing and homelessness initiatives, including a massive \$1.1 billion additional investment for housing and homelessness, bringing the total investment since 2021–22 to \$3.2 billion, which will boost housing supply and affordability, and \$400 million for social and affordable housing projects. The regional town of Brunswick has benefited greatly

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from the Cook Labor government’s ongoing quest to boost housing supply. The Shire of Harvey was successful in receiving \$4.98 million in funding through the Department of Communities social housing economic recovery grants program to deliver the third round of the Brunswick River Cottages here in Murray–Wellington. Stage 2 of the Brunswick River Cottages was funded by the previous McGowan Labor government with a \$1.6 million investment. The rental units are for Aboriginal people over the age of 55 and non-Aboriginal people over the age of 65 and are part of meeting the accommodation needs of people experiencing difficulties accessing housing in regional Western Australia. So far, the Brunswick River Cottages site has 19 independent living units, with 12 new homes being built under a partnership between Brunswick River Cottages and the Shire of Harvey, through a grant of nearly \$5 million from the Cook Labor government. Over time, it is planned to increase the number of units to a total of 41—eight leased for life and 33 rentals—to maintain a quaint and enjoyable community. The development is expected to be completed by June 2025.

I also had the pleasure of meeting with Minister John Carey to explore the stunning senior cottages nestled in the heart of Dwellingup. These cosy abodes are more than just homes; they are a testament to community care and wellbeing. The Dwellingup Community Village was awarded \$4.6 million to create 11 brand new community dwellings for our cherished seniors. Six of these delightful dwellings have already been completed, and soon our wonderful tenants will be moving in. The construction magic was woven by the skilled hands of Port Bouvard Homes, and this project is a true collaboration between the community and the Dwellingup Community Village Inc. There is also \$60 million for the regional community housing grants program to support community housing providers to deliver new dwellings or refurbish existing dwellings, and \$8.9 million to strengthen protections for renters following the passing of amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act and to support the Commissioner for Consumer Protection in dispute resolution processes.

The WA rent relief program will make a real difference to our communities. A \$24.4 million package will provide a one-off rent relief payment to help eligible tenants who are at risk of eviction because their rent is in arrears to negotiate with their landlords to extend their tenancy. Together with the residential tenancy reforms, our renters know that they are looked after under the Cook Labor government. Boosting regional land supply and social housing helps people to stay in or move to regional communities to prevent population decline and support communities’ sustainability.

This budget continues a record investment in health and mental health, with a further \$3.2 billion to boost the capacity of our hospitals, invest in more nurses and doctors and improve access to quality care. There will be \$405 million spent to boost regional health service delivery, including \$119 million to incentivise nurses and midwives to work in regional WA. The patient assisted travel scheme will receive a boost of \$32.5 million. Babies under eight months old will benefit from the \$10.9 million boost for vaccinations against respiratory syncytial virus. There will be \$39.1 million available to expand child development services, with a further \$4.7 million to extend the WA Country Health Service brief crisis intervention service, providing virtual post-emergency department follow-up for children, adolescents and their families or carers who have been discharged from regional EDs following a mental health-related presentation. The Cook Labor government continues with its support to transition to public health services at Peel Health Campus from August 2024, with a \$152 million redevelopment and expansion underway, and enabling works to commence in late 2024. With Ramsay Health Care bidding to build a new private hospital, it will allow scope for additional specialist teams within Peel Health Campus, allowing both hospitals to work in partnership to provide an increase in the care facilities available. With the delivery of \$17.5 million, the community mental health and specialist community eating disorder service will open in the Peel region in 2025.

The Bunbury Regional Hospital redevelopment project is the largest redevelopment of a regional hospital in Western Australia’s history and will deliver an expanded emergency department, increased theatre capacity, additional beds, expanded mental health facilities and maternity and birthing services for the region. On top of this, it will include regional WA’s first teaching, training and research centre. An additional \$173 million is being added to the project budget, bringing the total to over \$443 million. In addition, there is \$7.1 million for a new infant, child and adolescent mental health hub in Bunbury. This is a massive win for not only the electorate of Murray–Wellington, but also the entire region, as it will deliver quality health care closer to home and ensure timely interventions, better outcomes and equitable access for regional communities. The previous Liberal–National government went eight years without any upgrades. This shows that the Cook Labor government is delivering and has our regional communities close to its heart.

Then there is the Cook Labor government’s “BCF-ing” \$165 million investment in outdoor adventure tourism. With the support of Regional Development Australia’s John Lambrecht, and delivered in partnership with the Albanese government, there is an \$8 million investment for the Peel regional trails in Murray–Wellington, Dawesville and Mandurah. This project will further increase and improve the network of trails across the Peel region and will include upgrades to the Woggaal Noorook thrombolites. With the additional funding in this year’s budget to expand the types

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of trails and improve the campgrounds along the Murray River in Lane Poole Reserve, this hidden gem is going from strength to strength. Dwellingup was crowned Australia's top tiny tourism town in 2023, following state-level wins in both 2021 and 2023. It is once again a finalist in WA's 2024 7NEWS Top Town Tourism Awards—do not forget to log on and vote! If that is not enough, Dwellingup has just been officially awarded mountain bike trail town status. Dwellingup really is the gift that keeps on giving. Then there is the Martins Tank campground expansion, aimed at developing nature-based camping facilities for tents, campervans and caravans, which has also received \$900 000 from the \$165 million outdoor adventure tourism package. On top of this, there is an additional investment for riverside campground improvements and establishments along the Murray River in Lane Poole Reserve, Nanga campgrounds and the water bodies of Logue Brook Dam and Lake Brockman. We are making our region not only a great place to live, but also a wonderful place to visit. Encouraging people to explore our wonderful state means more visitors to our regions, creating local jobs, supporting local businesses and helping to diversify our Murray–Wellington, Dawesville and Mandurah economies. This region offers an enviable lifestyle; one can be relaxing in nature one minute and tackling an aerial obstacle course high in the pines the next. The many campgrounds offer a beautiful getaway from life's hustle and bustle. There really is nothing better than packing the car on Friday and disappearing for the weekend, although once there, a weekend really is not enough to take in the sights, sounds and smells of this beautifully diverse region. It is where conservation meets innovation, preserving assets for future generations.

The budget contains a major investment in WA's future, with \$1.8 billion to diversify and decarbonise our economy and position WA as a clean energy powerhouse. Regional WA will benefit from a magnificent investment of \$67.2 million to support the new forest management plan, creating an additional 65 jobs focused on climate action and forest health, and a \$324 million investment in the south west interconnected system to support WA's decarbonisation journey, provide certainty to investors and unlock job-creating renewable energy projects. The budget also delivers \$23.2 million over the next three years for biosecurity management, and a further \$33 million to manage the impact of wild dogs, feral deer and feral pigs on the environment and farming communities.

In order to not only boost our housing and economy, but also nurture young minds and create employment opportunities for our youth in the regions, the Cook Labor government will maintain its commitment to providing free TAFE courses. Additionally, it will allocate \$21.2 million for the apprenticeship support package, \$15.1 million to offer extra assistance to employers in the building and construction industry and \$16 million for the apprentice tool allowance. There is also \$1.7 billion per annum to provide regional Western Australian students with access to quality education, \$10 million to the School of Isolated and Distance Education and \$1.1 billion for training programs to prepare Western Australians for the jobs of the future. But it does not end there. Other key initiatives include a \$224.3 million boost to individual disability loading allocations, an extension of the provision of free period products to WA public primary schools and \$4.2 million to continue providing specialist services for Aboriginal people at jobs and skills centres. There are currently 130 free TAFE courses available in our regions in fee-free programs—for example, a certificate IV in ageing support, the business-ready skill set or a certificate IV in community services. Under the previous Liberal–National government, the cost to study an enrolled nurse qualification was \$10 000. Under our plan, it is free. This is also the case for early childhood education, with previous fees totalling \$7 500, whereas under the Cook Labor government, it is free. The previous coalition government raised TAFE fees by 500 per cent. Ours is the only government that truly appreciates how important it is to have training available for everyone to access.

The Cook Labor government will help to build safe, strong and fair regional communities. It will provide \$460 million per annum to provide police services across regional WA; \$23.4 million to extend Operation Regional Shield, which allows the WA Police Force to rapidly deploy officers to regional areas where they are needed most; \$30 million to the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions for bushfire management through additional staff and firefighting equipment; and \$8.6 million to support WA's vitally important emergency service volunteers with communications equipment, road crash rescue equipment and station upgrades. There is also \$46.3 million to continue the successful Home Stretch WA program, which supports young people leaving out-of-home care, and a crucial \$26.4 million for programs and initiatives to address family and domestic violence.

The Cook Labor government continues to look after regional communities by investing in regional roads and transport projects.

[Member's time extended.]

Mrs R.M.J. CLARKE: In this budget, there is \$169 million in additional funding for regional roads, forming part of the \$4.5 billion investment in regional roads over the next four years. The delivery of \$250 million for the Pinjarra heavy haulage deviation was met with great enthusiasm. As we all know, after years of promises, the previous federal Liberal government originally delivered funding for only stage 1 of the project. After intense advocacy from me and with the steadfast support of the Deputy Premier, Rita Saffioti, the project will be delivered in full. Due to the delicate

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nature of this project, we are advancing cautiously and considerately, and working in unison with the Bindjareb people to do this in a culturally responsible way. As the member for Murray–Wellington on Premier Roger Cook’s team, I am focused on delivering the Pinjarra heavy haulage deviation, despite all the negativity put out there by the federal Liberal member for Canning. This government has always understood how vital the deviation is for the Murray community. That is why the Cook government has committed to fully funding this project. The member for Canning and my Liberal opponent have either ignored this or forgotten about it. They have been relentlessly negative about the project. I say that my Liberal opponent must have forgotten about it because he previously publicly praised the Cook government for committing to fund the deviation. After we announced our commitment to the project, the Shire of Murray released a media release on 17 November 2023 that said that my Liberal opponent, the shire president, welcomed Minister Saffioti’s announcement. In that media statement, my opponent said that he looked forward to seeing further details of budget funding, so I am sure he is pleased to see that we have fully committed to this project in the budget. If he does not believe me, he can look it up on page 603 of budget paper No 2. I ensured that I kept advocating for the Pinjarra heavy haulage deviation, which will take trucks out of the Pinjarra township and make the town centre more visitor and family friendly. We have seen the results of my advocacy in this budget, and I look forward to work commencing on the deviation.

Another area in which the federal Liberal member for Canning has been constantly negative is offshore wind farms. That is just fearmongering and fake news from him. Let me correct the record. I would like to quote Hon Reece Whitby, Minister for Energy, in response to a grievance from the Leader of the WA Liberal Party last Thursday.

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.00 pm

Mrs R.M.J. CLARKE: I was interrupted by our lovely dinner break, but I will proceed.

I was talking about the federal Liberal member for Canning. Another area where the federal Liberal member for Canning is being constantly negative is in relation to offshore wind farms. This is just fearmongering and fake news from him. Let me correct the record. I would like to quote Hon Reece Whitby, Minister for Energy, from a response given to a grievance made by the Leader of the WA Liberal Party last Thursday. He stated —

... offshore wind farm” is quite perplexing because this is not about a public comment on a proposed development to build a wind farm. There is no ... offshore wind farm that I am aware of. Again, we have an obligation in this place to be honest about what is happening in the community, but I will continue because this is not about a specific wind farm proposal. That is not accurate; it is misleading. This is about consultation on the potential for the creation of an offshore wind zone.

The federal Liberals have released a very specific and very impactful energy plan in the course of one news cycle, I think, and there was absolutely no public consultation. The Liberal Party has decided to drop a nuclear power station in the backyard of the people of Collie. The question that the federal Liberal member for Canning has to answer is why he is in favour of putting a nuclear power station in our region. There has been no consultation, there is no evidence it would work and it would be the most expensive energy source in the state’s history. The federal Liberal member for Canning and my Liberal opponent are both just focused on negativity, scare campaigns and “shock-vertising”. They have no plans. They are not interested in real facts and they are not focused on delivering for my community.

Unlike them, this government is full of positive announcements and it is doing what is right for Western Australia and Murray–Wellington. I will continue to focus on delivering for my constituents with important infrastructure that has been built and regional roads that have been maintained, including significant safety upgrades that have been expanded to account for the rapid growth in the electorate. In February, the new \$12.2 million Sustainable Innovative Food Technologies Centre was opened. This investment will provide more than 150 jobs, inject \$100 million into the economy and take food businesses to the next level. The SIFT Centre was an election commitment and proves that our Cook Labor government delivers on major infrastructure projects. Our schools have been maintained with new or upgraded STEM and science labs. There is also \$11.2 million for the new performing arts centre and school gymnasium for Pinjarra Senior High School, with a further \$1.5 million for the new STEM building. Our schools will also benefit from a program for school camps to Rottnest Island, which I know has been very well received during these times of financial frugality. With additional investment into WA public school internet infrastructure, the Cook Labor government is making sure education in regional and remote Western Australia is being looked after.

Our local sporting clubs in Murray–Wellington have flourished thanks to the state government’s funding programs. These initiatives have facilitated exciting upgrades, including new pavilions, improved changing room facilities and enhanced floodlighting. The construction of the Lovegrove Sports Pavilion in December, with a multifunction room, commercial kitchen, changing rooms, equipment stores and a wraparound veranda, has truly re-energised the associated sporting clubs such as the Pinjarra Cricket Club. On top of that, the redevelopment of Murray District Rangers Soccer Club with its new changing rooms and canteen in South Yunderup was so grand it even enticed

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the Pinjarra Croquet Club to relocate and make it its new home. The Pinjarra Bowling and Recreation Club was a proud recipient in the last round of the community sporting and recreation facilities fund, with a whopping \$401 012 to be directed towards the construction of a bowling green canopy. Through my election commitments, we actively contribute to the growth and vitality of these clubs.

Another great success story is the Ravenswood Community Centre. Since I was elected to represent the seat of Murray–Wellington in 2017, the community of Ravenswood has been vocal about its need for a community centre. I lobbied, advocated and was a strong supporter for the community of Ravenswood to get the funding from the state government and to make sure the Shire of Murray proceeded with its plans to deliver. In October, having secured the \$1.3 million necessary for the build, the community centre was opened. It is heartening to witness the positive impact these investments have had on our community sports infrastructure. In tightknit communities like Pinjarra, Waroona and Harvey and the other 48 towns in Murray–Wellington, this support means a great deal.

We have also seen a lot of good things coming from the regional economic development grants. Round 8 applications are now open. The regional economic development grants program is a statewide initiative that invests in local-driven projects to stimulate job creation and economic growth in regional areas. The program provides funding of up to \$250 000. To date, a total of 16 recipients have received a collective total of \$2.25 million in funding in Murray–Wellington.

I recently joined the Minister for Emergency Services, Stephen Dawson, MLC, to hand over the keys to some pretty impressive appliances as part of the Cook Labor government's over \$3 million handout to emergency services in Murray–Wellington. I then represented the minister at the opening of the refurbished fire shed at Preston Beach. The brigade is a highly valued part of Preston Beach and the wider Waroona area, attending more than 50 incidents in the past three years, including the recent Nanga Brook bushfire. This new upgrade will enhance the service, fostering growth and resilience. Undoubtedly, it will significantly improve safety for the community. I find it difficult to put into words just how much I admire and respect the men and women who commit themselves to the volunteer bush fire brigades and the volunteer fire and rescue services. Their courage, resilience and selflessness during emergencies is truly commendable. Thank you all.

The Labor Party, which is often criticized by the opposition for its financial management, has once again achieved a remarkable surplus. While other Australian states and global economies are grappling with increasing debt burdens, it is essential for policymakers to strike a balance between necessary investments and prudent fiscal management. I believe the 2024–25 budget resonates with this theory and I congratulate the Deputy Premier; Treasurer for her excellent fiscal management.

Reading the budget, I was pleased to see that it continues to deliver for Murray–Wellington. Every time I step out into the communities of Murray–Wellington, it is as though I am embarking on a mission to unveil exciting new projects and funding opportunities. Whether it is a local sporting club, a recreational hub or any other community group, my goal is to enhance facilities and deliver essential services. Together, we are building a stronger, more connected Murray–Wellington. The Cook Labor government has respect for and supports our regions more than any other government or party. We have the strongest representation in the regions with active, hardworking members who deliver on the Cook Labor government's commitments. Over the past seven years, Murray–Wellington has experienced unprecedented levels of spending. Community members have actively approached me on the streets, reached out to my office and engaged in conversations during community events. Their feedback has been consistent: there was a discernible shift when the once-secure Liberal seat transitioned to new representation as a Labor held-seat in 2017.

We are the government that truly represents the regions. We want to ensure that our regions are not only great to live in, but also amazing to visit. The Cook Labor government is doing what is right for not only Western Australia but also the regions. I want to congratulate the Deputy Premier; Treasurer on another outstanding budget that delivers for all Western Australians.

I commend the 2024–25 budget to the house.

MS L.L. BAKER (Maylands) [7.09 pm]: I would like to start by absolutely congratulating the Premier, Roger Cook, and the Treasurer, Rita Saffioti, for their remarkable work in producing what is truly a budget for the times. These are not easy times in our constituencies, by any stretch of the imagination. People are struggling with a range of different challenges, but so far the feedback from my community is that the government has hit a number of nails right on the head with this budget and is really delivering some relief from the cost-of-living pressures that everyone seems to be enduring at the moment.

However, today I would like to talk about some of the specifics of the budget and reflect a bit on what they mean for me in this place. I will start by recognising the additional \$88 million for child protection initiatives, including more than \$46 million to expand the Home Stretch WA program, which supports young people leaving out-of-home care,

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and \$16 million for the 10-year Early Years Partnership. There is a further \$19 million for the partnership from the Minderoo Foundation—thank you to the Minderoo Foundation. The Early Years Partnership will improve early childhood learning, intervention and support for families in four Western Australian communities: Armadale west, central great southern, Bidyadanga and Derby.

I want to pick up on a particular issue around child protection. I will be quoting liberally from an article by a dear friend and former member of the upper house, Hon Linda Savage, who, in the brief time she was a member of this Parliament, constructed a number of incredibly well-referenced and researched policies. One was WA Labor’s policy for children; I am not sure where that policy went, but at the time, I thought it was a remarkable piece of work. She recently published in the *Australian Journal of Social Issues* an article on corporal punishment. I promised her that, when I had the opportunity, I would find the time to read this important article in Parliament. To my knowledge, this issue probably has not been raised in this place since she was here, which was a very long time ago. I will quote liberally from her article in order to describe what we mean when we talk about the violence against children that is deemed acceptable under the guise of corporal punishment. It states, in part —

In Australia assaulting another person is a criminal offence. It occurs when one person strikes another person, applying force of any kind either directly or indirectly, without the person’s consent. There is an exception. Children are specifically denied legal protection from intentional assaults when it is rebranded as corporal punishment. Successive governments have failed to act to provide children with the same protection from assault as adults despite repeated calls by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child to prohibit corporal punishment in all settings, and the robust body of evidence of the substantial harm it causes. This glaring inconsistency in the law, should cause us to question how far we have evolved in our attitudes and treatment of children. In particular just how deeply ingrained are attitudes and prejudices about children that rationalise or justify acts and omissions that harm them, and fail to protect their rights.

...

Hitting children is wrong. Turning a blind eye to corporal punishment is in effect sanctioning the deliberate harm of children. Every child deserves and has the right to grow up in an environment free of violence. It is hard to imagine what the role of government is, if not to ensure that is a reality. Everyone can play a role by pointing out the glaring inconsistency in the law that means children have less protection from assault than adults. Challenging policy makers about their hypocrisy of claiming that violence is never acceptable when children continue to be subject to physical violence that is rebranded as corporal punishment. And by supporting those advocating for legislative reform and policies that promote non-violent parenting and discipline.

My purpose in reading that is that it is an issue that has—in my view, certainly in Linda’s view and in the view of many others—gone unrecognised in this Parliament for far too long. Linda sits on international committees on this subject and has published widely. She is a deeply well-respected academic in this area. I urge my government to think about what we can do to overcome the hypocrisy of saying that it is okay to assault a child because we call it corporal punishment. I do not think that is something that our modern society really should accept.

Moving onto a different subject, I want to talk about the transformation of food systems and the opportunities we have in Western Australia. As members know, I have been speaking about this issue in Parliament since 2018, so this contribution will not be new. Hopefully, I will give members some new facts and figures, but the topic is very much still current.

The UN estimates that the global population will reach 10 billion people by 2050, requiring a 60 to 70 per cent lift in food production. People worried about losing agricultural business in this area are just wrong. This is the most open field and diverse market that is starting to come about, and we need to have policies to take advantage of it. We need to support the development of alternative or complementary proteins, as they are sometimes called, or we will face a global food shortage. Already 310 000 Australians do not have access to enough protein; that is a disgraceful statistic in a wealthy, developed country. There are both challenges and opportunities in how we can provide people with healthy, affordable, accessible and sustainable food in the very near future. It is essential that we turn our attention to what we are doing now to provide for the health and sustainability of humanity, animals and the planet.

Food production currently accounts for 70 per cent of the world’s consumption of fresh water. That is a staggering amount. Of the water used in the production of food, 30 per cent is wasted between the time it is produced and the time it is consumed. Food systems create between 25 per cent and 33 per cent—depending on which international body we listen to—of global greenhouse gas emissions. If growing populations and the environmental impact of our current food production and processing systems are not enough to concern us, we also need to factor in rising

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concerns about food security and food supply chain vulnerability at a time of global uncertainty. Additionally, issues regarding antimicrobial resistance are inextricably linked to our current animal-based production systems.

I recognise—as does the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, commonly known as CSIRO, in its *Reshaping Australian food systems* report—that the agriculture and primary production industry is working towards sustainability in its practices. I have said that time and again in this house, but I think, for political reasons, certain people on the other side choose to ignore it. Never mind; I shall keep saying it. This is about sustainability and helping the agriculture production sector achieve that. Whilst supporting efforts by the agricultural sector to transform and thrive, it is also important to support the development of complementary sources of food. The alternative protein sector is expected to grow globally into a \$A65 billion market by 2034. That is only 10 years, folks; that is not a long way down the track.

Where are we? What are we doing in this space and which part of the market are we securing? WA needs to do things differently. We need to show leadership in this space. Our neighbouring states, like Victoria, are forging ahead with strategies designed to optimise this new market. They are already contributing millions of dollars to the development of this sector, while we are sitting here arguing about its efficacy or its validity. I have been championing the complementary protein industry sector to the WA Parliament, our ministers and consumers in Western Australia since 2018. I will continue to research the progress of this industry around the world to highlight emerging trends and good practice. This work is my passion; I want to be a part of making a difference for the planet and for the people and animals that dwell on this planet.

I now turn to the report that the Education and Health Standing Committee released last week, which achieved absolutely no media coverage until someone quite surprisingly decided to politically link it with the live export decision. I point out, first, that the writing of this report had been going on for 12 months and, second, that despite me desperately trying to find out when Minister Murray Watt was going to release a date, he never rang me or told any of us when the date would be announced. This report had absolutely nothing to do with the issues raised by the Leader of the Opposition. The front page of that paper that is unfortunately our only local paper referred to there being an anti-agriculture agenda within the Labor Party. I do not think so! We are putting a lot of support and financing into the agriculture sector. I know the Minister for Agriculture and Food is completely committed to this issue and is consulting very closely with the farming industry.

Another humorous comment made by the Leader of the Opposition was when he referred to the content of the report as “ideological drivel”. I will refer to a few of the references in this very extensively referenced scientific document, which are slightly different from the Leader of the Opposition’s off-the-cuff comments that have no backing. They include the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development; the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; COP27 and COP28; Professor Dora Marinova from Curtin University; and the National Health and Medical Research Council’s *Eat for health: Australian dietary guidelines*. One that is definitely dodgy is someone called Professor Barry Marshall; I think he might be a Nobel prize-winning research scientist.

Mr D.J. Kelly: He certainly is!

Ms L.L. BAKER: I thought he might be. He is also the WA Ambassador for Life Science and director at the Marshall Centre for Infectious Diseases, Research and Training. Members opposite heard me mention antimicrobial resistance a while ago. They should have an argument with Professor Barry Marshall about antimicrobial resistance and its link to animal production facilities. I think I have already referred to the World Health Organization, the Australian government’s strategy on AMR and animal health in Australia, the National Centre for Antimicrobial Stewardship and Animal Health Australia. The list goes on; there are hundreds of references. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s special report, *Climate change and Land*, also raised this issue as valid and credible, and one that needs urgent attention. In its identification of the things that we absolutely need to look at in the future, CSIRO has made it very clear that complementary proteins are the way of the future. Further, the George Institute for Global Health, which is one of the most respected food and science institutes in Australia, has made many comments in this space. The report also referenced Meat and Livestock Australia. It is not as though we used references from just one side of the story.

I want to impress upon the Leader of the Opposition and members on the other side of the house that the Education and Health Standing Committee’s report is about health. It essentially looks at a very pressing question: what are we going to do to keep our nation healthy and what are the opportunities in this new sector for the future?

Before I sit down, I turn to my concerns about the greyhound racing industry. I am sure that members will not be surprised to hear this. When I opened an email the other day, I did not realise what I was reading until I read the top of the page. The email names the 11 greyhounds that have died on tracks since 1 January this year. For members’ edification, and because they are dead and nobody cares, I will read their names into *Hansard*. Columbus Monelli, aged three years, died on the Cannington track on 27 January. Cash Landing, aged two years, died on the Cannington

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track on 29 January. Cameron Keeping died on the same day on the same track. Shady Town, aged two and a half years, died on the Cannington track on 5 February. Send it Rose, aged one and a half years, died on the Mandurah track on 6 February. Unintimidated, aged two years, died on the Mandurah track on 25 January. Our Aim, aged two years, died on the Mandurah track on 25 February. Charos Max, aged two and a half years, died on the Cannington track on 4 March. Really Deceiving, aged one and a half years, died on the Northam track on 29 April. Appolo Fun, aged four years, died on the Northam track on 29 April, the same day as his mate. Charos Supreme, aged one and a half years, died on the Cannington track on 1 May. I have read that list because it is an issue that needs to be spoken about and looked at by the organisations in charge of managing the welfare of these animals.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms L.L. BAKER: Until 1 February this year, we had a 90-day standdown for greyhounds with injuries. Most of the dogs that I mentioned broke a hock and were euthanised. Since 1 February, the dogs were euthanised pretty quickly, and I will tell members why. The standdown policy allowed for a 90-day standdown for injured dogs. Prior to the policy change on 1 February, none of the dogs returned to the track. Most of them were rehomed or euthanised. The 90-day standdown still applies—Racing and Wagering Western Australia continues to fund the medical treatment for those dogs—but the greyhounds have to stay with the trainer in the trainer's kennel. Now we have dogs with broken legs, locked in a concrete run for 90 days or longer, after which time the trainer has to decide what will happen to them. Why would a trainer keep a non-income bearing dog with a broken leg on their property? Members should think about the summer we have just had with temperatures of 42 degrees. Some trainers have air-conditioned premises, but not many. Now we are facing winter, and those greyhounds will be trying to recuperate on cold concrete. It is well-nigh time that we looked at much better welfare outcomes for these animals. If we insist on pursuing this continued focus on the money that is made from these animals through gambling, it is our responsibility as the government to make sure that these dogs are not assigned an awful, dreadful fate. These animals need our protection, and it is time we stepped forward and took far more interest in their welfare.

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington) [7.28 pm]: I am very pleased to join the general debate on the Appropriation (Recurrent 2024–25) Bill 2024 and the Appropriation (Capital 2024–25) Bill 2024. I start my contribution by letting members know that I was very surprised to hear that when the Liberal candidate for Churchlands was on radio on 19 April, he played a grab from *Hansard* of 17 April in which I talked about the omnishambles that is the leadership of the opposition here in Western Australia. I make it clear that at that time I never mentioned the name of the Liberal candidate for Churchlands.

Mr P. Papalia: Why would you?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Exactly. He went on radio and said that that sort of lack of dignity and class is not befitting the chamber. He went on to say that he wanted to “raise the standards”. The problem is that Mr Zempilas is a man with a glass jaw. This is a guy who cannot stand criticism and he therefore attacks anybody who criticises him in any way. I make the point that I was not criticising Mr Zempilas, I was criticising the lack of clarity about the opposition. I will point out exactly what I explained on 17 April. At the moment we have a person drawing a salary as the Leader of the Opposition, that being the member for Moore, who does not intend to be the Premier. He is not campaigning to be Premier of Western Australia. Up until now, whoever was the Leader of the Opposition wanted to be Premier. Then there is the situation in which the leader of the Liberal Party is not supported by the Liberal Party. I note that there has been a number of articles quoting unnamed Liberal Party members of Parliament who say that she will be gone by Christmas this year. I was pointing out exactly what has been in the media. I was not inventing anything and I certainly was not criticising Mr Zempilas.

I will make some comments about his performance. On 1 February 2024, in PerthNow, under the headline “Battle-hardened Basil says he is up for the fight”—I acknowledge that is not a quote from Mr Zempilas; that is the editor of that journal putting that forward—the article quotes Mr Zempilas, and says —

There hasn't been a moment, an issue, a situation, a story, a criticism where I've thought I don't want to be anywhere near this.

It's clear to me now that (politics) is in my blood. I love it.

He is up for the fight and states “that lack of class and dignity is not befitting the chamber”. I will go through a couple of things he said in the media. In *The West Australian* on 22 March, Mr Zempilas spoke about former Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and former US President Donald Trump. He said —

I was able to explain Aussies would probably have gone with “not the sharpest tool in the shed” over “not the brightest bulb”. What I didn't tell them is if I meant it for Rudd or Trump.

He has spoken about a conversation he had while he was representing the people of the City of Perth in Houston in the United States. He thinks this a good way to present himself. In that same piece, he says of the Treasurer —

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It's only a matter of time before one of those Lower House scallywags start calling her Rita Spendaloti. That is what he thinks is a good thing to say about the Treasurer. He wants to make a lame, stupid comment about her Italian heritage. What a disgrace! What did he say about the Minister for Education? He said —

I'm close to renaming Sleeping Buti.

Again, he is making a play on the Minister for Education's Italian heritage. I could not trip over the standards set by Mr Zempilas. We remember Mr Zempilas' confected outrage when quotes by him circulated nationally. In *The West Australian* on 2 February, he said —

There was that press conference excitement which proved to be a false alarm for the pile-on brigade.

Other journalists and other people wanted to hear what Mr Zempilas said at the press conference—I am not saying he has said anything that he did not explain. He said that he was not talking about the women's tennis; he was talking about reading the news opposite the women's tennis. I accept that; but, because journalists and others challenged him, he called them the "pile-on brigade". I do not understand why he would call other journalists who are doing their job, the "pile-on brigade". He went on to say —

Selective editing made a conversation I was having prior to the press conference sound like something it wasn't.

That is very interesting, because the organisation that he attacked said this —

Anyone claiming (6 News) deliberately cut out the first bit of Zempilas' comments is lying.

I did not say those things; that is what 6 News said. That is from *The West Australian* on 29 January. Again, when Mr Zempilas is criticised, he goes about attacking the people who raised the issues with him. He is a man with a glass jaw; he cannot handle these things.

I acknowledge that the heading is written by the editor of the paper and not by Mr Zempilas. I do not believe he has ever clarified that he did not agree with the headline, but on 9 February in *The West Australian* he spoke about having the right to disconnect from an employer. He said —

As I read through some of the right to disconnect cheerleading this week ... I found myself asking, is this the way we drive our country forward ... Hard work and common sense have been the cornerstones of our prosperous communities.

As Minister for Industrial Relations, I was pleased to make arrangements—I know the new minister supports this—with the WA Police Union about the question of the right to disconnect. I do not understand why Mr Zempilas thinks that it is wrong to give the police a right to disconnect. I do not understand why he is attacking the police for getting that right to disconnect. Mr Zempilas is up for the fight, but he should stop complaining when people criticise him. This is politics. He is going to have to put up with this. Imagine what is going to be like for Mr Zempilas when he is in this chamber? Instead of being able to throw insults at the Treasurer, based on her Italian heritage, he is going to have to front her up.

We cannot trip over Mr Zempilas' political standards. He uses schoolyard name-calling. He attacks his critics, and he associates with the unrepresentative Liberal candidates, like we heard with the Liberal candidate for Albany. This is the modern Liberal Party that he has chosen to be part of. I make it clear; I am happy to go on radio this Friday with Mr Zempilas during his spot on 6PR, unless of course he is too afraid of accountability and he wants to sit and throw stones but not be held accountable for his behaviour. He has to work out whether he is a "battle-hardened Basil" who is up for the fight or a Liberal with a glass jaw who cannot stand the fact that he does not connect with the broader community. He has joined the Liberal Party, under the National Party, and they do not have a plan for the future. They do not have the experience to run a state like Western Australia. He does not want the community to be reminded that the last time the Liberals and Nationals were in government, Western Australia's economy was forced to its knees; unemployment was at record highs and they left a trail of debt and deficits that we had to clean up when we came to government.

I make it clear—Western Australians will pay more under any Liberal–National government. It is simply not worth the risk to Western Australians to head down that pathway. It is interesting that, unlike the broader Liberal Party, he has come up with a couple of policies. The first one is that he wants a cable car built from Elizabeth Quay to Kings Park. In *The West Australian* of 19 January, he said it will be —

From somewhere next to Elizabeth Quay up to Kings Park, a world class attraction for our world class city. It is time.

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Is that costed? What is the planning process? What are the environmental regulations? Does he have the consent of the traditional owners of the site? Those are all questions for him. What are the answers to those questions, Mr Zempilas? Tell us the plan. He is now a Liberal Party candidate. He cannot simply come up with random thoughts. Where is the costing? Who has done the costing? Which engineering firm has provided the advice about those costs? Do not tell me he has asked the City of Perth and the ratepayers to pay for the analysis for his Liberal Party policy? Where are we going with that, Mr Zempilas?

But there is something even deeper that we need to be worried about. That is Mr Zempilas' advocacy of nuclear energy. I point out that in *The West Australian* of 8 March 2024, he says that John —

... Howard says climate change advocates rightly urge sceptics to trust or accept the science when it comes to debating climate, so it is only fair that same standard be applied in the debate around nuclear energy. Nuclear power is used safely in 30 countries including the US, the UK and Canada.

First, I want to point out that the International Energy Agency has already said that nuclear power is not suitable for Australia. I will go through a couple of the questions. Mr Zempilas, in your plan to build a nuclear power station—I assume in Collie because that is where the federal Liberals and Nationals have said that they want to build it—firstly, do the people of Collie agree with siting it there? Generally speaking, it takes about 10 years to do site selection and get the various pre-construction approvals anywhere in the world. If members do not believe me, they should look. The World Nuclear Association, which is the lobby group for the industry, makes that point on its website. It then takes about 10 years to build the plant. If we started work in March next year, it would be 2045 before any nuclear energy was put into the grid in Western Australia. What would we do for electricity for the next 20 years, Mr Zempilas, because the electricity needs to be supplied every day until then? Obviously, there is only one answer to that. We would have to build other energy sources. That means by the time we get to 2045, we will already have the power we need because we will have built the other energy sources. Why would we build a nuclear power station when we have already built the other energy sources that we need? It does not make any sense.

Another thing Mr Zempilas needs to understand is that we need spinning reserve for our largest unit on the system. Western Australia has spinning reserve for the three largest units. A nuclear power station is about 1 000 megawatts. That means we would have to have 1 000 megawatts of electricity generators sitting idle, waiting in case the nuclear power station breaks down and that is how we operate the system. That is okay in a massive grid in the United States or the United Kingdom, where their power demand is in the tens and tens of gigawatts. But our system peaks at four and a half megawatts. Worse than that, Mr Zempilas, our weekend load can get down to 600 megawatts, which is less than the power produced by the nuclear power station. That means we would have to turn off the nuclear power station on weekends in spring and autumn because there would be no way to put electricity in the system, and that would push up the cost.

That is another interesting issue. A nuclear power station usually lasts about 20 or 60 years. Remember that it would take us 20 years to build it. It would continue operating until at least 2105 or, if it takes 80 years, to 2125. What will be the price of electricity in 80 or 100 years? How will we get investment into the power station if the person who builds the power station does not know what their future revenues will be? Mr Zempilas is taking a bet on the power price in 80 or 100 years. There is a reason nobody in the private sector talks about building nuclear power stations. It is because they do not make sense. Mr Zempilas can support it. Let us make it clear, nobody in the power sector thinks that a nuclear power station is the answer. Nobody!

Mr D.J. Kelly: Unless the government subsidises it.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The government could pay for it. But why would we take taxpayers' money and pay for the most expensive piece of equipment in the world? Here is another issue. There are individuals, but there is no business in Australia that builds nuclear power stations. It means everybody who came to build the power station would be brought in from overseas. We cannot build more than one at a time because the workforce is not available. To train up the Australian workforce, we could have them trained while we built the first one, but that would be for the second one, not the first one. The whole workforce would have to come from overseas.

Read about the challenges in the UK, Finland and the United States and about the problems with building nuclear power stations and the number of times things go wrong in the construction phase. I am not talking about safety. I am talking about getting it to work as an engineering process. There is a famous one in Finland that I did a case study on a number of years ago. I cannot pronounce the name of the place because it is a Finnish word, but I am happy to sit with Mr Zempilas offline and explain why his idea of a nuclear power station in Collie is such a bad idea. If he does not think it should be in Collie, he should tell us where he is going to put it.

I will finish on this point. Where will we get the fuel from? We cannot put uranium yellowcake into a nuclear power station. There are uranium mines in Australia, but they produce yellowcake, which is the uranium oxide that is then sent overseas to be enriched and turned into nuclear fuel. There are no circumstances in which the countries

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that make nuclear fuel are going to share that technology with us because that is how they make their money. They make their money on the fuel. That would lead us to the position where we would have to import all the fuel. By the way, if we had only one station, we would not be able to afford to build an enrichment facility or a facility to build the rods because it would be stupid. It would be so expensive to build that facility.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: It is never going to happen. It is totally impractical. It is not sensible. No-one will ever suggest that. But that means we would have to import the fuel to go into the nuclear power station. At the moment, every power station in Australia, except those running on diesel, uses domestic fuel. They use natural gas, coal or renewable sources such as sun and wind. Diesel is only a small proportion of the total fleet of power stations, but apart from diesel, probably 96 or 97 per cent—probably higher than that—of all the electricity generated in grids in Australia, not only Western Australia, comes from a domestic fuel source. Suddenly we would go from being 100 per cent—in fact, a massive energy exporter—to being reliant on imported fuel. It beggars belief and it shows the risk. We had the mad scheme at the last election for closing the coal-fired power stations precipitously without a proper plan, and now we have the mad scheme to push up electricity prices, which the Liberal Party is very good at.

I want to make some comments about the budget papers. I turn to page 19 of budget paper No 3. It points out that the participation rate here in Western Australia is projected to be 68.9 per cent in the current financial year, 2023–24. I point out that the national average participation rate—that is the percentage of the working age population with a job—is 66.6 per cent. That means 2.3 per cent more of the workforce is in work here or seeking work than the average across the country. That is an outstanding result and makes our unemployment figure probably 50 per cent better than the numbers suggest.

I refer to page 23 of budget paper No 3. I am very pleased to see the \$100 million Western Australian government contribution to the \$200 million new critical minerals advanced processing common-user facility that will flow-on from the Future Battery Industries CRC, which is now coming to the end of its term. That is a very important facility. The Minister for Mines and Petroleum, the member for Balcatta, should be proud that he has been able to achieve that. I was unable to achieve that when I was minister, so we are lucky to have a high-quality minister in the job now.

I want to turn to page 36. I want to quote Charles Dickens from 1849. He said —

Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure nineteen nineteen and six, result happiness. Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure twenty pounds ought and six, result misery.

This is a good lesson for the Liberal and National Parties. This year, 94.3 per cent of our income is projected to be spent on recurrent expenditure. In the last year of the Liberal–National government, it spent 115.2 per cent of the income it received.

No wonder Western Australians ended up in misery when they had to live with the results of that inept approach. It is extraordinary that the Liberal and National members, who pretend they can lecture the Labor Party on financial management, missed the memo: 1849 was some time ago. It is not a new concept to run a surplus.

It is interesting that at the moment, the Liberal and National Parties are saying that our surplus is too big and our debt is too high, but the only way to get that down is to have a bigger surplus. Pick which side of the street to walk on and then tell us how it will be achieved. If they are saying our surplus is too big, that means we have to have bigger debt. If they are saying our debt is too large, that means we need to spend less. Tell us what we are not spending money on.

They like to lecture us about health expenditure, but I want to point out the charts on pages 90 and 91. On page 90, it shows that health and mental health expenditure will be \$13.168 billion. That is 30 per cent of total government expenditure. Page 91 shows that there has been \$3.2 billion additional health and mental health investment since the midyear review. That is an extraordinary level of investment into health and mental health for the people of Western Australia. There is always more to be done, but the good news is that the Minister for Health has a plan and is implementing it. We can see in these early stages that that is having a big impact. The COVID pandemic was an incredible disruption to the health system and it is taking a while to regularise it, but the good news is that we have a minister with a plan and the plan is having an effect.

Page 159 has a highlights box about asset investment. It shows that our asset investment plan for the 2024–25 financial year is to spend \$12.1 billion on new assets for Western Australians. That is following on from the \$10.6 billion expected overrun for the 2023–24 year. Let us contrast that with the last budget of the Liberal–National government, when its budget was for \$5.862 billion. The Labor government has more than doubled the asset investment program on behalf of the people of the state.

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Again, I am not sure whether that is too much or too little for the Liberal and National Parties. Eventually, sometime between now and the election, it will have to come up with a plan. It will be interesting to see whose plan is important. At the last election, the Liberal and National Parties put out separate election statements. It is interesting that the National Party's one was not costed, because it argued that it was effectively an opening gambit for negotiations with the Liberal Party to form government. The Liberal Party left most of its commitments out of its costing, including the mad harebrained scheme from the member for Cottesloe to shut all the coal-fired power stations that we plan to do by 2030, five years after it would have closed them all. Opposition members say that is too fast, but the member for Cottesloe at the last election said it was too slow.

The good news about the asset investment program and the commitment to a better state here in Western Australia—acknowledging that there is always more to be done—is that we have a Premier who will always do what is right for this state. We can see that in Cannington with the investment into Lynwood Senior High School that has transformed that school. It has had some very good teachers and principals over the last 16 years that have been members of Parliament. The standards of that school are exceptional these days. It is difficult for that school, because many of its brightest students are taken by Rossmoyne Senior High School and Willetton Senior High School on special placements. I imagine that Como Secondary College suffers the same challenges, member for South Perth. Nonetheless, they have done an exceptional job at Lynwood, like they do at Sevenoaks Senior College. We have been fortunate to have that investment to transform that school.

Of course, the level crossing removal project is going on. I know the Liberal and National Parties would have never done it. They have made it clear that they think it is a bad idea and project. I can tell members that out of the thousands of contacts we have had on this issue, I think we have had three or four people complain about the disruption. There is no question that there is disruption. In my own travel around the electorate, I suffer that disruption just like everybody else, but everybody is very happy about the fact that an issue I started talking about 14 years ago is being fixed. That is, those three level crossings—particularly at Wharf Street.

Wharf Street was the worst level crossing in Western Australia after Denny Avenue was resolved. I am not saying that the boom gate was down continuously, but it was down for 30 minutes between 8.00 and 9.00 am. It would go up and down, but for 30 minutes out of that hour, the boom was down. It had inbound and outbound Armadale, Thornlie and Australind trains. It would then repeat. There could be queues of cars coming south on Wharf Street that would stretch way back to Centre Avenue. It was just crazy. Even now, while works are still in a disruptive stage, traffic already flows much better. Indeed, someone going north on Wharf Street does not have the fear that they will get to the traffic lights and never be able to get through. That is because the pattern of the traffic was always to preference the southbound traffic, someone would sometimes have to sit there for two sets of boom gate motions before they could go north. That is all fixed.

The new stations are going to be exceptional. The use of the land was worked through very carefully between the council, community and Metronet team. I know the Liberal and National Parties would never have done Metronet. They are opposed to public transport and want to put prices up. However, I can tell members that the residents in Cannington are looking forward to this. It is going to make a huge difference to the community. Interestingly, when the temporary bus station is no longer required, they will finally get some development on that site, because it is government-owned.

We look forward to having more residential towers there. I keep making the point that if we have residential towers in the node, three to four-storey apartment blocks will not spread into the suburbs where people have genuine criticisms. They do not want their neighbour to suddenly become a three-storey apartment block. This is an opportunity to make the most of the vacant land around Cannington. We have already seen five apartment blocks built there. The sixth is nearing completion. We look forward to having others in the area as well because we know that a denser population will make it easier to provide services there. That is a good spot. It has very effective public transport, which is being made even better.

I am very proud that something I have worked on for many years is being delivered. I want to acknowledge that at the last election, the federal government made the commitment to do the William Street level crossing, the third one. That means that all three level crossings will be fixed by the middle of the next year. That is an amazing outcome. Only a Labor government would deliver that. The Liberals and Nationals are opposed to it and think it is wrong. They criticise it constantly and can think of nothing but to harp negatively. They do not reflect Western Australians; Western Australians are positive. They like to see a strong economy and that is what we have under the leadership of the current Premier.

MR G. BAKER (South Perth) [7.58 pm]: I would like to speak on the Appropriation (Recurrent 2024–25) Bill 2024 and the Appropriation (Capital 2024–25) Bill 2024. It gives me great pleasure to speak on these bills. This budget sees the Cook government continue its record of strong and responsible financial management and it is delivering

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unprecedented levels of cost-of-living relief, providing a brighter future for Como Secondary College, investing in our clean energy future and much more. I am very pleased to be a part of this team.

We have delivered our sixth consecutive budget surplus. It is the result of very careful spending, restraint in government, cautious assumptions about our income future and the delivery of the GST deal for WA. This gives our economy a solid foundation for future work. As a result of this work, we have reduced government debt, regained the AAA credit rating and returned good governance to public sector processes. Contrast this with the previous Barnett Liberal government, which engaged in reckless spending, had deficit budgets, increased government debt, had slack or non-existent governance processes and collapsed GST revenue. This led to so much debt that it lost the AAA credit rating. It increased household charges and taxes, and unemployment went up in Western Australia. Let us remember that all this happened to the Barnett Liberal government while it was coming off the back of a boom. The Barnett government presided over the biggest minerals boom we had ever seen up until that point. Let us compare the two governments. On the one hand, we have the Cook Labor government with its record of sound financial management; on the other hand, we have the Barnett Liberal government's record of risky and poor financial management. There is no comparison with these two. I am very proud to be a part of the Cook Labor government. This responsible financial management enables us to address the key issues facing WA families, seniors and residents.

In this budget we deliver an unprecedented package of household cost-of-living measures. The \$400 energy credit continues our great work in that area, and I believe the commonwealth government has delivered a further \$300 this evening with its budget. That brings the household contribution to energy up to \$700 tonight. There is the WA school assistance package of \$150 for each primary school kid and \$250 for each high school kid. We are keeping household charges down. The average household is paying less in household charges than it was six years ago, which is an extraordinary thing and impossible to imagine under a Liberal government. We are providing free transport for school students to and from school and free transport for everyone each Sunday. We are giving out free flu vaccines in May and June for all Western Australians aged six months and older, and \$65 million to continue WA Labor's affordable airfare zone caps for regional WA residents. We are boosting the Regional Pensioner Travel Card, with an increase of \$100 to \$675, to support pensioners in regional WA with travel costs.

These are all great things because we have been hit with a double whammy of bad news on the economic front: global inflation and fast-rising interest rates. Hardworking families in South Perth and across WA have done nothing wrong, but they have seen their household budgets get squeezed. I have listened to people hit by these hardships, and the government has listened. The state government does not have the same big economic levers that the commonwealth does. It does not have any control over interest rates, and it does not provide social security. Instead, we can address household charges directly and give support to households, parents and seniors directly. As a direct result of the Cook government's sound financial management, we have very sensible measures to directly address the cost-of-living pressures faced by so many people.

This strong financial management has also been delivering for South Perth. I am not going to talk about every project our government has delivered in South Perth because I would be here all night, but I will talk about some of the highlights. I want to draw members' attention to two ongoing projects. The first project is Perth Zoo, which is in the middle of a \$40 million master plan rebuild. This rebuild has seen upgraded facilities for the public and a program of improvements in animal enclosures. Perth Zoo is one of WA's most-visited attractions, and our master plan project will see it stay that way. It is the largest outdoor classroom that we have in Western Australia. It is one of the most important educational facilities we have, and it makes an enormous contribution to our environmental conservation efforts. The investment that we are putting in there is quite extraordinary, and some of the things that are popping up down there are really good.

The second project is the upgrade to the Canning Bridge interchange. This major project will see the bus stops removed from the interchange bridge, from the middle of Canning Highway, and a second area built parallel to that above the freeway for a bus interchange, directly above the rail line platform below. This will increase the capacity of the interchange and improve traffic flow across the bridge. This project is in the planning stage and will commence in 2025. It will relieve the traffic jams around there, the snarl of pedestrians crossing the road and cars stopping behind buses in the middle of the highway. It will open that area for further development. We will see pedestrian and cycling links to nearby areas, which will be easy ways for pedestrians and cyclists to get on and off the platforms and get through that area without crossing busy highways.

This brings me to this budget and the announcement of \$600 000 for planning for a major upgrade of Como Secondary College. Como Secondary College is a project very close to my heart. It was built in the 1960s, in the same burst of high school building as Rossmoyne, Willetton, Applecross, Balga and Balcatta. Unlike these other schools, it has seen very few improvements since. One of the few improvements happened under the McGowan government with a \$1 million canteen and performance space, which was completed in 2022. Prior to this, the last major upgrade was in the 1980s. When I came to office, it was clear that this was the outstanding project overlooked by decades

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of Liberal government and Liberal local members. A growing set of local people have been raising their voices about this topic, including the Como Parents and Citizens Association president, Richard Quance; school board chair, Leon Taylor; Jesvin Karimi, former P&C president; principal Digby Mercer; South Metropolitan Region MLCs Hon Kate Doust and Hon Stephen Pratt; parents such as Amy Birch; community figures such as Sue Doherty; Nicole Taylor and Bob Davies of the P&C; and the P&Cs of the primary schools surrounding Como secondary, such as Kensington, Collier, Curtin, Como, Manning and South Perth.

Late last year, the students, staff, parents and community members engaged in a vision exercise for the school. Earlier this year, we collected 1 600 signatures on a petition calling for an upgrade, and we presented this to the Minister for Education, the member for Armadale. Thank you very much, minister, for accepting that petition.

Dr A.D. Buti: Great work there, member.

Mr G. BAKER: I was very pleased when I saw that there was \$600 000 in this year's budget for planning for upgrading Como Secondary. I congratulate the minister for the work he did there.

This is the first step to delivering that upgrade. It is more than the preparation of a business case. It is a more extensive exercise involving community and consultation, architects, engineers, site surveys and more. I encourage everyone in the South Perth community to get involved, and I will keep regular reports going out to the community. One thing I hope we can preserve at the college is the surrounding pine trees. This is one of the reasons the college is close to my heart. The Collier Pine Plantation used to cover all the land between Como secondary and Curtin University. It was the feeding ground of thousands of Carnaby's cockatoos. I grew up there and remember giant flocks of the birds screeching into the trees and eviscerating pine cones. The other day I was down at the college for a meeting and I took a phone call. I went outside and stood underneath the trees, and the largest flock of Carnaby's I have seen in a very long time flew over and settled into the trees. Very quickly I could not hear who I was talking to on the phone, and that was soon followed by pine cones dropping onto my head. I hope that in the future upgrade of the school, we can find some way to preserve that habitat because I think it has one of the largest flocks of Carnaby's cockatoos I have seen for ages.

The last thing I want to talk about from this year's budget is the significant contribution to the clean energy transition. The clean energy transition is essential for the future of Western Australia to not just reduce our carbon emissions and help reach net zero in 2050, but also help decarbonise the world. Along the way, we may open up an enormous economic potential in a new industry for Western Australia. In this budget, we announced a \$500 million fund to unlock Western Australia's strategic industrial areas and pave the way to become a global leader in clean energy. There is \$200 million for a new critical minerals advanced processing common-user facility, subject to joint funding from the commonwealth. I have not yet heard about that one tonight. There is \$324 million to undertake extensive planning and procure long-term transmission infrastructure for the state's main electricity grid to unlock industry growth and connect more renewable energy. There is \$148 million to construct common-user electricity network infrastructure in the north west interconnected system in the Pilbara. There is \$36 million to continue to reform our approvals system and slash red tape, including establishing cross-government triage teams and accelerating the rollout of Environment Online. There is also \$53 million to establish a Founders Factory accelerator in Western Australia to support entrepreneurs and startups.

The combination of wind and solar energy provides the cheapest energy cost in the world and Western Australia has one of the best combinations of both resources. These two resources will not just power Western Australia, but have the potential to become the major energy supply to East Asia. This may be the next boon for the Western Australian economy. Following on from the member for Cannington's comments, we can get there without indulging in ridiculously expensive nuclear power.

Finally, I would like to thank the Premier and the Treasurer for delivering an excellent budget. It is great news for Como Secondary College. It is great for the cost-of-living pressures that families are under. It is a great budget for Western Australia. It is the sort of budget that is the result of years of strong financial management.

I commend the bills to the house.

MR D.J. KELLY (Bassendean) [8.11 pm]: I rise to make a contribution on the 2024–25 budget—another outstanding budget by this WA Labor government. There are lots of things in the budget I could talk about, but when we talk about budgets, we can get lost in the numbers. I want to mention initially some of the really great people in my electorate who turn Bassendean into not just an electorate but a community. I want to mention a couple of people before I talk about the numbers. Firstly, Brockman Community House is a really fantastic community centre in my electorate. It provides a range of community services, including early childhood services. It is a great organisation. We funded about \$5 million for the new centre, which is now complete, and the organisation is well and truly into the new premises. A facility like that cannot run properly without great leadership. The CEO, Rosina Mastrolembo, has been there for a number of years. She was recently recognised with an award. Child Australia runs awards

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each year. She was the recipient of the WA Early Childhood Education and Care Recognition Award for 2024. I know everybody at the centre was excited about it. It was a team effort, but Rosina has been a great leader in that community for a long time. It is very fitting that she got that award. I just want to add my congratulations, Rosina. As the local member, I have enjoyed working with her throughout the whole project to get the centre funded firstly and then built. It has been an absolute pleasure and I hope we have the benefit of her leadership for many more years to come. Thank you very much, Rosina, and all the team at Brockman house.

Secondly, I want to give a shout-out to the leadership of the Bassendean Eastern Regional RSL. Obviously, we have just had Anzac Day for 2024. The team down there does an amazing job. President Andrew Robertson is a Somalia veteran; vice-president Justin Hughes was in the Navy during the first Gulf War in Kuwait; and Dave Beacham served overseas in Malaysia, up in Butterworth. They did such a great job on this Anzac Day. They do a great dawn service in Bayswater. Then they do an 11.00 am service in Bassendean. They are the two services they do in my electorate. Each year, they grow and grow. They epitomise the hardworking RSL members. Since that leadership team took over the Bassendean RSL, the place has really gone from strength to strength. I want to congratulate them for the work they do. They not only do work on that day, but also support ceremonies at various primary schools around the electorate in the lead-up to and post the day. I want to thank them.

One of the good things about Anzac Day this year was that the Bassendean Caledonian Soccer Club, one of the oldest football clubs in Western Australia, had an Anzac Day service for the first time before its senior match on the weekend following Anzac Day. That was really special. The club went back and researched its history with the original Anzacs. The club was formed in 1913, just before the First World War. A whole bunch of the team enlisted and a number of those players never came back. The club has done that research and decided that each year it is going to do an Anzac Day service. I want to congratulate the president, Rebecca, and the vice-president, Kyle, who was the emcee of the Anzac Day service they did before the match on the Sunday. It was really good. A bugler played the *Last Post*. They also had two bagpipe players, complete with kilts, who sort of dominated the proceedings in a way. It was fantastic. I really want to congratulate the team, particularly Rebecca and Kyle, for the work they did. I think Dave Beacham from the RSL came down and read the *Ode of Remembrance*. It was a really great effort.

I also want to give a shout-out to Phil Woods, who is the chairperson of the newly reformed Lockridge Progress Association. We previously had a Lockridge Progress Association, but it dwindled a few years back. Phil Woods is the new chairperson. He is determined to get it up and running again. Joseph is his vice-president. I have met with him a couple of times and I have been to one of their committee meetings. They have now got the association incorporated again. It is really important for an area like Lockridge to have a representative group that can take up issues and apply for funding and those sorts of things. I know one of the issues they are particularly interested in addressing is Main Roads Western Australia's plans to widen Lord Street through Lockridge. There is a lot of concern about that issue. It is a residential area that, in their view, is not really suited to a mini freeway going through there. I know that is one of the issues they want to take up. I look forward to working with them on that issue in particular. Congratulations to Phil and Joseph and the rest of the team for reinvigorating a Lockridge residents group.

Likewise, the Bennett Springs Residents Association had a really competent and committed leadership group for a long time. Deirdre Foster was the chairperson, with Narelle Bevan as the deputy. Those two, along with a very good committee, worked really hard for a number of years and ran a number of events. They raised a number of issues that were important to people in Bennett Springs. When both Deirdre and Narelle decided, for a range of personal reasons, that it was time to pass on the baton to a new team, there was a period when it looked as though the association may have to fold. However, I am really pleased to say that a couple of new people have stepped up. Deep Singh is the new chair and Kay Shah has put up her hand to be the deputy. There is a bit of continuity. Hoosein Ismail was the treasurer under the old leadership group and Hoosein is still part of the committee. He is going to remain as treasurer. I am really pleased that the Bennett Springs Residents Association will continue. I look forward to working with the new leadership group.

I want to give another shout-out. P&Cs do an amazing job. When P&Cs do well, our public schools do well, and when our public schools do well, our whole communities do well. P&Cs can make a really fantastic contribution to schools. I have a lot of them in my electorate, so I am a little reluctant to single out any particular individuals, but I want to recognise Nikki Rodgers, who was president of the Bassendean Primary School P&C for many years. Nikki is just a force of nature. The committee was so appreciative of the work she did that they put on a little function at the Bassendean Hotel and I was lucky enough to go down there and join them. Nikki was so appreciative that, for once, she was actually speechless! It took her a while to gather her breath when she realised that people had gone to the trouble of organising something to show their appreciation for the work she did. I know Nikki will still be around to give advice; she was always very generous with her advice to other P&Cs in my electorate. Once a term I get the P&Cs in my electorate together at the Bassendean Hotel. It is a good opportunity for me to meet them and learn what issues are important or current at those schools. It is also a good opportunity for the P&Cs to

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share information, and they do. Sometimes they hang around and keep talking long after I have left, and Nikki was always really generous with her experience and ideas for other P&Cs. Well done, Nikki. I really thank you for your work. I am sure Liv, who is the new president, will carry on a really fine tradition of great P&C presidents at Bassendean Primary School.

I will briefly mention a few other issues. This is a great budget with lots of cost-of-living relief, including a \$400 energy credit that the feds have today topped up with a further \$300, so every Western Australian household and a whole bunch of small businesses will get very significant credits on their energy bills. That is absolutely fantastic. Our record on energy prices compared with those opposite is just extraordinary. There is also the WA student assistance payment for all Western Australians who have school-age children. I encourage people in my electorate, in particular, to make sure that they sign up for that.

One of the things I am really excited about that gets a bit of commentary from the opposition is that this year we should see the completion of the Morley–Ellenbrook train line. My electorate already has train stations at Bassendean, Success Hill and Ashfield. With the addition of the Morley–Ellenbrook line, constituents in my electorate will have access to new train stations at Malaga, Noranda and Morley. The north-eastern section of the eastern suburbs was really the missing arm in Perth’s rail network. To have new train stations at Malaga, Noranda and Morley will be so important and life-changing for many of the constituents in the northern part of my electorate, particularly Lockridge, Beechboro and Bennett Springs.

Members opposite are at times very critical of Metronet. They go on about how it is costing too much money et cetera. I want to point out to them that these train lines will be there for 100 years or more. Imagine what Perth would have been like had we not built the Fremantle, Midland and Armadale train lines. That infrastructure has stood the test of time for decades. The changes we have made to the rail network, the new lines we have added, especially the Morley–Ellenbrook line, will be there for 100 years. If anyone in the future looks back at the history of this rail infrastructure, they will read the Leader of the Nationals WA or the Leader of the Liberal Party complaining about it. It really is a sad, short-sighted perspective that they bring to this debate.

I want to also quickly mention a couple of other things. There is \$2.8 billion in the budget for Western Australia’s third desalination plant. In a sense, that is a bittersweet announcement. It is great that we have such great budget circumstances that we can actually fund that infrastructure and do a whole bunch of other things, but the bitter part of it is that it is \$2.8 billion that we would not have had to spend were it not for the impacts of climate change. The only reason we have to spend that money is that the water for Perth that used to fall out of the sky into our dams is no longer there, because of climate change. We already have two desalination plants that Labor took the lead on. The third 50 gegalitre desalination plant at Alkimos will cost \$2.8 billion. Members can imagine what we could have had for \$2.8 billion but cannot because we have to spend it on a desalination plant to get water that used to fall from the sky. Members opposite always say, “Oh, you can’t do this to prevent climate change. What’s the cost?” They just have to look at what the Alkimos desalination plant costs: that is the cost of the world community failing to halt the march of climate change. That \$2.8 billion is for only half of that plant. It is planned for it to double in size, probably within the next decade, so we are looking at \$7 billion for that plant alone, to deliver water that we used to get—not for free, but at a much cheaper rate—through rainfall.

Members opposite often say, “Oh, you can’t do this. It’s going to cost a fortune. Climate change et cetera.” The cost of not dealing with climate change is enormous, and that desalination plant is just one example of the costs we will have to bear, even in regional WA. When I was the Minister for Water we had to build a pipeline from Albany to Denmark, for heaven’s sake—one of the wettest parts of Western Australia, or used to be. It can no longer rely on its local dam for its water supply. We had to run a pipe from Albany at a cost of, I think, \$25 million, to supplement Denmark’s water supply. This is happening everywhere you look around regional WA. Our drinking water supplies are failing because of climate change and the current government is picking up the tab.

I want to give a shout-out to the Minister for Health and the team at the Department of Health for bringing the Peel Health Campus back into government ownership and operation. That will happen in August. It was privatised back in 1996 or 1998 by the Liberal Court government, which privatised anything it could get its hands on. The Peel Health Campus was originally run by a contractor, Health Solutions, which was hopeless. It was appalling; it underpaid its staff and that hospital had the worst staff morale of almost any hospital in the Department of Health system. Even the previous government eventually got rid of Health Solutions, and gave a relatively short contract to Ramsay Health Care, which currently runs that hospital. The people of Peel, like anyone else in Western Australia, deserve a first-class hospital. I think we are spending—the Acting Speaker (Mrs M.R. Marshall) might be able to tell me—\$150 million to redevelop the Peel Health Campus. It is going to be run by the Department of Health, like every other first-class hospital here in WA.

The other day I met with a bunch of health workers from Fiona Stanley Hospital. They had been employed by Serco and had transitioned back into government employment as a result of an earlier decision by this Labor government.

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One thing stuck in my mind and reinforced this issue. One guy who works in logistics at Fiona Stanley Hospital—I cannot remember his name—said, “The transfer was pretty smooth. There were a few things we needed to work out on rates of pay and all that sort of stuff. But the thing that really changed when we went from Serco to working for the health department is we were treated a lot better. Under Serco it was their way or the highway. When we became health department employees, we were treated better by management.” That counts a lot for workers. I hear that over and over again.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr D.J. KELLY: The way they are treated matters a lot to workers. I am sure that staff at Peel Health Campus are looking forward to going back to being government employees.

There has been quite a bit to say—I will keep this brief—about the encroachment or invasion of the religious right in the Liberal Party. It is a sad situation when many longstanding supporters of the Liberal Party look at the current state of the party and ask, “What on earth has happened to the Liberal Party?” There is the fiasco with the candidate who has been pre-selected in Albany. He suggested that members of the LGBTIQ+ community includes paedophiles, which is really disgusting. The Leader of the Liberal Party quite rightly said that they were not the values of the Liberal Party. She described his comments as bizarre. Despite the Leader of the Liberal Party making those comments, he was still pre-selected. Is the Leader of the Liberal Party going to go down to Albany and stand beside this candidate and say that he deserves to be elected after describing his views on the world as bizarre? The position is untenable. The Liberal Party is a sad reflection of what it used to be. It used to be a mainstream party, but not anymore. Heaven forbid the Liberal Party is re-elected to form government in Western Australia.

This is a fantastic budget. I could say a lot more, but other members in the chamber are desperate to contribute to this debate, so I will leave it there. Congratulations to the Premier, Treasurer and cabinet for this year’s budget.

MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Thornlie) [8.32 pm]: I am very pleased to rise tonight to address the Appropriation (Recurrent 2024–25) Bill 2024 and the Appropriation (Capital 2024–25) Bill 2024 and acknowledge the tremendous and excellent work done by the Treasurer, Premier and the whole government team. Before I address aspects of the state budget, I would like to put on record my appreciation for the wonderful work done by members of a community of which I am a proud member; that is, the Western Australian cycling community. I acknowledge the organisers of the Perth Hills Gran Fondo, which was held just a few weeks ago on 28 April. The event is a magnificent way to showcase the tourism values, natural beauty, general aesthetics and wonderful environment of the Perth hills. The race began in Karragullen and went across the City of Kalamunda, through the City of Gosnells in part and into the City of Armadale. The event is designed to promote the Perth hills as a cycling region. There is something really special about this event. I applaud the organisers and acknowledge Ian Wee, the key organiser, for the way in which the event connected with local businesses in the area—the orchardists, the various purveyors of fine goods and fine wines, the viticulturists, apiarists and producers of all that wonderful produce in the Perth hills. The event made a connection between visitors—the cycling community in this case—and those businesses. It was tremendously done. We had the joy of being able to regularly visit some of the cafes in the area. It was not just about this event; it was about the lead-up to it and the way in which people who had limited ability or had not done much training were nurtured along and given the support they needed to complete this challenging event months before it took place. What is more, the event was a fundraising effort for a charitable organisation known as Street Friends WA, which raises awareness about homelessness. It raises funds to provide warm clothing, bedding and equipment for rough sleepers. That was an added bonus to the way in which the event was run. Sponsorship was provided by Grange Insurance Solutions, Perth Integrated Health and Happy Health Care, which is a National Disability Insurance Scheme provider. Interestingly, we had rather classy support vehicles from Barbagallo Motor Group. Some five or so Maseratis were the main accompanying vehicles for the event. We felt safe travelling around and were well supported in that way. Planning for the event in April 2025 is already well underway. That is just an indication of one of the events in the cycling community. The Seven Gravel Race was held the weekend just gone in Nannup. I was very pleased to compete in that and see the quality of some of the elite riders.

Dr A.D. Buti: How’d you go?

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: I completed the 125 kilometres in six hours 54 minutes. I felt pretty sore afterwards. What is more important to note, member, is that right now as we speak, two Western Australians are competing in Italy in the Giro d’Italia stage 10, which began in the city of Pompei and finishes on the Cusano Mutri mountain top. At the start of this stage, Ben O’Connor was in fourth place and Michael Storer in eleventh place. Some people would be interested to note that this international sporting event has an Aquinas versus Trinity feel about it. It is wonderful that in our Western Australian cycling community we have rank amateurs like me and elite riders, such as O’Connor and Storer. It really is amazing. Of course, just a couple of years ago in the 2022 Giro d’Italia, Jai Hindley won the event.

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Dr A.D. Buti: Some people would say you are elite!

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: The member is very kind.

This state budget is a tremendous budget that deals with all kinds of headwind challenges. Just in the last financial year, our population has increased by 94 000. The McGowan and Cook governments have created 300 000 jobs; our unemployment rate has stayed below four per cent for 29 of the last 30 months. The current unemployment rate is 3.4 per cent, which is a remarkable statistic coupled with a projected growth in the domestic economy of 5.25 per cent. We have business investment at 13 per cent this year and, at the same time, an outstanding investment in infrastructure. Over the next four years, \$42.4 billion will go into infrastructure. We have an operating surplus in our state budget of \$2.6 billion. That is very useful when we are still aiming to reduce our net debt, which is at \$28.6 billion. All sorts of measures are in place to reduce the interest bill that is acquired when there is a net debt. Our level of net debt is exceptional when compared with other jurisdictions. It really is something.

There are highlight features of this budget for electorates right across the state. I am sure people in the Thornlie electorate will be very pleased to hear about the \$400 electricity payment. That is another contribution. In fact, it is the fourth such electricity credit. As we have just heard, in the federal budget tonight there is an additional \$300. In effect, constituents in Thornlie will benefit from a \$700 credit towards their electricity over coming months. That is very welcome indeed. Another wonderful cost-of-living initiative is the WA student assistance payment, with up to \$250 available for high school students and \$150 for each kindy and primary school student. That will be very well received. I know that many people have already received that money by using the ServiceWA app and other means to access the funds. That is another great initiative. There are other things, like free public transport for school-age children. That is a great cost-of-living advantage that this budget brings about. It really is helping Western Australians in so many ways. I know a lot of people appreciate the fact that transport fares are capped at the two-zone amount. That is really appreciated.

Of course, in Thornlie and Gosnells we do not have a train service at the moment. People are very much looking forward to that train service resuming. I have to pay tribute to the people of my electorate for the stoic way in which they are continuing to get about. They are, in the main, working and need to get to their places of work, but they are doing that without the benefit of the train service. They are just getting on with things, but very much looking forward to the works being completed. Overwhelmingly, I hear from constituents how impressed they are by the way the shutdown is being used by the construction teams to advance the works in such an expeditious way. People are really impressed with how things are moving along. I think people are feeling that there is a bit of pain, but they can see what is going on and that every detail has been planned to make maximum use of the shutdown time. There is a sense of the community being a part of the development of this project. It has the community buy-in, which is really welcome and really impressive. It is something that we will all be proud of once it is completed. We will all enjoy the benefit of it. It is something that we can all feel we have gone through and we have suffered along with in some way, and therefore have an extra degree of connection with this project. I think it is great when an engineering project, such as Metronet, actually has that level of community interest and community buy-in. That is a really exciting thing.

I want to turn to the special purpose account aspect of the budget, which is sometimes overlooked. I see here some excellent initiatives around the climate action fund. I congratulate the Minister for Environment for his work here. It is really good to see. Although it is not directly connected to this particular special-purpose account, I want to make a comment about the offshore wind acreage release that we saw a few weeks ago—7 000 square kilometres. That is a massive area, and well offshore, in the main. Yet we hear all sorts of concerns from people. I have to say that my concern is that those concerns are, in the main, going unaddressed. People are raising all sorts of crazy ideas about wind turbines having thousands of litres of oil in them and that that could leak into the ocean. People are raising concerns about wind turbines being a problem for migratory whales. All sorts of issues have been brought up. People are saying that they fear that they will have their views blighted by wind turbines on the horizon. It just seems that a head of steam, anger and misunderstanding is building up.

I really implore the various proponents—knowing that there are a number of companies, organisations and corporations that may well bid for acreage and will be competing with one another for some of that area to place these wind turbines—to work together at this stage so that they can allay any of these community concerns before they get completely out of hand. I think the formation of some sort of coalition of potential offshore wind turbine operators would be a really valuable step. That way, whenever some crazy idea is being put forward on talkback radio and going completely unchecked, it would be possible for there to be some rebuttal, sensible commentary and factual information presented. I really think that is necessary before the community sentiment rises to a point that there are concerns about the degree of social licence that these operators might have. I really look forward to that.

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I return to the issue of the special purpose accounts. I am very impressed to see the digital capability fund and the aspects of cybersecurity and the ability for data to be shared across jurisdictions and legislative initiatives. I turn now to another area—the issue of ecological thinning and the specific account for that very purpose. I think all of us who are keeping an eye on the issue of climate change and how it impacts Western Australia have known about the 20 per cent decline in annual rainfall. That has been on our minds for some time. But now we are beginning to see the consequences of a drying climate on the natural ecology, especially in the northern jarrah forest. That is really telling. I observed that up until about December, maybe into early January, areas that had in fact been burnt in the last couple of years, around the time of the last election, were just regenerating. There had been sufficient rain last winter to just enable things to improve. But once we had that heatwave in February, it was just killed off. There was a downward step again. That was really concerning.

Ecological thinning is primarily targeted at areas of forest where there has been extensive logging. We have been in a logging rotation in state forest that, especially with Jarrah forests, where the stems come back in a very dense way. They get to a height of a couple of metres or so and just do not grow anymore. They are competing with one another for what groundwater is in the soil profile. Then they just run out of water and do not grow. They do not necessarily always die, but there is no advancement of some of the stems to become big trees again. That is the reasoning behind ecological thinning—to thin things out so that there can be some growth of bigger trees. I welcome the section in the state budget relating to ecological thinning to help pay for that. If it is not able to become entirely self-funding, it should be able to recover its costs. As well as seeing the forest regenerate, we should see the costs recovered by the selling of some of that timber through the ecological thinning process.

On the matter of timber, I also want to mention the softwood plantation expansion. This is something that I am very concerned about. We are not getting enough trees in the ground for plantation purposes. I am pleased to see that there is money in the state budget for various land acquisitions where necessary and perhaps for incentive mechanisms to help landholders make the business decision to put a softwood plantation on their property.

I am very impressed with the content of this state budget. I look forward to exploring the details of it during our estimates week. There are many commendable features, but, overwhelmingly, I think all Western Australians can rest assured that we have the best finances, the best-managed economic portfolios and the best-managed books in the country. Just as we led the world in the management of COVID-19, I think the same can be said about economic management in this state. We are absolutely leading not only in Australia, but also across the western world. If we compare WA with other states and sub-national jurisdictions within, say, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, it is pretty clear that the quality of budgetary management in Western Australia is first class.

I am very happy to support the state budget that is before us.

MR P.C. TINLEY (Willagee) [8.51 pm]: What a lovely time of the night to rise and make a contribution to —

Dr A.D. Buti: Like the good old days.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: It is like the old days; we would be looking for the supper menu by now!

Mr D.A. Templeman: Are you about to give another one of your outstanding five-minute speeches?

Mr P.C. TINLEY: I am; I am about to give forth, Leader of the House, and give my erudite contribution to what has been a volume of cheerleading from this side for an outstanding piece of work by the cabinet and the government of Western Australia. What a great state to live in. What a great place to be in at this time in our lives. This state is in rude health. That is the only way to describe it—rude health. Member after member has got to their feet and talked about those 300 000 jobs that have been created since 2017 and have added to what we like to call this great state’s “happy headache”, as more and more people realise that the land of milk and honey is very much in the west of Australia, where opportunities abound.

I read the Chamber of Minerals and Energy’s state of the industry report released just over a month ago, which referred to many things and metrics within the largest industry sector in our state, the resources sector, with a value of about \$115 billion. It said that at the time of printing, there were 10 000 job vacancies in the resources sector. They were not made up. They were not hypothecated from one thing or another; they were genuine jobs that were advertised as ready to be filled. Is it any wonder that the rate of migration across the great country of Australia to the great state of Western Australia has been so full and strong?

This is all the economics of it—the numbers in the budget and what they are allocated to. Every year, the government writes a \$37 billion cheque for the purposes of growing and supporting this state and finding opportunities for all Western Australians. This budget is no different. However, these budgets are done within the framework of a theory, a view, a set of values or an ambition, and they are all contained within this budget, not least of which is the way that we want to add to the standard of living and quality of life of a Western Australian, no matter where

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one lives in this massive state. As many have said in the past in this chamber, I want to live in a community, not an economy. The numbers describe what we want to do, and they are an expression of the ambition that we have for ourselves as a people; however, it is about the quality of life that comes from the community that we create as a result of this. No greater opportunity exists than to give a person a job and the dignity of employment—not just any job, but a job in the technical spectrum in a high-wage jurisdiction like Western Australia that befits the sorts of circumstances and ambitions that they have for themselves and their families to make sure that they can grow and be a massive contributor. The reason we want them to have a good, productive job is that we want them to be good contributors to the society that we are trying to create—the community, not the economy.

As we look to what this budget says, we know that the Premier and the cabinet have grand designs about the idea of what the future economy of Western Australia will look like, and it is encased in the idea of a diversified economy. I want to pause and talk about the history of our economy. The history of our economy is underpinned by the red rock, followed by oil and gas. I have to be quite honest: as a jurisdiction in this Federation of Australia, global capital was always going to find us; it was always going to come to Western Australia. Yes, successive governments had to plough the field and deregulate things and provide access to land and opportunity, but we have grown into one of the best mining and resources jurisdictions in the world. We are consistently in the top five of the Fraser Institute’s assessment of mining jurisdictions. If someone wants to dig a hole, we are world champions at it. If someone wants to build a railway line over a thousand kilometres, we are world champions at it. We are massive infrastructure builders and we are massive developers of great opportunities for all Western Australians. Now that we come to the idea of a diverse economy, it is a little bit of a different fight. We will have to go out and hunt for it because we are in competition with the rest of the world. We have our ambition for downstream processing for lithium, rare earths and critical minerals; those things are abundant in the world. It is incumbent on us to decide what is our natural competitive advantage and make sure that we invest at that point.

Another jurisdiction that has had to adapt to this is Victoria. Victoria does not have the natural endowment that we have; it had a fair abundance of minerals and metals, particularly in the Bass Strait and onshore, but the reality is that it had to invent a service economy. The number one contributor to the economy in Victoria is education. It is the largest state for international education, and it underpins much of its economy. It is a service-based economy. South Australia, not dissimilarly, has a bit more of a mixed economy, as has Queensland. When Peter Beattie was Premier, he invented the “smart state” idea. It added on to resources in that jurisdiction and became a world leader in biotechnology, attracting foreign direct investment on that basis. Western Australia, under Premier Cook and the cabinet, has clearly set its mind on the idea that we must diversify the economy because we need to maintain the standard of living that we have grown used to. We inherited it from our parents and must now pass it on to future generations. That is very clear and evident in the budget. We can look at the spend around critical minerals development, the strategic industrial areas that are going to be needed and the economic infrastructure to support that, as well as the various arrangements around science and innovation and the spend in those areas.

We can always do more. There is not one area of the budget in which any one of us would not get up and say that we need to more. However, as we have only a finite resource in the amount that we can spend, as healthy as it is, there is a limitation to what we can do. It is more than the dollars a government spends; it is the policy effort that ensures that it actually gets the outcomes it wants.

One of the great opportunities that we all centre on is this idea that is often talked about, particularly in the southern suburbs, around AUKUS. The concept is to manufacture and base submarines, strategic assets, in Australia to support us and the rest of the Five Eyes community, particularly with the United States and the United Kingdom basing some of their nuclear submarines here. It underpins the dangerous times we are coming to live in. Geostrategic pivoting and readjustment are going on as we adjust to the growth of not only a great power in the form of China but also the middle powers of Indonesia, which will be in the G20 and G7 in our lifetime, and Vietnam and Malaysia. They are starting to make massive contributions and expect to be included at the top table when it comes to the future of our region. Things are changing. We need a sense of place that identifies where our contribution to the future prosperity and security of our region will be. That means we also need an industrial base that can support it. AUKUS presents that opportunity.

The defence industry within Western Australia is modest compared with what it could be and needs to be, and certainly compared with other states. We are in competition with all the states, no doubt, but certainly with South Australia in the form of growing our surface and subsurface fleets. Going from 11 combat vessels to 26 is a big ask for a small country like Australia. Western Australia is right at the core of that. Inside that, the skills and support that are needed to achieve the outcomes of that diversified economy will need a whole-of-community effort. We know that under the AUKUS plan some 500-plus US families and 400 UK families will be moving to Western Australia for the purposes of supporting the ambition around AUKUS. That is just the submarine program,

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let alone all the prime contractors that will go to support and deliver those outcomes and that capability within that same framework. They will all have people moving here.

We are going to see an exponential jump in the non-mining sector of Western Australia. I have a personal view on that: I do not think we are giving it the full-throated support that it needs in policy thinking. The erstwhile effort of the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation, under the leadership of Rebecca Brown and Linda Dawson, is doing a fantastic job, but Defence West is 25 people, and they are all trying very hard to achieve an outcome that is so big and so large. Just by way of understanding the balance here, the resources sector is a \$115 billion industry. The next nearest to it is agriculture at about \$10 billion. There is a triple-digit, internationally focused and commodity-based economy and then we have agriculture. Both those industry sectors have their own department. The Department of Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety and many other agencies, including JTSI for the development side of it, look after the resources sector. The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development looks after ag. We have AUKUS alone in the defence industry and could add, by some estimates—these are fairly early days for these numbers—between \$25 billion and \$45 billion value to the economy of Western Australia and all the concomitant jobs that come with that sort of thing. It needs much more heft from not only the government but also industry to step up and take advantage of the opportunity.

As I said, this is a fantastic budget that looks very much like it underpins the narrative of what the Cook Labor government wants to achieve for future generations of Western Australians. We want them to have a quality of life and a standard of living that we in this place can all be proud to have taken a part in delivering. On that note, I recommend the bills to the house.

MRS M.R. MARSHALL (Rockingham) [9.03 pm]: I am honoured to rise today to make a contribution on the 2024–25 state budget and the Appropriation (Capital 2024–25) Bill 2024 and the Appropriation (Recurrent 2024–25) Bill 2024. It is my first budget as the member for Rockingham. As a former staffer to the member for Balcatta and a campaign organiser at WA Labor, I love budget time. I am usually sat at a desk with snacks and a budget bingo card, watching over the state or federal budget, so this year it was a great privilege to be sat in this place while the Treasurer delivered the 2024–25 Western Australian state budget.

This is a state budget to be proud of. I thank and commend our new Treasurer for her leadership and strong economic management, which has delivered a forecast surplus of \$2.6 billion for Western Australia and has meant that our government can do what is right for WA. Because our government has managed the finances responsibly, we are able to provide Western Australians with the support they need and focus on what matters, such as providing cost-of-living relief and boosting housing supply.

I want to use my time today to talk about how the budget will impact families and communities in my electorate of Rockingham. It will not surprise members here that, as a former campaign organiser, I love campaigning and having face-to-face conversations with everyday people. As a local member, I still make time to go doorknocking, make phone calls, host mobile offices and coffee catch-ups, and open my office outside business hours so I can be as accessible as possible and hear the concerns and ideas of my community. I can say with conviction that cost-of-living pressures are the biggest issue facing families in Rockingham right now. This budget shows that the Treasurer, the Premier and the entire Cook Labor government are tackling this issue head-on.

The state budget looks after the community, in particular the most vulnerable in our community, as much as a state government possibly can. The budget is all about helping with cost-of-living pressures. It is designed to help local families, pensioners and small businesses. With a record \$762 million in support for WA families, we are able to deliver a new \$400 electricity credit to every WA household. This credit will be extended to be delivered to small businesses as well. Families with kids in school will receive the WA student assistance payment of \$150 for each kindergarten and primary school-age student and \$250 for each high school student. This is on top of our investment earlier in the year to provide free public transport to all WA students. This means that a Rockingham family of four with two school-age children could receive \$1 460 in cost-of-living assistance this year.

Rockingham is the destination of choice for retirement, and it is home to an ageing population. On top of the \$400 household electricity credit, pensioners in my community will receive a further \$334 energy assistance payment, rebates on local government rates and water service charges, vehicle licence fee discounts, and the seniors cost-of-living rebate, which was reinstated by our government after it was cut by the Liberal–National government. They will also benefit from a discount of up to 50 per cent on the emergency services levy, free public transport for seniors and the free flu immunisation program. This will mean that a pensioner in Rockingham could receive \$2 400 in cost-of-living assistance if they have the eligible concession cards.

We have also made respiratory syncytial virus immunisations free for all new newborn babies, providing parents with \$300 in savings. Young parents who have a newborn baby and are renting in Rockingham could receive \$700 in cost-of-living assistance. They could also benefit from our \$10 000 first home buyer construction grant or the

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stamp duty relief for first home buyers. In this budget, we are making changes to stamp duty for the first time in 10 years, increasing the limit from \$430 000 to \$450 000 to help get more homebuyers into the market.

As I have mentioned a lot in this place, I strongly believe in the transformative power of education. One reason I was motivated to join the Labor Party as a young 19-year-old was the shambolic state of our TAFE system, which was making vocational training unaffordable and unachievable for my friends and peers. I am proud that this budget also extends our government's highly successful fee-free TAFE program through the 2025 training year. More than 130 fee-free TAFE qualifications and skill sets are available through this scheme, including in areas of skills shortage such as early childhood education and care, health care, age and disability care, technology and digital skills, hospitality and tourism, construction, and agriculture. We have also created a new Construction Training Fund, which will help encourage more apprentices into jobs in the construction industry and help apprentices with cost-of-living pressures; we will provide a milestone payment of \$1 000 during their apprenticeship, along with an additional \$1 000 rebate at the start and end of their training to cover the costs of tools and equipment. Our investment in TAFE will ensure that Western Australians are trained in the skills for the jobs of the future.

Providing quality education at all levels is an important responsibility of government, and this state budget includes an investment of \$1.6 billion over the next four years to build, redevelop and upgrade Western Australian public schools. The budget includes \$60 million for Rockingham Senior High School and Rockingham Senior High School Education Support Centre, and \$40 million to Safety Bay Senior High School. We are making sure that no child is left behind, regardless of their circumstances or postcode.

This state budget shows that our government is committed to doing everything it can to boost WA housing supply, improve housing affordability and bolster support services for those doing it tough. To support our most vulnerable, the budget will deliver a boost of \$92 million to the state's homelessness service providers, representing an unprecedented increase in funding for the services that do so much good for our fellow Western Australians. We are investing \$5 million to provide an incentive of \$5 000 to owners of currently vacant properties to offer them to Western Australians on the long-term rental market. This program has already converted 150 homes from holiday homes into long-term rentals and in a tight rental market, every home counts. We are continuing to deliver the WA rent relief program, which provides tenants at risk of eviction up to \$5 000 in direct rental support to keep more people in their homes. Our government's investment in social housing has already delivered 2 100 social homes, with another 1 000 under construction.

Having a strong public health system that delivers accessible quality care is important to my community. As we heard from the Minister for Health earlier, we are committed to delivering world-class health care for every Western Australian. This state budget delivers a record additional \$3.2 billion investment in health to deliver more beds for our hospitals, more nurses and doctors, and further reforms to address ramping and surgery wait times. This investment boost will increase WA public hospital capacity, add more beds, improve patient flow, upgrade digital systems and deliver on key infrastructure investments like the mental health emergency centre and behavioural assessment urgent care centre at Rockingham General Hospital.

We are also taking over the 75-bed Bethesda Health Care clinic in Cockburn to provide more public mental health services to the southern suburbs, making sure that Rockingham families can receive appropriate quality care, close to home. The budget also delivers \$39 million for the rapid expansion of child development services to provide an additional 114 health professionals, such as paediatricians, clinical nurse specialists, speech pathologists, occupational therapists, psychologists and audiologists, to help meet the unprecedented surge in demand, an announcement that I know is welcomed by local Rockingham families and our school staff and educators.

We are making it easier to access emergency services by expanding WA's virtual emergency department to include mental health services, which will reduce emergency department visits and ambulance ramping. It is already proven that these investments in our emergency department reform are working, with a 30 per cent decrease in ambulance ramping across the South Metropolitan Health Service in the six months to March, compared with the same period last year. We are committed to building the women's and babies' hospital at Murdoch, the only responsible location for it to be built. This will mean Rockingham families will have access to expert care closer to home. It means more birthing and maternity choices for local women and families, and it means more accessible specialised gynaecological services for Rockingham women. Our investment in health is working.

Just last week I was out doorknocking late on Friday to discuss the state budget with my community and I was unfortunately bitten on the finger by a dog. It was nothing serious, but it did draw blood, and being pregnant I wanted to be extra cautious. I rang the maternity ward hotline at RGH and after a quick phone consult, they recommended that I visit the hospital's emergency department or the Rockingham Medicare Urgent Care Clinic to get it checked by a doctor and get a referral for antibiotics.

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I went to the urgent care clinic, which we opened last year with Hon Madeleine King, the federal member for Brand, at about 4.15 pm on a Friday, and I left at 5.30 pm with the all clear and a script for antibiotics in hand, saving a trip to the emergency department and the additional pressure on our WA public hospitals. Our investment in health is working and I am pleased to report the dog owner was a Labor voter! All was forgiven.

Mr D.A. Templeman: What sort of dog was it?

Mrs M.R. MARSHALL: It was a little black thing. A little mutt. It is always the little dogs we have to watch out for!

This state budget also delivers \$96 million of new investment for family and domestic violence prevention, response and reform initiatives to help tackle the scourge of domestic violence. As part of this new package, \$3.1 million will be used to boost capacity of existing family and domestic violence community-based counselling and advocacy services, something that I have been advocating for on behalf of South Coastal Health and Community Services, a wonderful service provider in the heart of Rockingham.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and congratulate South Coastal's CEO Dr Gill Walker and her Babblingur Mia nursing and midwifery team who were this week awarded the prestigious WA Nursing and Midwifery Excellence in person-centred care team award for their culturally safe and holistic clinical services provided to Aboriginal families. Last year the Babblingur Mia team assisted with 29 births and 300 child immunisations, and increased antenatal appointments by 14 per cent, which delivered improved health outcomes for Aboriginal children. Well done, Gill and Babblingur Mia, it is a truly deserved recognition of the remarkable and outstanding support you provide to Western Australian Aboriginal families.

It has been nearly 10 months since I had the privilege of being elected at the Rockingham by-election. In that time, I have been relentless in my pursuit of more government investment in Rockingham—I am sometimes proudly referred to as needy by some of our ministers—but Rockingham deserves the best, and I am pleased that the Cook Labor government supports my vision for Rockingham and is committed to delivering investment for my community, supporting our ecotourism ambitions, and ensuring we are AUKUS ready.

In this state budget, we are delivering \$2.75 million to upgrade the Penguin Island jetty, making it safer and more accessible for visitors and staff to the island. We are delivering \$1 million towards the first stage delivery of the Cape Peron recreational master plan, a plan that I am looking forward to the minister delivering and releasing to the community soon and that will highlight our government's support for protecting Cape Peron's natural environment and enhancing the region with sustainable investment and ecotourism opportunities. We are also supporting private investment in Rockingham, like the recently opened Tyrecycle facility, the opening up of new industrial land at Latitude 32 and working with a developer on the Wanliss marina.

We are also committed to improving road safety and making sure that we invest in projects that will help get people on our roads home safely. We are providing \$231 000 in funding to provide necessary upgrades to the intersection of Read Street and Malibu Road as part of our black spot program. As part of the upgrades, we are moving the pedestrian crossing further away from the roundabout and extending the 40-kilometre-an-hour school zone. Our local community has been asking for these upgrades, in particular the Safety Bay Senior High School community and local traffic wardens Conrad and Jan, and now we are delivering them.

Rockingham will also receive \$2 million from the Cook Labor government to make necessary upgrades to the Ennis Avenue–Dixon Road intersection to improve safety conditions for drivers and assist with easing traffic by extending and adding both slip and acceleration lanes. Rockingham locals who drive through this intersection during peak hour traffic know just how critical these upgrades are.

Finally, I want to celebrate our government's commitment to improving access to community sport and quality recreational infrastructure in Rockingham. It is a core belief of mine that everyone should be able to experience the thrill of playing community sport and belonging to a team. Sport is fundamental to Rockingham's community spirit, and we are spoiled for choice with many great clubs for all ages and interests. We have a long history of thriving sporting clubs and strong local participation. However, a lot of clubs in Rockingham have existed for several decades, and as a result the facilities are dated and sometimes no longer fit for purpose, so in several instances clubs have moved out of the area when newer facilities are built nearby, such as my former club the Rockingham City Football Club, that are now based at the state-of-the-art Lark Hill Sports Complex facility in Secret Harbour.

Growing up in Rockingham, I spent many Saturday mornings playing netball locally at the Mike Barnett Sports Complex. It is more than 15 years since I last played netball there, but in that time the indoor capacity has not changed. During the Rockingham by-election campaign, I met with the Rockingham Flames and Basketball WA, and I was disheartened to learn that its basketball club has 400 kids on its waiting list due to lack of court capacity. That is 400 local kids missing out on all the benefits of playing community sport, so I am proud that we are

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delivering \$10 million for additional courts and much-needed maintenance works at the Mike Barnett complex, \$2 million of which has already been delivered for roof and ventilation upgrades, and they are already making a difference for players in the stadium. I look forward to working with the City of Rockingham on the delivery of further indoor courts to meet the growing demand for indoor ball sports in my community.

It is truly a privilege to be the member for Rockingham. We were well represented by the former Premier, Hon Mark McGowan, and I am honoured to continue his legacy of delivering for Rockingham. Local people still tell me how much they loved Mark and remind me that I have big shoes to fill. But with the state budget delivering record support and investment in the issues that matter for Rockingham families I know I am on the right track, and with this state budget I know our government is on the right track too. I commend the budget to the house.

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