



Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

FORTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION
2022

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 24 February 2022

Legislative Assembly

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THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr S.J. Price) took the chair at 9.00 am, acknowledged country and read prayers.

PUBLIC HOUSING — ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR — EAST VICTORIA PARK—KENSINGTON

Petition

MS H.M. BEAZLEY (Victoria Park) [9.01 am]: I have a petition that has been certified by the clerks from 52 petitioners in the following terms —

To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned, say

Street safety along Hertford St and Basinghall St (boundaries Etwell St and Jarrah Rd) has declined dramatically in recent years. Tenure in this area has 24 privately owned houses whilst 50 houses are Social Housing and under the management of Department of Communities. According to ABS Census 2016 East Victoria Park—Kensington had 184 social houses in the area, meaning that this small area holds 27.17% of all of the state housing in the area. With 60% of houses in the small area occupied by Social Housing a noted risk can be assumed as those with historical antisocial behaviours have been placed in close proximity to one another, this has resulted in increased antisocial behaviour in public areas as well as an increase in crime related activities on not only the two streets but the surrounding suburb.

Now we ask the Legislative Assembly

To consider the risks associated with this high-density social housing pocket and reduce the number of houses to within a safe ratio. It is understood by the petitioners that this is not a task easily achieved and in the interim, we ask that an increase in police presence may be provided to the Kensington Police Department to reduce the crime in the area, alongside better lighting and CCTV. Furthermore in relation to 24–26 Hertford St, 18 Hertford St, 127 Basinghall St and 137 Basinghall St these are all Zoned as R20 dwellings stated by PlanWA, however they do not adhere to this zoning and are already over developed.

[See petition 27.]

CITY OF MELVILLE — PARKS AND RESERVES — ZONING

Petition

MS K.E. GIDDENS (Bateman) [9.03 am]: I have a petition that has been certified by the clerks from 367 petitioners in the following terms —

To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned, say that the Laurie Withers Reserve and Jack Martin Reserve in Kardinya must be ratified as official parks in the City of Melville. An article in the Herald Newspaper on 15 January 2022 indicated that the State Government had rejected the request for parks in Melville to be officially listed as Parks i.e. Open Public Space, with the intention that these areas would be zoned for Residential purposes. However, the two parks of concern (Laurie Withers Reserve and Jack Martin Reserve) are identified as Public Open Space in the northern catchment of Kardinya in documentation produced by the Statutory Planning Commission of the Western Australian Planning Commission associated with the Kardinya District Activity Centre Plan in December 2021. The approval of 9-12 storey commercial and residential development by WAPC in December 2021, was based on consideration of these reserves being listed as Public Open Space, to ensure liveability of the suburb given the approved densities for this area. These local green spaces are currently listed as Public Open Space and are important parks in the northern urban catchment of Kardinya. They have children's playgrounds and mature native trees, which provide important tree canopy to prevent urban heat sink. The parks are critical for the mental and physical wellbeing of local residents who use the park for recreational activities, including children's playgrounds, birthday parties, community social gatherings, picnics, exercise such as walking/jogging and dog walking. This is particularly critical given the high level of infill that is occurring in this part of Kardinya, associated with subdivisions and the high-density apartment development that has been approved with the Kardinya District Activity Centre Plan. The Kardinya community understands the need for urban infill and higher density living introduced with the Kardinya District Activity Centre Plan. However, maintaining critical Open Public Space in areas of high density is of great concern for Kardinya

residents – ensuring that the Laurie Withers Reserve and Jack Martin Reserve are officially listed as Parks is essential for the well-being of residents and to ensure a healthy and vibrant community in this area. Open green space with high canopy cover has been recognised as increasingly important for responding to climate change, including maintaining substantially lower levels of heat in suburban environments.

Now we ask the Legislative Assembly

To ensure that Laurie Withers Reserve and Jack Martin Reserve in Kardinya are ratified as official parks (Public Open Green Space) in the City of Melville.

[See petition 28.]

PAPERS TABLED

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

ROAD SAFETY — SHADOWS OF SUMMER CAMPAIGN

Statement by Minister for Road Safety

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Road Safety) [9.06 am]: On Saturday, 19 December, I was joined by the Road Safety Commissioner, Adrian Warner, and representatives from the Western Australia Police Force at Bathers Beach in Fremantle to launch the Shadows of Summer campaign. This campaign, which has been running over the summer months, has seen “shadows” cast on walkways across the state to remember Western Australians who have tragically lost their lives over the past 12 months. Last year, 166 people died on WA roads. That is 166 lives too many. These shadows represent those fatalities. The shadows shine a light on the scale of WA’s road toll, which, sadly, represents mums, dads, sisters, brothers, mates and work colleagues who were not around to enjoy the summer and festive period with their loved ones.

It is hoped that when members of the public see these shadows in their local communities, it will prompt a conversation about the number of lives lost and make them reflect on their own behaviour when it comes to road safety. The shadows are currently in several locations, including Fremantle, Scarborough Beach, Hillarys Boat Harbour, Northam, Albany, Geraldton and Mandurah. Over the festive period WA police ramped up their patrols, their drug and alcohol testing and their use of mobile road safety cameras. This additional effort helped to keep motorists safe and prevent other road users from becoming another shadow of summer. I would like to acknowledge the work undertaken by the Road Safety Commission to develop this campaign and thank it for the extensive engagement it undertook with local communities, particularly in regional areas. I also acknowledge and thank WA police for their efforts over the festive period. While many of us enjoyed well-earned breaks and time with friends and family, many members of the Western Australia Police Force made great sacrifices to help keep communities across Western Australia safe.

POLICE — MENTAL HEALTH CO-RESPONSE PROGRAM

Statement by Minister for Police

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Police) [9.09 am]: I rise to inform the house of the expansion of the mental health co-response initiative, which continues to be a very effective assistance to members of the public during situations that may escalate into a critical incident. The mental health co-response program is a joint initiative between the Western Australia Police Force, the Mental Health Commission and the Department of Health. The MHCR aims to divert people experiencing mental health distress away from the criminal justice system and hospital emergency departments. The agreed outcomes of the mental health co-response model for people exhibiting a mental health crisis who come into contact with the Western Australia Police Force are outlined as being: improved access to timely mental health assessments, treatment and support; a reduction in emergency department presentations and hospital admissions; increased accessibility to early intervention and diversion from the criminal justice system; a reduced risk of injury to Western Australian police and individuals during a mental health crisis; improved awareness, confidence and decision-making of WA police in responding to mental health-related cases; and improved collaboration between police, mental health services and/or other agencies involved in the management of mental health crisis events.

The original mental health co-response model comprised two teams, and was later expanded to four. In 2020, the McGowan state government announced a \$20.2 million commitment to provide additional mobile mental health teams in the metropolitan area and expand the mental health co-response program into Bunbury and Geraldton. As part of the 2021 election commitment, funding was allocated to the Mental Health Commission to expand the current mental health co-response program, increasing metropolitan capacity to seven days per week in the eight metropolitan police districts. The budget submission also included provision for an additional authorised mental health practitioner at the Perth Police Operations Centre and the Perth watch house.

In September 2021 the Geraldton mental health co-response team commenced operation. It included an authorised mental health practitioner and an additional Aboriginal mental health worker to provide a seven-day service in Geraldton. The inclusion of the Aboriginal mental health worker is important, particularly given the recent announcement of the newly created Department of Health Aboriginal community liaison officer positions across

the state to support the implementation of region-specific Aboriginal suicide prevention plans. The Geraldton model will be assessed in partnership with the Sellenger Centre for Research in Law, Justice and Social Change at Edith Cowan University and will act as a blueprint for the Bunbury model. The Bunbury mental health co-response model will commence operation in July this year.

CLOSING THE GAP

Statement by Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale — Minister for Aboriginal Affairs) [9.11 am]: I rise today to table this statement on the progress made in 2021 under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. I do so on the country of the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation and I pay my respects to Whadjuk Noongar elders past and present, and to their emerging leaders. I also acknowledge all Aboriginal Western Australians and their connection to country, wherever it may be across this magnificent state.

Today, I table this update on progress made in 2021. It highlights the key reforms already underway and the \$374 million in budget initiatives announced in September, many of which will help to address specific socio-economic targets under the national agreement, such as increasing family safety and reducing the number of young Aboriginal people in detention. The update emphasises work done to implement priority reforms that make sure that our structures and systems are serving Aboriginal Western Australians as well as they can and maximise our capacity to achieve those socio-economic targets. These reforms include: building the Aboriginal community-controlled sector through sector-strengthening grants and a whole-of-government Aboriginal community-controlled organisation strategy; implementing *The Aboriginal empowerment strategy: Western Australia 2021–2029* throughout the Western Australian public sector; establishing the Aboriginal justice advisory committee to provide crucial cultural advice and guidance on justice issues; contracting Aboriginal organisations to help implement key initiatives such as the Aboriginal family safety strategy and the family-led decision-making pilots; and setting Aboriginal employment and business targets for the state’s major transport infrastructure program, including \$700 million of contracts for Aboriginal businesses and 3.5 million employment hours for Aboriginal workers.

As I submit this update, I acknowledge two significant documents released in September. The first is WA’s *Closing the gap jurisdictional implementation plan*. This sets out how the government will do what is required of it under the national agreement’s four priority reform areas and 17 socio-economic outcomes. The implementation plan was developed in collaboration with 19 state government agencies and the Aboriginal Advisory Council of Western Australia, with critical input from the Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia, WA’s representative on the Coalition of Peaks. This first implementation plan sets out the state’s approach to its Closing the Gap commitments over the next 12 months and beyond. It will be refined, refreshed and updated on a regular basis. This process will reap the benefits of increasing collaboration and partnership with Aboriginal people and organisations, a stronger community-controlled sector and a more data and accountability-driven approach.

The second document is *The Aboriginal empowerment strategy: Western Australia 2021–2029*, which envisages a better Western Australia for Aboriginal people—one of partnership and shared decision-making and of greater self-determination and economic prosperity, and where Aboriginal people and cultures are celebrated and valued. Through the implementation plan and public sector-wide adoption of the Aboriginal empowerment strategy, this government will continue to develop working relationships with Aboriginal people and organisations that grow and flourish. These partnerships will help guide us towards a Western Australia in which all Aboriginal people, families and communities are empowered to live good lives and choose their own futures from a secure foundation.

[See paper [972](#).]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Well done, minister.

GENDER EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

Statement by Minister for Women’s Interests

MS S.F. MCGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Women’s Interests) [9.15 am]: I do not know whether I can match that pace. We know that the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs has a bit of sporting acumen and I think he just showed it. I rise to update the house on the continued commitment of the McGowan government to improving gender equality for women in Western Australia. With the opportunities we experience in Western Australia, every girl and woman should be able to reach her potential and achieve her aspirations. But we know that this is not always the case. Gender equality is important for all Western Australians. There is clear evidence it brings economic and social benefits for everyone.

Earlier this year, I launched WA’s second action plan under *Stronger together: WA’s plan for gender equality*. Stronger Together is the first whole-of-government long-term plan to advance gender equality in WA and to drive change in key areas including health and wellbeing, safety and justice, economic independence and leadership. This is the second of four action plans to be rolled out over 10 years. Five focus areas will guide the work of the government over the next four years: COVID-19 recovery; safety and respect at work; primary prevention; Aboriginal women’s leadership; and older women.

We are committed to change that allows women and girls to have equal opportunities in schools, workplaces, at home and in the community. A clear example is that when we came into government, women made up only 34 per cent of the senior executive service, with parity not expected to be achieved until 2035. This is despite the public sector having a predominately female workforce. One of the key initiatives under Stronger Together includes a target of 50 per cent women in the senior executive service. As at September 2021, representation of women in the senior executive service had increased to 44.2 per cent. I am pleased to say that we are well and truly on track to achieving this goal.

This government is leading action to close the gender gap, starting with our own backyard. I am proud of the work we are progressing as a government to lead the way. I commend all the people in our community who are working together to make gender equality a reality so that WA is a place where every child can reach their potential.

PETS IN CRISIS PROGRAM

Statement by Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence

MS S.F. McGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence) [9.17 am]: I rise to inform the house of an important initiative that will support victim survivors of family and domestic violence. We know it takes several attempts for a woman to leave a violent or controlling situation. Sadly, many delay seeking refuge, increasing the risk to themselves and their children for fear that their family pet may be at risk at the hands of a violent perpetrator. As a government, our commitment does not extend to just systemic and legislative reform. We also support initiatives that have an immediate impact for women when they are at their most vulnerable. That is why I am proud that the McGowan government supports the Pets in Crisis program run by the RSPCA. Pets in Crisis supports the forgotten victims of family and domestic violence by providing temporary foster care for family pets to ensure their safety. The program gives pet owners peace of mind, knowing that their pet will be safe and well cared for, enabling them to focus on their own safety.

We have been supporting this program since 2017. In December last year, I announced a \$1 million expansion of the program to Albany, Bunbury and Busselton to help more women and families in need. This is part of our \$4 million package of the supporting survivors initiatives, which also includes subsidised driving lessons and dental treatment for women leaving refuge. These are things that most of us take for granted, but for many who have suffered persistent abuse over the years, these supports can help them move on with their lives.

With over \$126 million of new investment in preventing and responding to family and domestic violence, the McGowan government has demonstrated it is committed to supporting brave victim survivors at all stages of their journey. No-one should have to choose between their pets and their safety. As a passionate pet owner myself, I am proud to say we are removing that barrier for many women.

CONTAINERS FOR CHANGE — ECONOMIC REGULATION AUTHORITY REPORT

Statement by Minister for Environment

MR R.R. WHITBY (Baldivis — Minister for Environment) [9.19 am]: The state's container deposit scheme, Containers for Change, commenced on 1 October 2020, fulfilling a McGowan government election commitment. The scheme has been embraced by the Western Australian community, with over one billion containers returned and \$3.7 million donated to charities and community groups so far. This is an excellent result.

When Containers for Change commenced, the government asked the Economic Regulation Authority to monitor the scheme's effect on drink prices. We did this to help ensure that the introduction of the scheme did not unfairly increase drink prices. The Treasurer has tabled the Economic Regulation Authority's report today. I am pleased to advise that, on average, the drink price increases over the first year of the scheme were less than, or very close to, the average scheme fee. The Economic Regulation Authority estimated that the retail price increase over the first year of the Containers for Change scheme in the metropolitan area was 13.2¢ a bottle or can for non-alcoholic drinks and 3.9¢ a bottle or can for alcoholic drinks. Regional retail prices increased by a similar amount. This compares with the average scheme fee of 12.82¢ per container. This means that, on average, the drink price increases over the first year of the scheme's operation are very close to the cost of running the scheme. Both the cost of running Containers for Change and the average drink price increases are very similar to those in other Australian states and territories that have container deposit schemes. It is heartening that the Economic Regulation Authority found no evidence to suggest that drink suppliers and retailers have exploited the introduction of the container deposit scheme to increase drink prices in excess of the additional costs incurred as a result of the scheme. That should give confidence to members in this place that the scheme is working just as it should—delivering a substantial positive outcome for the environment, with no additional costs to the consumer.

I encourage members to do what they can in their communities to encourage participation in Containers for Change. I have collection bins outside my electorate office and I encourage people to put their containers in those bins. We go through about four to six bins a month. The money is donated to local community and sporting organisations or P&Cs. I can tell members that this month, the donations will go to Baldivis Little Athletics. I add up the deposit income, and my electorate office matches it, so it is a good source of funding for local community groups. I look forward to the continuing success of Containers for Change and the benefits it brings to our environment and communities.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT — LEASES — JURIEN BAY BOAT HARBOUR*Grievance*

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [9.22 am]: My grievance today is to the Minister for Transport. I grieve on behalf of two businesses associated with the fishing industry that lease maritime assets from the Department of Transport. These businesses, at Jurien Bay and Port Denison, approached me out of sheer frustration. After numerous attempts to deal with the lessor, the Department of Transport, and the property agent, McGees Property, they had reached a stalemate and did not know where to go next. Comen Ltd, which trades as Comen Fuel WA and Jurien Boat Lifters, has held two Department of Transport leases at Jurien Bay marina since the 1980s. Both leases had expired due to the leasing agent not providing renewal and new lease documents.

The first lease, at lot 1225 Jurien Boat Harbour, is referred to as Jurien Bay Fuel Farm. The lease expired on 30 September 2019 and a renewal was not received until six months later. For 12 months, the Comen board attempted to discuss details of the lease with the agents, McGees Property, and the Department of Transport's manager of property services and finally had to engage solicitors to instigate a meeting. Comen staff speak of incompetence on the part of McGees Property and about correspondence disappearing into a black hole. After a 27-month hiatus, this lease has now finally been signed.

The second lease, lot 36 Breakwater Drive, is home to the Comen enterprise Jurien Boat Lifters and encompasses a hardstand and lifting facility. Essentially, Comen provides an integral boat lifting service, ensuring that boats do not have to travel to Two Rocks or Geraldton if they need to come out of the water. This slipway is a 30-year-old DoT asset that I am told has not been maintained. It is referenced as Department of Transport asset 2760. The lease expired on 30 June 2020.

The sticking point in negotiations centres around schedule B, which was added to the lease agreement in 2010. According to my notes, it is headed "Lessee to maintain Boat Lifter Runway Jetties" and reads —

The Lessee must maintain the Boat Lift Runway Jetties including but without limitation all structural parts of the Boat Lift Runway Jetties, in safe, good order, repair and condition. The maintenance repairs may be undertaken by the Lessor who is then entitled to recover the costs from the Lessee.

Comen has contested this clause for the past decade, to no avail. Prior to the renewal of the 2010 lease, there was no expectation that Comen would be accountable and liable for the cost of maintaining a Department of Transport capital asset. Comen has no lease over the runways or jetty; it has only a licence to use the runways. Comen has no authority, no jurisdiction and no control over the runways or jetty. As the runways and jetty are a Department of Transport capital asset, the department should therefore be responsible for repairs and maintenance. Comen believes, and I would agree, that the imposition on Comen is not within normal business practices.

Comen claims that communication with the Department of Transport and McGees Property over the past two years has been almost non-existent and very frustrating. Approaches to the Department of Transport are rebuffed with the requirement to deal with McGees, which is effectively a real estate agency. Information is gathered by McGees and passed on to the Department of Transport at scheduled meetings, giving an indication that neither party appreciates the urgency of the situation. As Comen explains, "This is time consuming and makes it extremely difficult to get any answers or direction to move forward, enabling us to reach an amicable position suitable to both parties."

Inspection of the department's boat lifter slipway in 2019 resulted in the bracing beams being condemned. Again, Comen points out that no maintenance had been carried out by the department on this asset prior to the inclusion of schedule B in its lease in 2010. In 2020–21, in order to continue operating the boat lifting service, Comen repaired the bracing beams and jetty at a cost of \$78 000. I believe Comen is justified in seeking 50 per cent of these costs from DoT, with a similar arrangement going forward.

As a tenant of Jurien Boat Harbour, Comen has contributed to a harbour levy for more than 30 years. Earlier advice from the Department of Transport explained that this fee is charged on all leases to support infrastructure costs, including service jetties and lifter runway jetties. It seems to be onerous that Comen is paying for repairs and maintenance via the harbour levy and is also expected to maintain a slipway jetty that it does not use.

I move now to Port Denison. George Bass established Seaz Denison Seafood at 3 McIntyre Cove on the Port Denison waterfront five years ago in a leased building at lot 953 Port Denison Boat Harbour. As in much of the midwest, the power supply is unreliable. By way of example, George's most recent power outage cost him \$680 in generator hire to preserve his very perishable fish and shellfish stocks. Keen to have an alternative power supply, two and a half years ago Mr Bass applied to the Department of Transport to put solar panels onto his leased building. Attempts to communicate with the department proved difficult. He was eventually told to reapply in six months' time when the power supply would be reconfigured locally to allow solar panels to be installed. When he reapplied, he was advised that the entire allocation for solar had in the meantime been taken up by another business. He points to a lack of transparency by the Department of Transport and adds that the department's incompetence has cost him dearly.

George quotes a separate incident in which he applied for rent relief on behalf of the business. He says it was beyond frustrating dealing with layers of bureaucracy, while noting that the Department of Transport has hidden behind McGees Property and vice versa. He has found himself constantly having to chase McGees for responses to his emails and says he could not get to the decision-makers.

I call on the minister to review the Department of Transport's management of its maritime assets—assets of the people of Western Australia. It would appear that outsourcing the management of these assets to a third party is not working. The aforementioned lessees are trying to run a business in a difficult environment. They are fed up with being fobbed off by a real estate agent. I ask the minister to ensure that the Department of Transport works with George Bass at Seaz in Denison to facilitate a resolution of the unfair impasse over power supply, especially the solar panel installation. I seek the minister's consideration of 50 per cent of these costs being recovered from the Department of Transport by Comen for the repairs to its asset, with a similar arrangement going forward. I would also request that the minister ensures that the outstanding lease is issued to Comen as soon as possible. I thank the minister for taking the grievance.

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan — Minister for Transport) [9.29 am]: I thank the member for Moore for his grievance. In a sense, many of the details that the member outlined relate to commercial negotiations between two parties, with the Department of Transport also being a party to those discussions. I will not go through the claims and counterclaims in detail because that will not be very fruitful or effective in these types of grievances.

I will address a couple of matters. One relates to Comen Fuel WA. As the member advised, the lease that was signed in 2010 included responsibility for all maintenance requirements, including the maintenance of the boat lifter piers, which were integral to the boat lifter operations, and also that Comen exclusively uses these piers to carry out its business. Again, I do not believe the member raising some points and me standing here reading notes is the way to sort out these things. I will ask the Department of Transport to follow up this issue directly to ensure that things are being conducted properly and that there are proper lines of communication. I will ask that further meetings and discussions on that issue be conducted.

In relation to the solar issue, again, I am advised that further work is being undertaken on how additional solar capacity can be provided in that area. That work will be undertaken. The member raised two particular commercial disagreements. I will ask the department to follow up those issues.

The member made a general point about the management of assets across the transport portfolio. It is fair to say that the Department of Transport, or Transport itself through both the Public Transport Authority and Main Roads, owns and manages a lot of different types of land and businesses across the state, whether it is land that is held for future roads or land that is left over from reservations, public transport corridors or land that has been set aside for public transport or the significant maritime assets that Transport has. I have already started not what I would call a formal review but an analysis of how we can do things better across the transport portfolio. We will look at how we can group the coordination of the management of assets in a new area to ensure we get expertise from across the transport portfolio into one area so that we have confidence in the management of all our assets in the state, noting that we manage the kiosks at train stations, along with the jetties and marinas.

There are a lot of different management tasks. I have already started a process of looking at how we can bring together all the expertise from the entire transport portfolio into one area so that we can have that expertise on how to manage and run all the assets of the state in the transport portfolio grouped in one area rather than littered through all the different agencies. That has already commenced. Frankly, sometimes I am not confident that when another party is appointed to manage those things, it understands the government's priorities and needs. I take the point; it is something that I have already started. In particular, I will ask the department to follow up these two commercial negotiations directly.

CITY OF MELVILLE — PARKS AND RESERVES — ZONING

Grievance

MRS L.M. O'MALLEY (Bicton) [9.34 am]: My grievance today is to the Minister for Planning and relates to the land use and zoning of several parks and reserves within the local government area of the City of Melville across my electorate of Bicton and the neighbouring electorates of Bateman and Willagee. I thank the Minister for Transport on behalf of myself and the members for Bateman and Willagee for hearing this grievance. My colleagues and I have the great privilege to represent electorates of notable natural beauty and ecological significance. From the foreshore reserves of Derbarl Yerrigan in Bicton and Bateman to the remnant banksia woodlands of Willagee's central reserves, our electorates are blessed with important places of public open space.

On behalf of my colleagues and our constituents, I would like to acknowledge our gratitude for the recent recommendation for rezoning to public open space the following parks: Baden Powell Reserve in Ardross, Charles Eckert Reserve in Applecross, Ogilvie Road Reserve in Mt Pleasant, the Bicton substation in Bicton, Davis–Lawlor park in Attadale and Geo Thompson Park in Palmyra. We know that land prescribed for the zoning of public open space is assured of protection and continuity of land use as parks and reserves for current and future generations to enjoy, so the commitment to rezone these parks is welcome news. Thank you, minister.

Studies on access to public open space and the associated benefits are plentiful and well documented. Just some of these benefits include providing places for people to meet, socialise, play and connect, which is associated with increased physical activity and improved mental health. I think it is fair to say that access to these opportunities is more important than ever. No less important are the ecological benefits associated with pockets of urban bushland, local parks and reserves. The many large established trees provide habitat for birds and other wildlife and welcome shade for humans and canine companions and are a vital antidote to the urban heat island effect.

That is why I am asking for a consideration of the expansion of the recommendation for local parks and reserves across the electorates of Bicton, Bateman and Willagee to a zoning of public open space for: Harry Clemens Reserve, Pitman Park and Prosser Park in Myaree; Marguerite Smith Reserve in Attadale; and Laurie Withers Reserve, Norm Godfrey Reserve, Jack Martin Reserve and the park near McBeth Way in Kardinya. In doing so, I would like to acknowledge the monumental efforts of several key community members in bringing this matter to our attention. On behalf of the member for Bateman and myself, I say thank you to Marina Hanson, Chris Gillam, Robyn Weir, Jill Bowman, Dr Kristin Warren, Jeanette Grosser, Carol Warren, Kristie Stuart, Sue and David Parks, Cindy McGhie and many others for their advocacy. Just some of the community actions undertaken to draw attention to this matter include the establishment of the Save Harry Clemens Reserve and Save Pitman Park and Prosser Park Facebook groups, petitions to this house and park activation initiatives.

The member for Bateman and I have received more than 1 300 individual communications in support of rezoning these parks and reserves to public open space. These communications have been delivered via a combination of petitions, survey responses, emails, phone calls, individual and group deputations and community forums. This extraordinary community campaign included two petitions tabled in the Legislative Assembly, with a total of 1 218 signatures, plus an online petition of 135 signatures, two community surveys totalling 145 responses, multiple emails and four well-attended community meetings. The feedback has been extensive, expansive and always heartfelt, and I thank everyone for their participation.

I think it is fitting that I share with members just a few of their comments, including, according to my notes —

“Parks offer a place of quiet reflection in these crazy pandemic times. It is lovely to be among the trees and hear the busy bird life that the trees attract.”

“These parks are an important escape from the built-up neighbourhoods that we now have and which are slowly increasing in density. Our park provides a great sense of wellbeing and connection to the life of our community.”

This one speaks to the historical significance of Harry Clemens Reserve —

“I grew up playing there with the other kids on the block. My kids played there and exercised our dogs there and now I’m happy seeing the younger generations utilising and enjoying the park.”

In conclusion, I would like to acknowledge those who are watching this grievance online today and thank them for their commitment and efforts to protect their parks. Thank you, minister, for hearing this grievance today. I respectfully ask for your support on this matter.

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan — Minister for Planning) [9.39 am]: I thank the member for Bicton for the grievance. I know that the member for Bateman has also received a number of petitions on the issue of the proposed rezoning of parcels of land in the City of Melville.

As I understand it, the city has proposed the rezoning of approximately 20 parcels of land from residential to public purpose use. The majority of those pieces of land are owned by the state government; they are crown land that is vested with the city. That proposal has been put to the state. In making decisions about the rezoning of land, it is always good to make sure that we investigate all different aspects of it, in particular to make sure that the land is being used for public purposes, that it is well maintained and that other organisations that occupy the land, such as the scout hall that I understand is on one of these pieces of land, can remain there should the land be rezoned. In making these decisions, it is always very important to get across the detail and seek further community feedback. That is why, as part of the decision-making process, I sought feedback from the member for Bicton and the member for Bateman and asked them to talk to their communities to really understand the value of these parcels of land to their communities. As we know, these areas can and do play a very important role in the total amenity of a suburb, particularly established suburbs. There are significant active playing fields in many areas, but, in this instance, we have the benefit of some established trees and parkland that help in providing good community amenity and good local access. These are places that kids can play if they do not have a big backyard. In some of those areas that the member outlined where there is significant density, it also helps to support new families that move into the area. They do play an important role.

After both receiving the petition from the member for Bateman yesterday and listening to the member for Bicton’s grievance today, I will take on board all that feedback. We will be meeting to discuss this again in the next three to four weeks and I will be able to make a decision about the rezoning of that land. As I said, the majority of it is state government owned and vested with the council, so we will want assurances that it will be kept as public open space but will also be well maintained to ensure that these parcels of land are safe places for the local community.

I thank the member for Bicton for her grievance. I accept her grievance. From the feedback that she has given me, both in the formal setting of Parliament and informally in the corridors of Parliament and in the meetings we have had, I understand the importance of these parks to the community. I thank her and the member for Bateman for their work. We will continue to discuss this issue before a final decision is made.

PERTH CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL — PARKING

Grievance

MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) [9.43 am]: My grievance is to the Minister for Health. I thank the minister for taking the grievance. I rise to speak about the impact of the recent changes to the parking arrangements at Perth Children's Hospital. As the minister will be aware, the PCH basement car park, located underneath the emergency department, was closed to visitors, including parents and patients, from 31 January. Parents were given less than two days' notice of this change and were told that it was made to strengthen screening processes to better control entry points to the hospital in a COVID-safe way and was based on the most up-to-date infection control advice, prioritising the safety of children and families above all else. To help those parents negotiate a walk of up to 15 minutes from the nearest car park at the Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre, the hospital advised that a buggy would be available to shuttle parents and patients. The buggy is, however, available only between 8.00 am and 8.00 pm on weekdays and 8.00 am and 4.00 pm on weekends. It also is not able to accommodate large prams or even extra luggage for those staying for extended periods. It is not unusual for parents and carers to make multiple trips from their vehicles to the ward to transport belongings and necessities. This process now takes twice as long and causes considerable unnecessary frustration and angst while children are, in some cases, left unattended inside the hospital.

The decision to restrict visitor access to the basement car park has understandably infuriated many parents, who do not believe the alternative parking arrangements improve the safety of children. This alternative, which involves either walking hundreds of metres in the middle of summer or transporting often very sick immunocompromised children from a car park near a COVID testing clinic to the hospital entrance on a buggy with other sick kids, is not deemed to be acceptable or safe. Many questionable decisions have been made on the fly with short notice during the pandemic, but this has to be one of the most bewildering and ill-considered. It is difficult to understand how the Child and Adolescent Health Service arrived at this decision.

One of the parents who contacted me explains the nonsensical situation he now faces as he attends chemotherapy appointments with his eight-year-old daughter, and I quote from my notes —

For all sick children, including my daughter, who has limited ability to walk, having to walk this distance in all weather conditions is ridiculous.

PCH have advised they will provide a shuttle service ... however this is entirely inadequate.

As an example, my daughter has chemotherapy treatment that requires her to be at the hospital between 6.30–7am.

There are times when it's a medical emergency (due to her having central line) that my daughter be taken to hospital outside of usual business hours. This has in the past occurred in the evenings but could be any time of the day when the shuttle is not available, leaving us to walk potentially in the dark when urgent medical treatment is required.

The other issue is that immune compromised children are not permitted to socialise with other children in hospital or permitted in other areas of the hospital due to the risk of contracting other infections.

However the hospital, despite this risk, seems to think it's ok to have a variety of children share a shuttle service to the hospital.

Another mother whose son is being treated for cancer shared similar concerns, and again I quote from my notes —

I am expected to walk several hundred metres from the QEIIIMC carpark at any hour of the day, often carrying my son who cannot walk long distances but weighs nearly 30kgs, to get to the other side of the hospital.

Just imagine this is your situation and if it's a 40+ day or pouring down with rain or in the middle of the night..?

The QEIIIMC car park is directly opposite to the COVID testing facility so these people who are possibly positive for COVID are right next to my son getting out of the car.

This is an extreme risk I have NEVER thought I would have to put my son in. The chances of my son contracting COVID are extremely high and his immune system will not cope with this at all.

We have had the Premier Mark McGowan stating all the time that he wants to "protect the most vulnerable in WA", my son is one of thousands that are most vulnerable and he is being exposed like this.

Whereas previously these extremely vulnerable children bypassed reception and were sent straight to the cancer ward to avoid unnecessary exposure to infection, they are now also being forced to sit with children and visitors

in the common COVID testing area while they wait for rapid antigen test results. This is extremely stressful for many parents with these incredibly sick children, who generally avoid public spaces and public transport to protect their children. Although no-one is denying the need for COVID testing upon entry, the process needs to be reviewed.

Many other parents have expressed concerns about accessing medical supplies from the basement car park and the way in which the decision was made—a social media post on a Saturday night advising of the changes from Monday. Parents who have contacted the Department of Health were reportedly referred to a complaints process and told that it would take 28 days and could not be expedited. It is difficult to fathom how health executives have come to this decision, which has undoubtedly caused immeasurable loss of time, angst and extra pressure for those vulnerable children and their families. I believe the decision was made by senior clinicians and subject matter experts apparently assessing risks associated with safe access, ventilation and infection control. However, many of the affected families have failed to identify how the current system of parking at another car park near a COVID testing facility and using a buggy with other sick children exposes their children to less risk. I understand that decisions are currently being assessed based on the risks and the information at hand, but I struggle to understand the rationale behind this one. I implore the Minister for Health to urgently intervene and review this decision so that a more suitable arrangement can be made. I thank the minister for taking my grievance.

MS A. SANDERSON (Morley — Minister for Health) [9.49 am]: I thank the member for her grievance on the parking situation at Perth Children's Hospital and on providing some background and reassurance to those parents. I have also found out about the parking arrangements; it is an operational decision. I also found out when a parent sent me the Facebook post on the Saturday night. That was the primary form of communication, and I want to thank Hon Matthew Swinbourn for his advocacy and support of parents through this time, and his communication. My office has been in regular contact with him.

I will talk bit about the process and the outcome. Ultimately, the primary aim is to protect our most vulnerable children coming into the hospital. The way hospitals do that is by screening them at the point of entry. That is why hospitals limit entries and exits; everyone is screened at the point of entry. I am well acquainted with the design of the Perth Children's Hospital and the car park; I have spent much more time there than I ever wanted to, and will probably continue to, so I certainly understand the importance of that car park to parents, particularly when they are dealing with long-term and multiple admissions. When you have children there and you are visiting three times a day, and you are carrying small children and luggage and so on, or you have children who cannot walk far or are unwell or have a disability, it is an added stress to not have access to that car park in an already incredibly stressful environment. I absolutely acknowledge that.

I contacted the chief executive officer and the board chair after seeing that. The board was not aware at that time that that was going to be put in place, so I met with the board chair the following day. We had a discussion about how we wanted to proceed and we went through a number of steps to look at resolving this issue. The primary objective is to protect and screen those patients. The design of the building is incredibly challenging; the basement goes up to the green lifts. The green lifts open into a very small area adjacent to the emergency department, and then people turn right down the long corridor to the main part of the hospital. That is a very small area in which to screen and triage people.

The basement car park is also very, very hot and noisy, and there are significant air quality issues. Asking vulnerable people to stand in that car park to wait to be screened—for up to half an hour when it is really busy—while mixing with other visitors was considered inappropriate. An infection control expert put together a plan to screen patients. The board chair and I asked the chief executive officer to go back and reassess the plan. The board chair herself spent at least two or three hours, walking the floor and going up and down the lifts—the green lifts, the blue lifts, and the pink lifts. We looked at trying to shut off some lifts so that only they have access. We had an engineer there, and an infection control expert who is a member of the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation also came in. He spent about three hours one evening, walking around the hospital, trying to find another alternative.

I am of the view that the most vulnerable people have been the most inconvenienced in this situation, and that is not appropriate, so we need to work through another way. I also raised my concerns about mixing on shuttles—that it seemed counterintuitive to try to screen people while popping them on shuttles with other people. I was very concerned that the announcement was made without any of those remediations having been put in place; that was a communication failure. Consultation with the oncology unit and staff was also lacking. Although I appreciate that the aim was to protect those people, I think it is fair to say that the process left a lot to be desired, and I think the hospital would admit that; it is not a surprise to the hospital.

Essentially, the outcome of all those many hours of walking the halls, looking at the lifts, and looking at the building design and the engineering reports was that the process of putting something in place quickly was defeated by the layout of the building. At the time that was put in place, school was about to start and we knew that children would start to get COVID. In the first week of February, 14 kids presented with COVID at Perth Children's Hospital, and we really want to protect children who are vulnerable. We have seen victims in Queensland, including a young girl who contracted COVID and had a compromised immune system.

I can assure parents and patients that this is not a permanent arrangement. Access has been provided to the University of Western Australia-owned car park opposite the emergency department for challenged and vulnerable patients who present for longer term stays; they just have to walk across. The member raised a good point about the concierge service and appointment times, and bringing the shuttle service in early. Even having someone meet them at the car park is potentially possible.

I understand the stress and the strain and I feel for those parents and patients. I want to assure the member that this is constantly under review and is not at all a permanent arrangement. We may get to a point at which we are able to give patients rapid antigen tests prior to coming in, and screen them through another entrance; we are working on all those angles. I appreciate the board's thoroughness in exploring this issue; it is an ongoing point of exploration. I also appreciate the CEO's willingness to continue to revisit this issue.

Ultimately, we are not going to just walk in and turn this around because of the vulnerability of the patients we are trying to protect, so we have to weigh up and manage that risk, but I can assure parents and patients that this is constantly under review, it is not permanent, and it is something that we are looking to fix imminently.

POWER OUTAGES — ROLEYSTONE

Grievance

MR H.T. JONES (Darling Range) [9.57 am]: Before I start, I seek the Deputy Speaker's indulgence in wishing Judy Curtis a happy birthday. Judy is a former nurse, the station officer at the Byford Volunteer Fire Brigade and a founding member of the Serpentine–Jarrahdale bushfire awareness team. She is an unsung hero, and I thank her for her service. Happy birthday, Judy!

I thank the Minister for Energy, Hon Bill Johnston, MLA, for accepting my grievance on behalf of the people of Roleystone. My grievance is about the unreliability of the power supply to Roleystone over a number of years, and in particular, the extended outage that commenced on Christmas Day 2021 and continued for four days in some homes.

People choose to live in the hills around Perth to escape the rat race. They enjoy the fresh air, the trees, the wildlife, the community feel, and, in some cases, housing that is more affordable than comparable housing closer to the city. However, there are problems associated with living in these areas, which people accept—albeit sometimes begrudgingly: remoteness from some services; communication problems, including mobile phone, TV and radio coverage; heightened fire risk; and, of course, power supply being vulnerable to the weather and interference from trees, branches and wildlife. The maintenance of blocks is an ongoing requirement, especially the trimming of foliage to reduce the risk of fire and to reduce the build-up of fuel loads.

A number of queries were sent to Western Power in November in relation to intermittent power. A response received by my office on 9 December that ties in with the environmental conditions was —

Western Power fielded a number of queries late November regarding momentary interruption issues affecting residents in the prior two weeks. The customers were seeing 'auto reclose' operations, that is the tripping of one of our high voltage protection devices due to some transient / passing fault. The line is set to restore immediately, should the fault have 'self cleared' and this is common. Typical issues out here are birds, trees, possums. The power is only off for a few seconds in these cases.

Western Power noted the frequency however and had patrols out on the line 27 November 2021 and did identify an issue with birds short circuiting high voltage connections on a transformer located in Armenti Rd, Roleystone. We carried out works on the pole that day, installed bird spikes and a new transformer and the line has, thankfully, been clear of this issue since. That is, we believe the root cause has been identified and remedied.

We note this same section of line did trip on the morning of 7 December 2021 and perhaps this has sparked some fresh queries. The power was off for around 2 hrs 15 mins, between 02:03 and 04:18, as a result of a tree down in strong winds along Holden Rd, In Roleystone. Full repairs have been made there and we do not anticipate ongoing issues, though of course its impossible to provide guarantees in respect of reliability. Roleystone has some exposure to faults, a product of the overhead network and the inherent risks associated with a heavily vegetated area and the strong winds which can present overnight in the hills.

It is fair to say that in order to maintain the natural environment and concentration of trees, the residents accept the level of fire risk and that power supplied by overhead lines will, on occasion, be interrupted. The outage of Christmas 2021 persuaded even the most tolerant of residents to actively complain that the systems and restoration responses were unsuitable in the conditions and need examination. I think everyone would agree that almost four days without power does not meet expectations.

Before continuing, I want to have it recorded that I thank the Minister for Energy for calling me on Boxing Day morning to assure me that every effort was being made to restore power to the residents of Darling Range, including Roleystone and those far down in Serpentine and Keysbrook. At this stage, it became apparent to me that power interruptions were being experienced across the metropolitan area; however, my focus was, naturally, on my electorate.

As the blackout continued into its fourth day, I attempted to call residents in the still affected area bounded by Jarrah Road, Palm Road, Raeburn Road and Tyers Road to advise them that they should soon have power restored as a Western Power team was completing the last connection. The feedback I received during those calls and in subsequent emails to my office indicated the following consequences of extended power loss. There was food spoilage, which was exacerbated by the fact that it was Christmas and people were buying more expensive foods such as seafood et cetera in greater quantities, and the fact that the shops were closed and they could not replace their food. People were suffering the effects of heat. One resident named Hazel had just had a knee operation, and her knee needed to be iced, but she had no ice and it had sold out in the local shops. One family member at another house was not able to regulate their temperature. A couple of residents whom I spoke to were very concerned that they would lose the fish they had in their aquaria and ponds. There was a loss of mobile phone communication, which was inconvenient but also potentially catastrophic for those unable to call for help or to respond to automated emergency messages. Properties not on scheme water, including orchards and residences, often rely on electrical pumps for potable water and water for animals and crops. The local volunteer fire brigade lost power, which impacted internal communications as well as with the Department of Fire and Emergency Services and the community.

I have received a number of queries and suggestions, all of which have been forwarded to the minister's office, but I want to especially acknowledge the submission of Denise Hardie, who made some astute observations and recommendations that cut across a range of portfolios. Suggestions include Western Power reviewing its communications, warnings and reactions when extreme weather is forecast to ensure that public health is considered should power be lost, or perhaps the Department of Health could do so under its heatwave responses. Incidentally, the authority to use personal generators in an area declared to be under a harvest vehicle and movement ban needs to be reviewed. There needs to be improvement in the timely publishing of causes of faults and estimates for restoration. There needs to be options for ruggedising or insulating the overhead power supply or other means to reduce the frequency and severity of transmission loss. There needs to be maintenance of vegetation in the vicinity of Western Power infrastructure to reduce damage and allow for vehicle access during total fire bans and harvest vehicle and movement bans. A memorandum of understanding needs to be set up with local fire brigades to formalise the supervision of Western Power crews working in conditions in which there is risk of fire, or maintenance crews need to be equipped with appliances to self-manage their risk.

It is no coincidence that catastrophic power loss occurs in conditions of extreme weather and that timely rectification is impacted accordingly. However, the people of Roleystone want to ensure that Western Power and the state government are doing all they can to design and implement systems that are safe yet efficient, time sensitive and reasonable. Power losses often occur when it is extremely hot, which is precisely when people need power restored quickly. Although some residents believe that they should not suffer any power losses, the vast majority expect, and endure, occasional outages due to environmental factors but do not accept outages of four days as reasonable, except in the event of a natural disaster or physical destruction.

I welcome the independent review into the Christmas 2021 power outages. I thank the minister for accepting my grievance.

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington — Minister for Energy) [10.03 am]: Firstly, I thank the member for Darling Range for this grievance and his advocacy on behalf of his community. I want to again apologise to the residents of Roleystone for the summer outages that they had at Christmas time, as I have done publicly already, and to the other people impacted by the challenges for the electricity system during that period. I also acknowledge the members for Burns Beach, Kingsley, Dawesville and Murray–Wellington, amongst others, who have also advocated on behalf of their communities. I want to make the point that not every outage that occurred at that time had the same cause, and I will come to that in a moment.

I want to make a couple of observations. On the Western Power network, 70 per cent of outages are transient outages—that is, something in the environment impacted the Western Power network and a protection service acted to prevent fire, and that is what caused the outage. I will come to the one in Roleystone in a moment. There are 8 760 hours in a year, and if we had 99.5 per cent reliability, each year we would have 43.8 hours without electricity. The fact that we have, on average, much higher reliability than that shows the achievement. To put that in context with other technologies, it is the equivalent of a car driving for 10.5 years. It is the equivalent of driving 262 000 kilometres over 10 years, which is the average that a car is used, and having one problem with the car—one flat tyre or one mechanical fault. I will give members an example from the airline industry. For January this year, Qantas and QantasLink flights were on time 89.4 per cent of the time, which is the equivalent of being without electricity for 928 hours. Virgin Airlines flights were on time 84.8 per cent of the time, so that would be the equivalent of being without electricity for 1 331 hours. Jetstar flights were on time 81.4 per cent of the time, so that would be the equivalent of Western Power not providing electricity for 1 629 hours a year. Although every interruption of electricity is always concerning, and we aim to not have interruptions, it is a very difficult issue to deal with.

At Christmas time there was plenty of electricity available even though we had heat waves. Electricity systems are managed by an organisation called the Australian Energy Market Operator, and Western Australia had plenty of electricity. The challenge was getting it through the wires to people's houses. That, of course, is unacceptable to the people who have a challenge in that area, and I understand that. For the people of Roleystone, the challenge

was contributed to by the fact that the Armadale council would not allow people to use generators in that area; therefore, people who had generators could not restore power themselves because the City of Armadale did not allow them to.

The outage occurred at 7.20 am on Christmas day when a high-voltage line tripped, disrupting supply to 2 787 customers. It appears now, we understand, that it was a transient fault, but at the time we did not know what had occurred. At 7.31 am, 11 minutes after the trip, with a total fire ban in place from 11 o'clock that night, Western Power dispatched a crew who had already been on duty that day to commence the network patrol, to identify what had occurred and caused the trip. Unfortunately, that crew was asked by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services to respond to a house fire in Roleystone. That meant that the crew was not able to mobilise to Roleystone on that night and, of course, the crew was not available because it had finished its shift and there was a need to manage the crew itself. Therefore, it was decided that a new crew would be allocated the job the next morning. At 6.00 am the next day, the task started of restoring power for the people of Roleystone, which of course meant there had been a 16-hour outage for those residents, which is obviously very disappointing for them. By 1.00 pm that day, power for 1 100 customers had been restored and the switching process continued to restore power to the other customers.

I make it clear that Western Power does have water trailers and trained personnel to manage fire risks during restoration work and, in addition, DFES was assisting Western Power with its patrol. I thank the DFES crews for their efforts because many people ask us to do that, so I make a point that that was being done.

By 10.00 pm on Boxing Day, power to 1 300 customers had been restored. The outage for those customers was between 21 and 26 hours, which left 400 customers who were connected the following day. Obviously, those customers were without power for between 40 and 46 hours. The point there is that the crews were working through all the challenges. Some residents say—I understand why they say this—that the people of Dawesville had generators allocated to them and their power was restored faster because of the allocation of generators. But that was because the particular issues involved in the outage in Dawesville were unrelated to the issues in Roleystone, where there had to be a line inspection, and, therefore, the allocation of a generator would not have solved the problem, because it was not power availability; it was the physical damage to the infrastructure.

I look forward to the completion of Michelle Shepherd's work on the review. That will tell us exactly what happened. I have explained to members what Western Power has advised me, but the point here is that I understand people want an external review of Western Power, and that is why we have Michelle Shepherd undertaking that review. I was disappointed in the sexist attack by some commentators on her capability, which is ridiculous, because she is an outstanding person. I look forward to her report. I will table a letter that I have committed to send, and have done, to the chair of the Economic Regulation Authority regarding the regulation of Western Power.

[See paper [973](#).]

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE CORRUPTION AND CRIME COMMISSION

Third Report — 'A good year': The work of the Parliamentary Inspector of the Corruption and Crime Commission — Tabling

MR M. HUGHES (Kalamunda) [10.13 am]: I present for tabling the third report of the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission titled *'A good year': The work of the Parliamentary Inspector of the Corruption and Crime Commission*.

[See paper [974](#).]

Mr M. HUGHES: A function of the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission is to monitor and report to Parliament on the exercise of functions of the Parliamentary Inspector of the Corruption and Crime Commission. To undertake the role, the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission conducts hearings and regularly engages with the parliamentary inspector. The committee reviews the inspector's reports, including the annual report tabled directly in Parliament. If the parliamentary inspector presents the committee with a report that is not an annual report, the committee may retain it as closed evidence or table it in Parliament. Due to the nature of the committee's work, most of the communications with the parliamentary inspector remain closed session evidence.

The title of this report, *'A good year'*, which was tabled in Parliament today, is how the Parliamentary Inspector of the Corruption and Crime Commission, Matthew Zilko, SC, described the performance of his office in his first year in this role. Members will remember that Mr Zilko commenced this role in November 2020, and was the first person appointed to the role since the late Hon Michael Murray, AM, QC, was appointed in 2013.

The report reflects on matters raised in the parliamentary inspector's *Annual report 2020–2021* and at his first public hearing with the committee in October 2021. It canvasses the work of his office in his first year, the significant increase in complaints to his office and his views on the use by police officers of body-worn cameras, which is a relatively new device in this state. This report also reflects the views of the Corruption and Crime Commission and the Western Australia Police Force on body-worn cameras.

As members may be aware, the most prominent function of the parliamentary inspector is to investigate complaints about the actions and decisions of the CCC, which in turn deals with allegations of serious misconduct by public officers. The parliamentary inspector investigated 98 new matters in 2020–21, a 72 per cent increase on the previous reporting period. There was a significant increase in public complaints, with 59 complaints from members of the public dissatisfied with the CCC’s actions and decisions. In the first half of 2021–22, the total number of complaints to the parliamentary inspector remained steady. An increase in public complaints is probably attributable to new paragraphs in CCC closing letters to complainants advising of their right to contact the parliamentary inspector if they are unhappy with the CCC’s decision. The committee commends the parliamentary inspector and the CCC for this initiative. Like his predecessor, the parliamentary inspector noted the lack of information the CCC provides in closing letters to complainants.

The committee in this report recommends that the Attorney General direct the Department of Justice to consider whether legislative change is required to prescribe or clarify whether the commission is authorised to disclose information that demonstrates that the complaint has been dealt with in an appropriate way.

Over half of the allegations of serious misconduct by public officers to the CCC relate to police misconduct. It follows that the parliamentary inspector investigates complaints about the handling of allegations of police misconduct. Between June 2019 and June 2020, over 5 000 body-worn cameras were deployed to police in this state. The committee has made inquiries about the impact of the rollout of body-worn cameras and concluded that this integrity tool has been a positive development, delivering benefits to the police and integrity agencies. According to the Western Australia Police Force, the introduction of body-worn cameras has led to a drastic change of culture. In fact, Acting Commissioner Blanch told the committee —

Police officers trust the camera on their chest to tell the story of their conduct.

This footage may immediately assist police officers when there are different versions of events. In the past, careers may have been put on hold while allegations of police misconduct were investigated without the tangible evidence provided by body-worn cameras.

From an integrity perspective, the Corruption and Crime Commissioner, Hon John McKechnie, QC, told the committee that body-worn cameras are “very, very useful” and —

... a very significant misconduct prevention measure and we are very pleased with it.

As independent evidence of what occurred during an interaction, footage assists the police, the CCC and the parliamentary inspector to investigate misconduct allegations. Although acknowledging that the WA Police Force is moving in the right direction, the parliamentary inspector is of the view that body-worn cameras should be activated at all times when officers interact with the public. The parliamentary inspector has questioned whether WA police should amend the policy to mandate the activation of body-worn cameras in a wider range of circumstances. In Western Australia, body-worn cameras are automatically activated when a police officer draws a firearm from their holster, as are body-worn cameras in the immediate vicinity. However, they are not automatically activated when a taser is used. The WA Police Force told the committee that it is working on a technical fix, which is quite expensive, to enable this capacity.

It is clear from the investigations undertaken by the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission and contributions made by other parties that body-worn cameras are an important tool in integrity investigations. Their use should be maximised. The committee intends to continue to monitor the use of body-worn cameras and how their use affects integrity investigations and agencies.

The work of the office of the parliamentary inspector is vital to ensuring public confidence in the integrity of our public sector. On behalf of the committee, I thank Mr Zilko and his principal adviser, Sarah Burnside, for their professionalism, diligence and assistance.

In closing, I thank the members of the committee and the committee officers—the deputy chair, Hon Dr Steve Thomas, member for South West Region; Mr Shane Love, member for Moore; Hon Klara Andric, member for South Metropolitan Region; and principal research officer, Ms Suzanne Veletta, and research officer, Ms Jovita Hogan.

FIREARMS AMENDMENT BILL 2021

Second Reading

Resumed from 23 February.

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Police) [10.19 am] — in reply: I will conclude my reply to the second reading debate on the Firearms Amendment Bill 2021 by completing the contribution I was making in response to the member for North West Central’s questions on licensed firearms owners who commit crimes. I had referred to the fact that the biggest incident that resulted in multiple deaths at the hands of someone wielding firearms occurred in Western Australia recently. The licensed firearms owner committed that offence in Osmington.

In June 2021, only last year, the Western Australia Police Force executed a search warrant in Helena Valley where an illegal firearms manufacturing facility was located. Police discovered multiple 3D printing machines, a computer-controlled milling machine, a commercial lathe and multiple tools used in the manufacturing process.

Digital diagrams and printing files related to firearms manufacturing, including semiautomatic rifles, were located along with 3D-printed components, rifled and chambered barrels, and other components. These items were found alongside homemade sound suppressors and thousands of rounds of ammunition. A 31-year-old was charged with multiple offences. The point is that he was a licensed firearms owner.

More recently, in September 2021, the Western Australia Police Force executed a search warrant in Warnbro, in my electorate, where five illegally manufactured firearms were located, including a pen gun—a firearm that resembles a pen. A hydroponic cannabis crop was also located, along with over 50 illegally manufactured prohibited and controlled weapons under the Weapons Act. A 48-year-old man was charged with multiple offences, and he, too, was a licensed firearms owner.

Many incidents of this nature confirm that being a licensed firearms holder does not prevent someone from offending. In addition, police are revoking the licence of at least one licensed firearms holder each week because of a violence restraining order. The point I want to make in response to the member for North West Central is that the observation he made that somehow licensed firearms owners are paragons of virtue and therefore should not be subject to any scrutiny is just not right.

Putting that aside, I want to conclude by saying what I said at the outset. This bill is a response, essentially, to the findings and recommendations of the Law Reform Commission report that resulted from an inquiry that went from 2014 to 2016. That inquiry resulted in a very large and substantial report. The number of public submissions was massive. It was the biggest contribution the Law Reform Commission had received. This legislation is partly in response to that and to the ministerial working group recommendations that were made in 2018, which included representatives from the Sporting Shooters Association, dealers and traders. More importantly, this legislation responds to only an element of those findings because, by necessity, the findings of the Law Reform Commission are expansive and really require a complete rewrite of the Firearms Act. That is for some time in the future; that is not what this legislation is. This legislation enacts about 17, I think, recommendations of the Law Reform Commission's report. It is focused entirely on serious criminals. I reiterate that the focus of this legislation is on outlaw motorcycle gang members, terrorists and serious domestic violence offenders.

Mr R.S. Love: When will you be undertaking that major review?

Mr P. PAPALIA: That will be sometime in the future. I am saying right now that that is not what this is. There has been some response on social media platforms, predominantly led by troublemakers from outside our jurisdiction who have no interest in the safety of the Western Australian community. Those people are suggesting that this bill is something that it is not. Any number of their suggestions are designed to do nothing other than create angst in the licensed firearm-owning community. What I have been trying to ensure yesterday, today and in the upcoming consideration in detail stage is that we are addressing the concerns that the lead speaker from the other side has articulated. We will address those rapidly. I think we have already done that in the debate. We will continue to ensure that people will be comfortable with the implications for them if they lawfully go about their business. Make no mistake, this bill is focused on outlaw motorcycle gangs, terrorists and domestic violence perpetrators. I do not think anyone in this place or the other place would see that as a bad thing.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

[Leave denied to proceed forthwith to third reading.]

Consideration in Detail

Clause 1 put and passed.

Clause 2: Commencement —

Ms L. METTAM: In relation to the commencement of the legislation and when it will come into operation, there was mention during the second reading debate that one of the outstanding concerns was about the consultation process and the clarification that local Western Australian groups with an interest in this bill have sought. Can the minister explain which groups will be consulted in the lead-up to the commencement of this legislation and what that process will be?

Mr P. PAPALIA: As I stated during the second reading debate and reiterated just now, this bill is focused on serious criminals. It is not an expansive response to the 2016 Law Reform Commission report. It addresses some of the recommendations, but it is very much focused on serious criminals. We have engaged in consultation through the Law Reform Commission inquiry and subsequently through the ministerial working group in the last term of office and, more recently, through my office reaching out to the Sporting Shooters Association and the representatives of the dealers and traders. There was a huge level of consultation on this bill earlier, and more recently there have been further discussions and consultation, but it has not been to the extent of seeking to change this bill, because this bill is focused entirely on those serious criminals. Therefore, I would not expect that there will be any great further consultation. We will engage with those bodies, and particularly the Sporting Shooters Association. I recognise that group. I see it as the peak Western Australian body. I know that some body from outside Western Australia

claims to be the representative or peak body for the nation, but that is not my view. We talk to the Sporting Shooters Association and our local dealers and traders. We have introduced this legislation now and it is complete. I do not anticipate that people will have concerns with it. They should not be worried that it is about them because it is not; it is about serious criminals.

Ms L. METTAM: I welcome the focus of the bill on outlaw motorcycle gangs and the fact that it is not intended to target licensed firearm owners. I certainly support that endeavour. It is clear that we agree that the Sporting Shooters Association of Western Australia needs that clarification. Hopefully, that will be achieved through this process.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I want to add that we will consult further with the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Department of Justice and the State Administrative Tribunal on how the bill will be enacted or will play out. However, during the second reading reply I pointed out that should some unforeseen complication or implication arise once the bill has been enacted, we will have the capacity to adjust the response with regulation. Obviously, we will consult with those people who are subject to the legislation. If the Sporting Shooters' Association or any individual legitimate and responsible licence holder finds some unforeseen implication, we will have the capacity to respond by regulation.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Will the minister define that the Sporting Shooters' Association of Australia WA is the peak body that he will consult with in terms of the WA context?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I recognise that the Sporting Shooters' Association is a representative body and that it actually has paid-up members. The Western Australia Firearm Traders Association is also a responsible body. I will, as will the police and my office, continue to engage with those bodies as we move down the pathway of implementing the bill, and into the future. I already have talked to them about regular meetings for discussing how firearms will be managed in Western Australia, which will enable a two-way flow of information. In my other portfolios and in this portfolio I meet with people regularly. We will establish a regime of that nature. I already said that I consider the Western Australian branch of the Sporting Shooters' Association of Australia as a representative peak body in Western Australia.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: It is good to hear that the minister considers that the SSAAWA is a peak body with a large membership in Western Australia. Many licensed firearm owners are part of the Sporting Shooters Association. When it comes to amnesties and people going to police stations to hand over firearms, which is a good thing, we know that in other jurisdictions peak bodies like the SSAAWA work with police. Will the SSAAWA be allowed to be part of the amnesty arrangement? When the industry is involved, there is a greater take-up by people and people will become involved in putting forward firearms under this amnesty. Given that the minister has highlighted that the SSAAWA is a peak body for firearm owners in Western Australia through its membership, will the government allow that organisation to assist police in the amnesty?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The firearms amnesty provisions arose from a national agreement among police ministers across Australia to introduce a permanent national firearms amnesty from 1 July 2021. Although the amnesty is national, arrangements for the surrender of firearms and parts are managed by individual states and territories. The amnesty amendments in the bill provide a framework to enact the national amnesty by enabling members of the WA community to hand in any unlicensed firearm, major firearm part, prohibited firearm accessory, sound suppressor and ammunition without fear of prosecution. The WA Police Force has previously seen great success in amnesties.

The member missed this—he was not in the chamber because of the restrictions in the chamber—but during question time yesterday I informed the house that when the amnesty occurred in 2017, more than 1 000 firearms were returned in Western Australia. Last year, between 1 July and 31 December, when we introduced an amnesty—we are including an enduring amnesty in this legislation—some 901 firearms were handed into Western Australian police. There were 71 handguns, 165 shotguns and 665 rifles and parts handed in. In addition, some 29 245 rounds of ammunition were surrendered as part of that amnesty.

I think the amnesty will work. I am comfortable with the current arrangements. There is no concern that people find it difficult; clearly, they do not. It works. Western Australian police are more than capable of receiving firearms under an amnesty and ensuring that they are safely dealt with. There has been consultation and, as I indicated earlier, that will continue between my office, the licensing enforcement division, the Sporting Shooters Association and the traders' representatives. I say, no, we will not change the actual process; firearms will be handed into any Western Australia Police Force station. That is reasonable. It works. It is effective and I think there is no concern around the effectiveness of it.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I understand that, but has any modelling been done or are any statistics available on what has happened in other states when, say, dealers have been involved in amnesties? I understand that when dealers are involved—that is, those who sell firearms—there is a greater take-up by people bringing in unlicensed firearms or parts of firearms. Has there been any research to see how other states have been able to get a greater take-up when there are amnesties?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I do not know about greater take-up. We have had a very successful take-up. Undeniably, 900-plus firearms in six months last year is a success. It is ongoing. An enduring amnesty will result in further firearms being returned. I would be concerned if any other parties were involved because that might have the unintended consequence of those firearms being cycled through the community rather than them being returned to

police to be destroyed, thereby removing them from society and making the community safer. The primary objective of this legislation, apart from focusing on criminals, is to elevate community safety to be the primary outcome and driving motivation of firearms legislation.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 3 to 5 put and passed.

Clause 6: Section 4 amended —

Ms L. METTAM: I have some questions about the definitions that are provided under this clause. Some concerns were raised about ammunition. Is reloading a firearm considered an offence under this bill?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I thank the member for raising this matter. I understand the concerns that the member is airing, and we are responding to them. Personal firearm licence holders have always been entitled to reload ammunition for firearms listed on their licence for personal use. They cannot reload ammunition for calibres not on their licence and cannot reload ammunition for supply or sale to others. There has been no change to the provisions that would prevent a personal firearm licence holder from continuing to reload ammunition for their own personal use.

Ms L. METTAM: How about reloading firearms for someone else—a neighbour or a friend? I know the minister touched on that.

Mr P. PAPALIA: As I stated, they cannot reload ammunition for calibres not on their licence and they cannot reload ammunition for supply or sale to others. That means licence holders should not reload ammunition for other people. They should do it only for themselves. That is not a change. That is the expectation and the understanding under current legislation and will remain so under this legislation.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I would like further clarification on that matter. Say someone is part of a pistol club and another member reloads ammunition. Would a member who does not have the skill, capability or the infrastructure to do that be allowed to let another member of that club reload the ammunition?

Mr P. PAPALIA: No. It was not previously right that people were doing that. We are not changing anything. We are retaining the understanding and the effect of the law that people should not reload ammunition for other people. People can do it for themselves for calibres of firearms for which they have a licence.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Does the definition of “firearms” include rendered firearms? Could the minister provide some clarification around that?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I assume the member means firearms that have been rendered innocuous. Under the legislation and the understanding of the licensing enforcement division, if a firearm is rendered innocuous, it is no longer a firearm. It is removed from the category of firearms.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Still on the definition of “firearms”, does that include stocks on rifles and shotguns as part of the firearm?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Going back to reloading, can the minister confirm that licensed shooters can produce their own components, such as casting bullets?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I refer to the definition of “ammunition” in clause 6. Proposed paragraph (b)(ii) refers to “any other prescribed thing”. To me this is insufficiently defined. It gives a very broad scope for additional items to be included without any adequate parliamentary oversight. Could the minister give us an idea of what “any other prescribed thing” could mean?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Member, it is a pretty common thing that I see in legislation of different types to have “any other thing”. It enables us to respond to an emergent concern that is not evident at the time. Specifics about what it might apply to will be defined in regulations at the time as necessary.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Proposed paragraph (c)(v) of the definition of “ammunition” refers to “a spent casing, whether or not it can be re-used”, but it is silent on new brass. Shooters who reload their own ammunition often do so using newly manufactured brass cases. Can the minister give us any definition there?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am advised it is considered to be accommodated by proposed paragraph (b)(i) as a cartridge.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Under the definition of “prohibited firearm accessory”, paragraph (b) states —

a device commonly known as folding stock, being a stock with a mechanism that allows the stock to be folded to reduce the overall length of a firearm;

Is the minister able to provide a bit more detail? Modern firearm designs have reasons for the configuration to provide for cleaning, servicing and storage. The legislation states that folding stock will be a prohibited firearm accessory. Given that modern firearms have that to provide for cleaning, servicing and storage capabilities, is that allowed to occur? Why is it prohibited?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am in agreement with Inspector Walker’s observation that people do not have a device with a folding stock to aid them in cleaning a firearm; it is so they can shorten it and potentially conceal it. In our case, that is what we are concerned about. The reasoning behind prohibiting a device with a folding stock is that it could enable someone to conceal a firearm and employ it more readily in a criminal act.

Ms L. METTAM: This is just a simple question. What constitutes removable stock according to this bill? It is a question that I have been asked to ask.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Up-front, “stock” is a recognised firearm term. Anyone who is concerned about this legislation is quite comfortable knowing what a stock is. The definition of “prohibited firearm accessory” in clause 6 of the bill lists the types of stock and other firearm components deemed to be prohibited. I will not break new ground in terms of defining what a stock is. I think that everyone in the firearms community knows what it is.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: On page 6 under the definition of “major firearm part”, paragraph (c) refers to “a barrel or barrel blank”. Can the minister describe what constitutes a barrel?

Mr P. PAPALIA: A barrel is rifled and chained for a particular calibre of firearm. I think that is pretty obvious.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Continuing on from the “barrel or barrel blank” question, quite often barrels are not serialised. Can the minister tell me how he intends to deal with that under this legislation?

Mr P. PAPALIA: If a barrel is unserialised and has been purchased to be used with a firearm, it should be serialised to that firearm. Once the barrel has been received, there is an opportunity to ensure that it is serialised in accordance with the legislation.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I have never changed a barrel or anything like that. Can the minister explain to me the process of how that blank barrel would become serialised?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am informed that the licensed manufacturer that provides the barrel to the purchaser would ensure that it is stamped with the particular serial number of the firearm onto which it is being fitted. I note that the average Joe is not allowed to purchase and fit their own barrel; they have to go through a licensed manufacturer.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I want to get this clarified. I might be on the farm, I shoot a rabbit and I accidentally bend the barrel of the gun. I then take it to a repairer to replace the barrel. Will it be replaced with a serialised barrel, the serial number of which is then placed against my firearms licence?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Probably not under this clause. That process is defined under proposed section 16B of the legislation.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Still under the definition of “major firearm part”, I refer to paragraph (d) and “an assembled trigger mechanism”. Once again, triggers are adjustable and upgradeable and quite often need to be altered. My understanding is that triggers are not serialised either. How can triggers be policed?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am not sure I get the gist of the member’s question. The law dictates that a person does not get to change their own trigger mechanism. They should be going to a licensed repairer or manufacturer, who will get an appropriate part and fit it.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: If I need to change the trigger mechanism, I take the firearm to a repairer. How do we identify that trigger mechanism on my firearm licence?

Mr P. PAPALIA: At the moment and into the future, a repairer submits a monthly return to the licensing enforcement division notifying it of the fact that a replacement trigger mechanism has been fitted.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Thank you, minister. That is handy to know. Further to that, I refer to paragraph (f) and “a magazine”. I know that a magazine is easily lost or can wear out. Does its replacement fit under the same scenario? If I have lost a magazine in the paddock, can I go to my repairer or supplier and get a new magazine; and how is that identified?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Unlike other major components of a firearm, magazines are not subject to serialisation. As long as it is a magazine for the particular firearm that is licensed, a person can have as many as they want. When I lost a magazine, they used to make me do a lot of push-ups. That might be a penalty we start applying to licensed firearm owners that will assist in their physical and mental wellbeing! There is no intention to track all the magazines. As long as an individual does not have a magazine that is not for their particular firearm, they are fine.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 7: Section 4A inserted —

Ms L. METTAM: I want to deal with proposed section 4A(b). How does this provision work if the licensed firearm owner genuinely has no knowledge of being in possession or control of that firearm? An example would be if the firearm has been left in a car or vehicle.

A member interjected.

Ms L. METTAM: Can someone be charged with possession if they have no genuine knowledge of that firearm?

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is kind of difficult to respond to the member's question, but, yes, under the definition of being in possession of a firearm. Clearly, whenever the police encounter any situation, it is subject to the elements of the particular case. Whether someone is charged and subject to a penalty will be determined on a case-by-case basis. The police will investigate; they will not just automatically assume that someone was in possession. However, yes, according to the definition.

Ms L. METTAM: I seek further clarification from the minister. Is the minister saying that consideration will be given on a case-by-case basis to whether there is genuine oversight of the possession of a firearm?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am informed that, under this proposed section, a prima facie case would have to be established that the person was in possession of the firearm. If that prima facie case was not able to be established, obviously it would not be pursued.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Can the minister give me a little bit more clarification about proposed paragraph (e), which states "the person is in charge of a vehicle where it is found"? I am thinking of a farm ute. In a scenario in which a firearm was transported by another family member across a road, what would happen then?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am informed that the facts of the case will essentially dictate whether someone is deemed to be in possession. There are so many potential scenarios that they could not all be encompassed. The police will investigate the matter and determine whether there is a prima facie case under the law; and, in the event that there is, they will press charges.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 8: Section 5A amended —

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Proposed section 5A(4) states —

The Commissioner may delegate the following powers only to a member of the Police Force who holds the rank of Commander or above —

Does the minister assume that the police force commander will be working in the field of outlaw motorcycle gangs or will they just be a commander from any section of the force?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The intention is that this delegation will initially be afforded to the officer in the state crime portfolio. That is the section that is predominantly focused on outlaw motorcycle gangs and serious crime. A person with the rank of commander in the police force is a senior officer and they will receive delegations of this nature because of their rank and experience. The level of delegation is to ensure that, firstly, the exercise of the function is based on high-level scrutiny and serious judgement and, secondly, there is better standardisation of the processes and fewer individuals are making these decisions.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Just out of curiosity, how many commanders are there in the police force?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I do not have an exact number. I would have thought a dozen; my advisers suggest that there are between a dozen and 15 at the most. It is a senior rank. There are not that many of them. There are commissioned officers from the rank of inspector up. Then there is the commander, and above that there is the assistant commissioner, and then there are two deputy commissioners and then there is the commissioner, so it is pretty high up.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 9 to 15 put and passed.

Clause 16: Section 11A amended —

Mr V.A. CATANIA: On page 15 of the bill, proposed section 16B, "Approval in relation to replacement or additional major firearm parts", states —

(2) The Commissioner may grant the holder of a Firearm Licence approval to possess, carry and lawfully use a major firearm part (the *relevant major firearm part*) for the purpose of —

Then there are proposed paragraphs (a) and (b). Does a person who needs to replace a rifle or a shotgun need the authorisation or approval of a commissioner?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sorry, member, but the bit you are referring to is in proposed section 16B, which comes under clause 22.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Sorry; that is where I am at. I will sit down.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is there a question on clause 16?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: In relation to proposed section 16B, which says that —

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: No; proposed section 16B is in clause 22. We are on page 13 and clause 16.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 17 to 21 put and passed.

Clause 22: Sections 16 and 16A replaced —**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I move —

Page 22, lines 7 and 8 — To delete “firearms or major firearm parts” and substitute —
firearms, major firearm parts or ammunition

The amendment seeks to include the manufacture of ammunition as a reason for making, or being in possession of, firearms technology under a manufacturer’s licence. Clause 22 outlines the different licences that can be issued under the bill. These are the same licence types that exist under the act; however, clause 22 of the bill expands on each licence type to clarify how they relate to the new concepts being introduced under the bill, such as major firearms parts, prohibited firearms accessories and firearms technology. Clause 22 introduces proposed section 16H, which sets out what the holder of a manufacturer’s licence is entitled to do. The licence will outline the specifics of what the holder can manufacture, which can include firearms, major firearms parts, ammunition and, in some cases, prohibited firearms accessories. The manufacturer’s licence will also entitle a person to make or possess firearms technology as long as an approval has been granted under proposed section 16J. Under a manufacturer’s licence, a person will be able to make or possess firearms technology only for a narrow set of reasons. The bill currently limits these reasons to the manufacture of firearms, major firearms parts and prohibited firearms accessories that the licence holder is lawfully entitled to manufacture. It is an oversight that the manufacture of ammunition was not included as a reason to make or possess firearms technology. We know that ammunition manufacturers need the templates, instructions and programs that constitute firearms technology in order to manufacture ammunition. This amendment adds the word “ammunition” into proposed section 16H(3)(a) to correct this oversight.

Amendment put and passed.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is obviously some interest in this clause. I will tell members what the question is, but we will not put it to the vote until after the discussion. The question is that the clause, as amended, be agreed to. If members want to speak or ask questions on it, they should do so now; otherwise, the question will be put and members will miss that opportunity. Does the member for North West Central want to raise the point he began previously?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Perhaps you can guide me, Mr Deputy Speaker, if I am out of order or whatever. I refer to proposed section 16B, “Approval in relation to replacement or additional major firearm parts”. Is the commissioner’s approval required if a rifle or shotgun stock is replaced?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Is the approval of the commissioner required if a drop-in trigger group is replaced?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The answer is yes. For those people who might be concerned about the line of questioning the member is pursuing, the process is that the dealer or the repairer who is conducting the repair would submit a return to the licensing enforcement division. The approval from the commissioner would be generated immediately. The process is not a lengthy one and is not really onerous.

Ms L. METTAM: Concerns have been raised about the length of the process, and I appreciate that the minister has stated that through the firearms dealer, it would not be a lengthy process. Can the minister define what he means by saying that it would not be lengthy? What sort of time frame are we looking at?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am informed that the only replacement part that would need a full assessment by the licensing enforcement division would be a barrel replacement. Other components would require only an administrative process that would not be lengthy. I cannot give an exact time frame, but it is not an onerous process and, in due course, over time, as our processes are improved and technology is employed, things will get faster.

Ms L. METTAM: Are we looking at days or weeks or something a bit more comprehensive?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am informed that, provided a repairer submits their return, the process, apart from replacing the barrel, is pretty much an administrative process and will be very rapid—maybe days, but no longer.

Ms L. METTAM: Is the minister anticipating that there would be a requirement for additional personnel to support this process? Will there be more administrative people within the WA Police Force to do that?

Mr P. PAPALIA: There will be no requirement for additional staff. In fact, as improvements in information technology are achieved, it will be a more streamlined process, which would be shorter.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I think the minister may already have answered this. Does a program exist in the licensing enforcement division by which flags come up from particular dealers or individuals that something is not right or has not been filled out properly? Is this a computer-generated approval process or is it physical, with a licensing officer going through every application? When the minister says “technology”, does he mean that technology is changing towards more of an IT solution rather than an individual solution, so we do not have delays because one or two people are sick or have COVID, or whatever the case may be, and it knocks out a department? Is it a computer-generated approval process?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Currently, it is not computer generated. As I have indicated, in the event that we get improved technology over time, things may speed up and be more automated. At the moment, officers carry out the task. It is the same one that has been undertaken to this day. Despite that, with the exception of barrels, any componentry that is replaced is viewed as being administrative in nature, and would just be approved. In respect of the impact of COVID, the Western Australia Police Force is probably the agency in government that is most prepared in terms of redundancy and practices and processes to deal with the impact of individuals having to be furloughed. There are plans right across the police for dealing with that. That aside, if there is a big unforeseen impact of COVID on the workforce, we will just have to wait while that is dealt with, but that is not unusual in a pandemic.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Will licensed firearms owners now require approval to possess major firearms parts? Let us say that I have my gun cabinet at home, and I have a spare stock or whatever. Will I need to get retrospective approval to actually possess that major firearms part?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am informed that people really should not have major firearms components lying around. That aside, yes, in this case, in the event that they do, they would be required to seek warrants. Retrospective approval, I think, is the phrase the member used and that is what has been suggested to me.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I certainly do not have any major firearm parts in my possession. I assume, out of 81 000 licence holders, including many clay target shooters and variations of others, that there will be some people who do. Is there some methodology involved? Will the police be going back to check their status? Will there be a transition period? Will there be a cost involved if people have to be registered as holding those major parts?

Mr P. PAPALIA: With respect to the process, contact the regulators and licensing enforcement division. With respect to cost, there will be a cost only if it is a barrel. As I indicated earlier, other componentry is considered administrative and will automatically be approved.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Further to that, minister. Let us say a person is on a station maybe 1 000 kilometres away from a licensed dealer and they do not often go to town because they wait to have a build-up of work before they do. They have parts for their firearms that they regularly use on their station because they have pests. If they do not take those parts into police or a dealer, are they subject to these new requirements? Could they potentially be acting in an unlawful way, given the fact that they may buy parts to ensure that they can carry on with their job and be able to repair firearms, as they sometimes break, get worn out or need to be repaired or whatever the case may be? Potentially, someone could be carrying extra parts simply because of the distance they are away from a dealer. Are they acting in an unlawful way if they do not bring those parts into a dealer? Is there a time frame when we get to the point of saying that it has been six or 12 months and these parts have not been registered by a dealer through the commissioner and the person is now subject to these new laws that they have breached and can be fined or ultimately go to jail?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I think so. Essentially, there is no legislated time frame, but it would be the intention of the Western Australia Police Force to give reasonable time for people to make the decision that declaring or surrendering that part, or declaring the part so that it could be registered and serialised, is enough of a reason to go to town. As the member indicated, people do not stay out there forever; they do go to town for various reasons, and getting a replacement part or having a repairer fix their firearm might be a significant reason to go to town. They might couple that with their other reasons for going to town and make it a trip. It is not the intention of the police to immediately rush out and prosecute people. People should understand that the purpose of this legislation is to prevent firearms and major componentry of firearms from falling into the hands of criminals. To that end, I make no apology for the fact that people should not have them lying around. People should be complying with the legislation as soon as practicable.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I am assuming that a pastoralist on a remote station does not have parts lying around and are aiding and abetting any criminal activity. The intent of this legislation is to tackle bkie gangs and so forth. I am concerned for a law-abiding citizen—someone who is out there doing their job and is a bit remote from what is going on—who has the ability and skills to fix their firearm and has done so forever and a day. Will education or information be provided to all these licence holders so that it is quite clear that this new legislation will affect them? How will the government communicate this to the 81 000 licence holders to ensure that they comply with this new piece of legislation?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Firstly, member, I hope they have not been repairing their own firearms prior to now, because it is unlawful to do that; that is not a change. If that is being done, firearms owners should be aware that they should not be doing that. All that we are doing with this legislation is focusing on firearms not getting into the hands of criminals. That means that people must abide by this law. If you are a law-abiding citizen, you abide by the law. This law is the law, and so was the previous one; the Firearms Act 1973 was the law before. People must abide by it. I have indicated that in the event that people have componentry that perhaps they should not have or they want to get it registered or surrender it, there is an opportunity to do that. There will be a degree of flexibility around accepting those components or getting them registered, but they must abide by the law. With respect to what we will do to promulgate it, we are doing it here. I am sure the peak bodies' representatives are watching and listening, and we will meet with them. But this law will be promulgated in the same way as all laws, and people have to abide by them.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Would repairs to a firearm be unlawful? I cannot find the definition that states that repairing a firearm by an individual is unlawful. In terms of the Western Australia Police Force, will there be no communiqué with those licence holders? Will there be no education program? Will the government just rely on word of mouth that these changes will be taking place and could make someone—unknown to them—act in an unlawful way? Is the minister saying that there will be no form of education once these new laws are passed? There are a few questions in that one.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Unless you are a licensed repairer, you should not be repairing firearms. That is nothing new. That is not a change. With respect to promulgation of law, it will be gazetted. It will be posted on the Western Australia Police Force website and in other fora. But, ultimately, people are required to obey the law. That is no great shock to anybody. We are in Western Australia. There are laws. Whether people are familiar with them or aware of them is not an excuse. They need to familiarise themselves with the laws. Bearing in mind, the possession of a firearm is a responsibility. Part of what we are doing is elevating community safety above all else. A person's perceived need or desire to possess a firearm is subordinate to community safety; that is just a matter of fact. This is something that the bodies that we have discussed this with accept and agree to. I do not think there is anyone who is a responsible, legitimate firearms owner or licence holder would dispute that. If the member has someone he is concerned about who may not be aware of this law, let them know. We will promulgate it and talk about it. It is not as though the bill did not get any media coverage when we announced it last December. In fact, that is what has drawn a lot of concern because there was then some ill-informed commentary on social media that resulted in a lot of anxiety around the traps. I hope we have allayed people's concerns by articulating the fact that this legislation is very much focused on criminals.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Can the minister outline what customisation would look like because, as the minister knows, we have a lot of sporting shooters who would be licensed firearm holders? What would that look like if their gun is customised? Will the commissioner —

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member, which particular part of the clause are you referring to?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: This question is in relation to new section 16B, "Approval in relation to replacement or additional major firearm parts". It is about customisation. What will that look like if there is a customised gun held by a licensed firearm holder? Will there be further associated costs or approvals that need to be granted for people to hold those customised firearm parts and guns?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am not entirely sure. I assume the member is reading the concerns someone has texted him. In terms of accessories, the fruit hanging off the firearm, like the scope, the grip, a foregrip or something of that nature—people are not allowed to have foregrips, are they?—will not be a problem. But I am not sure what the member is referring to when he talks about customisation. If he is talking about a bump stock, that is illegal. Something that changes the design or function of the firearm is not acceptable; it is not legal. If a person is going to convert something to being a semiautomatic, something of that nature is obviously not legal. I am not sure what customisation the member is referring to otherwise. Maybe the member can elicit some more details from whomever is asking him to ask the question.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Let us say for arguments sake that I am a clay target shooter and I decide that I need a different stock to improve my shooting ability. Will there be some sort of retrospective cost or approval process associated with that? I am calling changing the stock customising a firearm.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I think I will go back to the answer we gave earlier on major components. As I indicated earlier, changing the stock is an administrative process that is not seen as of concern. Obviously, a barrel would have to be assessed.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: On maintenance and repair of firearms, if a sporting shooter —

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sorry, member, which particular clause is that?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: It is under new section 16B. Sporting shooters have various firearm components they may carry that are currently unregulated and that they attach to their firearm to change it to suit the distance that they are shooting or whatever the case may be. The components are commonly owned and replaced regularly for different applications in target shooting. Will these components be classified as illegal or will the Commissioner of Police need to approve them, whether it be a grip, sights or whatever on a firearm? Will sporting shooters need to have those components approved by the commissioner if they already have them and carry them as part of their competition kit? If those items will have to be approved by the Commissioner of Police, will there be any compensation forthcoming to those competitors who have them that they could access by arguing the fact it is the nature of the competition they participate in?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am not entirely sure what the member is getting at. If it is not a major component, it is not of concern. If the member is talking about major components, then, yes, we have specified that people must seek to have them registered. With the exception of a barrel, they will be mostly administrative in response. If people do not change the form and function of a firearm, they should not be of concern. Anything that changes the form and

function of the firearm is illegal and people need to seek approval. That is what we are getting at. I am not sure that the scenario the member posed will be subject to any concern. Most sporting shooters—is the member talking about target shooters?

Mr V.A. Catania: Yes.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I assume the member is referring to sights or scopes or potentially a grip. I am not entirely sure what the member is getting at with his concern.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members, you have asked a similar question in many different ways and you are getting the same response.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I am just trying to get some clarification on this. Is it the case that changing a stock does not necessarily mean changing the function of the firearm?

Mr P. PAPALIA: As we indicated earlier, if a person wants to change a stock, unless they are a licensed repairer, they must take the firearm to a repairer to carry out that activity.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Is it correct that a person will still have to take it to a dealer and get permission even if it will not change the function of the firearm?

Mr P. PAPALIA: They will have to take it to a licensed repairer. What I was referring to with respect to changing the form or function of the firearm is a different matter. Here we are talking about changing major components. If people want to change a major component, they need to take it to a licensed repairer. That is what we have been saying all along.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I seek final clarification on that, Deputy Speaker. This is really about new section 16B(4), which states —

The Commissioner cannot grant an approval under subsection (2) unless the Commissioner is satisfied that the relevant major firearm part is capable of forming part of a firearm named and identified in the Firearm Licence referred to in that subsection.

Does this mean that a competition shooter will not be able to use customised components—sight, barrel, trigger—if they do not form part of the firearm named in the licence?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am informed that that particular new subsection refers to components being suitable or appropriate for the licensed firearm that a person possesses. It means that a person can get components that are legitimate and reasonable and fair to be used for the particular licence they hold. If a person has a bolt-action rifle, it is something that can be employed with that firearm. It means that a person cannot seek to get a component that might be designed for a firearm but that might convert it to be a semiautomatic or something of that nature. Provided that the firearm component is appropriate for the licence that a person possesses, it would be legitimate.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, members. Before I put this question, for clarity, this covers clause 22, which goes from proposed section 16A to 16L, which is up to page 24 of the bill. Are there further questions on clause 22?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: We have completed questions on proposed section 16B, but I think we have other questions.

Ms L. Mettam: I have a question about the amendment to clause 22.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: We have done the amendment.

Mr P. Papalia: What do you want to ask?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member can still discuss it.

Ms L. METTAM: Can I get some clarification on the purpose and the reason for this amendment and the inclusion of ammunition?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I think the member is asking why we have moved this amendment. Is that correct?

Ms L. Mettam: Yes.

Mr P. PAPALIA: We omitted to include ammunition. It just was an oversight. The reference clause entitles manufacturers to manufacture firearms and therefore they are entitled to manufacture the ammunition, but obviously they require the equipment and the technology to manufacture the ammunition as well. That was just not put in in the original draft.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I know that we want to move on from proposed section 16B, but I have one more question. I hope that I have this right. Rifles bought from Howa Machinery are able to have several different stocks fitted to a rifle that do not need to be given to a repair or dealer to orchestrate. Will that be illegal?

Mr P. PAPALIA: They do need to be. I do not know where the member's question is coming from, but if someone in Western Australia wants to replace a stock, which is a major component of a firearm, they must take it to a repairer.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: If Western Australia Police Force officers put a pistol grip on a bolt rifle to make it self-loading, will the police officers or the police firearms department be subject to the same sorts of conditions when they make a change to their firearm, such as putting a pistol grip on a stock? Will that be subject to the legislation?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Officers in the Western Australia Police Force are not subject to the provisions in the bill when acting in their capacity as a police officer, but are when they are sport shooting or something like that.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I refer to proposed section 16G, “Repairer’s Licence”. Can a licensed repairer repair a gun from interstate?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Under section 16 of the act, a repairer’s licence authorises a repairer’s licence holder to —
 repair firearms belonging to persons who are authorised by this Act or any other law to possess them ...
 That means yes, they are.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: They can repair a gun from interstate?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Providing that the firearm is lawfully possessed in another state and is held by a licensed firearm owner under another jurisdiction’s laws.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I want to clarify repairers being able to hold stocks and so forth in their supply. Are there any other complications under the repairers’ licence in which they will have to secure those? Under normal circumstances, I understand that stocks et cetera do not need to be secured. Will this legislation change that at all? If a repairer holds X amount of stock in their storeroom, will any changes in this legislation require repairers to secure them more tightly than that?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Section 32 of the extant act dictates —

The holder of a Dealer’s Licence, a Repairer’s Licence, or a Manufacturer’s Licence shall keep all firearms —

We are changing it to “repair firearms or major firearm parts” —

and ammunition in a strongroom or otherwise in safe keeping, securely fastened during any period when the premises are not open for trade.

Essentially, that will not change. Those major components should already be stored in that fashion.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: This is my final question on this matter. Can the minister clarify for me his interpretation of the difference between “maintenance” and “repair” in relation to the repairer’s licence?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, he cannot. The minister cannot give a personal or legal opinion.

Mr P. PAPALIA: No, I cannot.

Ms L. METTAM: Further to that question, a definition is not provided.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I know that the lead speaker posed this question during the debate. Maintenance and cleaning is not, by definition, repair work. Licence holders will still be entitled to field strip the firearm listed on their licence to ensure the proper and safe functioning of them. This includes cleaning the associated parts and reassembling them. Repairs involve the fixing or rectification of broken functions of the firearm that require more than simple field stripping and cleaning. If licence holders are unsure of the extent to which they can go in maintaining their firearm, they should refer to the user’s manual that relates to that firearm, as provided by the original manufacturer, or refer to a licensed repairer for advice or contact the regulator.

Mr P.J. Rundle: Thanks for that. I appreciate it.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: No worries.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 23: Part 2 Division 5 heading inserted —

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Proposed section 23AG on pages 45 and 46 —

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, you have jumped ahead again, mate.

Mr P. Papalia: I think you after a different clause—clause 43 of our bill.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: What is the page number?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: It is page 45.

Mr P. Papalia: I think you are talking about clause 43 of our bill, so we could move to there.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question as it stands is that clause 23 stand as printed.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 24 to 42 put and passed.

Clause 43: Part 5 Divisions 2 to 4 inserted —

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I refer to “Offences relating to firearms technology”. There has been much debate about the technology in the matter before us today. I have a question about proposed section 23AG, “Firearms technology”, and proposed paragraph (d), which states —

a hard copy of a digital or electronic thing referred to in paragraph (b) or (c).

That is —

- (b) any type of digital or electronic reproduction of a technical drawing of the design of a firearm, major firearm part, prohibited firearm accessory or ammunition;
- (c) a plan, drawing, instruction, template or computer program, in digital or electronic form, for the manufacture or repair of a firearm, major firearm part, prohibited firearm accessory or ammunition;

I want some clarification. The minister will be aware that people like to collect magazines, books or drawings of firearms that can depict any of the items mentioned in this proposed section. Many novices out there like to collect these bits and pieces. Will they be subject to this legislation and be noncompliant with this law that will get through the Parliament?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Any firearms technology that is circulating in the community is a risk to community safety, especially when it is in the hands of serious and organised criminal groups. The intent of the bill is to ensure that private citizens do not have holdings of firearms technology unless they have the appropriate licence or approval. If private citizens are in possession of any designs, technical drawings or instructions without an approval, they will be captured under the new offence provisions. As with any offence, police will have discretion and will consider the circumstances involved in each instance of possession of unauthorised firearms technology.

I will add to that answer and repeat an example I made in a contribution in question time yesterday and at the conclusion of my response to the second reading debate. The scenario the member posed can easily be applied to this individual. In June last year, the Western Australia Police Force executed a search warrant in Helena Valley where an illegal firearms manufacturing facility was located. Police discovered multiple 3D printing machines, a computer-controlled milling machine, a commercial lathe and multiple tools that are used in the manufacturing process. Digital diagrams and printing files related to firearms manufacture, including semiautomatic rifles, were located along with 3D printed components. Someone who claims that they are an innocent enthusiast and likes to possess diagrams and manufacturing instructions for a firearm could potentially be that individual. They seek to portray themselves as an innocent individual. We have made it clear that someone in possession of any designs, technical drawings or instructions without approval will be captured under the new offence provisions. However, police do have discretion and can consider the circumstances involved. If somebody out there has accumulated this type of material, they should bring it to the attention of licensing enforcement.

Mr V.A. Catania: Like a magazine that they have? A picture —

Mr P. PAPALIA: A magazine is not what we are talking about. Remember what I said earlier—as long as the magazine is for the licensed firearm that they possess or they possess a licence for; that is legitimate. They can have as many as they want. Is the member talking about a reading magazine? I am sorry.

Mr V.A. Catania: Yes. You know how you get people who collect these magazines on firearms.

Mr P. PAPALIA: If the member is talking about a shooting magazine—no; a magazine is in the public domain.

Mr V.A. Catania: Or a collector of military, you know, World War II or Vietnam or the Gulf War things; things that have been used. They may have information on the schematics of firearms or weapons and so forth because they are collectors.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I would advise that if there are individuals in that category who have diagrams, schematics, instruction manuals and manufacturing manuals of that nature, and they have acquired them over time just through their enthusiastic pursuit of firearms, they should seek advice from the licensing enforcement division, the regulator, rather than assume that they are okay.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I think there are a lot out there. Just like aviation enthusiasts who have schematics or the components of planes, a lot of people have these magazines and schematics because they are collectors and are interested in firearms. That is not to say that there are thousands of them—there could be thousands—but a lot of people possess these materials because they are interested in firearms and how they are manufactured. They may not have them to build a firearm, but there are a lot of magazines out there that provide this information, which legislation could capture. I am just seeking that clarification. There are a lot of enthusiasts out there who collect schematics, whether of planes or firearms.

Mr P. PAPALIA: If they have things of that nature that are associated with the firearm for which they possess a licence, that is fine. That has already been discussed. If the member is talking about other things, that person could just as easily be up to no good and intends to employ that information to manufacture their own firearm illegally.

That is the focus of this legislation. We are intent on imposing greater pressure on organised criminals—serious criminals, people who will engage in potential terrorist acts or other serious crime. If people are in possession of things of that nature and they harbour concerns, they should seek advice from the regulator.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I have a photo of a placemat that has a picture of a Europe Africa Glock Ges.m.b.H, showing every part of the disassembled Glock. It has details on firing pin safety, trigger safety and drop safety. Every part of that gun is labelled on the placemat to educate, obviously, a person about the components of a Glock. Under this legislation, the placemat that defines how a Glock is put together will be deemed illegal and the person in possession of it will be fined.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I have to ask the member whether he opposes this legislation or supports it. The question he has asked is a bit silly. Clearly, police are able to exercise discretion, as I indicated. If the member has a legitimate concern about someone who is in possession of something of that nature and they are concerned that that it might be deemed to be wrong or illegal, they should seek advice from the regulator. It is a simple thing. Everyone should understand this: anyone texting, messaging or sending the member questions from Queensland or elsewhere who has some agenda should understand that this legislation is focused on serious criminals. If you are standing against this legislation, that is who you are standing with—outlaw motorcycle gangs, terrorists and family and domestic perpetrators. That is who you are standing with if you are standing against this legislation.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Perhaps an answer to the question that the minister just posed to me is that this opposition is not opposing this legislation. Do not get on your high horse here and say that we are with outlaw motorcycle gangs or we are at the fringe of those who want to bear arms and try to put us in that corner. We have consistently said we are not opposing the legislation. Our job is to ensure that it does not capture all those individuals who are law-abiding citizens. That is our role as the opposition. The minister cannot just say that if we do not agree with something we are with the bikies. We are not with the bikies.

We are here to make sure that legislation is questioned appropriately and that law-abiding citizens who are licensed firearm owners do not get caught up in the government's legislation. Even having a placemat with a schematic showing the components of a firearm displaced could fall under the government's legislation. Those people could unintentionally go against the legislation and be fined. We are seeking clarification for the people who are listening and text messaging. Let me tell you: they are not in Queensland or New South Wales, but here in Western Australia. They are law-abiding firearm owners. They are concerned because there are people out there who collect magazines or posters that show schematics. They may not want to build a firearm with the technology. That will be deemed illegal and members on this side agree.

The problem is that there are people out there who do not want to build a Glock or another firearm that may be on a picture or in a magazine, but this legislation will capture those people. The minister says that it is up to the police and their discretion. It is up to us in the house to provide definition around legislation so that it gives some guidance to lawyers and police officers, and those in the public who may be subject to this legislation. Our role is to get that on *Hansard*, to get that on the record, and to get those definitions right so people know where they stand. Under this legislation, in a scenario in which someone has a schematic of a firearm on a placemat, they could be fined. That is of concern to many people who are just enthusiasts, let alone licensed firearm owners. That is the point.

The minister should not come in here and grandstand. Throughout his second reading reply, the minister said that the member for North West Central is on the side of the bikies and so forth. That is not the case. The minister said I am accusing the police of being corrupt. That is not the case and the minister misled Parliament several times. A lot of speakers on the Labor government side misrepresented what I said in my contribution to the second reading debate. It is disappointing that the minister keeps going down the path of grandstanding. We are here to ensure that we can question the legislation and get definition so that law-abiding firearm owners do not fall foul of the law. That is our role. People send us questions. That is their right. Our right as the opposition and as members of Parliament is to question. History often shows that the legislation put before the house is not the best legislation and does not have the right definitions. We are here to make sure that we get the right definitions.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I will place on *Hansard* yet again the notes, the very accurate notes, that I took of the member's comments during the second reading debate. He said —

We have seen the police use legislation to their own advantage to target those law-abiding citizens who are licensed gun holders in my community. I know they have been targeted by the police using an interpretation of the legislation to benefit their cause. I do not know what that cause is.

That implies that they have acted in a corrupt manner and corrupted the law. He also said this in relation to the enduring amnesty —

Will they go into the police station and present this firearm and the police will go, "What do you want me to do with that? I do not know much about guns?" That is what will happen.

That is what the member said. It is undeniable. It is in *Hansard*. I have repeated it to ensure that *Hansard* does not get changed by the member retrospectively, because that would be totally inappropriate. The Western Australia Police

Force and I hope the Carnarvon police in particular are taking notice of the member's observation on their integrity, capacity and competence. The member suggested in both cases that they are below par. I am of a different view. I am of the view that the Western Australia Police Force is excelling in its delivery of service to the Western Australian public, and it has been doing an outstanding job. It has been demonstrated to be the equal of any in the world over the past couple of years in many different cases in which it has excelled and performed an exceptional service to the Western Australian public.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: The minister said that he has taken notes. I would not trust the notes that the minister takes because he would not have the crayons in the backseat there.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs L.A. Munday): Member for North West Central, if you could direct it to me, please.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Yes, I will direct it to you.

The whole point of my second reading contribution was to get clear definitions so that we know whether having placemats that have schematics of a gun on them would break the law? Is an enthusiast owning a poster or magazine with a gun schematic breaking the law? My criticism of the legislation is that it has a lot of grey areas, which is open to interpretation of what is the law and what is not. Let me get that on record again. The Minister for Police is misleading the house yet again. We need clear definitions so that law-abiding firearm owners know exactly what those definitions are—as well as the police, because this house, members of Parliament, are the ones who produce legislation and contribute to the second reading debate to provide a clear understanding of what legislation is intended to protect or enforce.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for North West Central, can we have a clear question regarding clause 43 for the minister to answer so that we can move on?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I will give the same clear question that he just gave me in his retort. Minister, we need clear definitions. The lack of definitions is creating further grey areas, and enthusiasts will potentially break the law under proposed section 23AG(1)(d).

Do not come into this house and accuse me of calling police corrupt. That is not the case. Someone may bring parts or firearms into a police station, but the police are stretched because the government is not dealing with any crime issues in regional Western Australia. They are stretched, so if someone presented a firearm or a part, the police may say, "What do you want me to do with it?" They may not want to deal with it. Local police would not want to deal with it because they have too much to deal with already because you are an incompetent Minister for Police who is not dealing with the real crime that is occurring out in regional WA.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister, do you want to respond?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I will respond briefly. Tell me which police officer would not want to deal with a firearm that is rendered under —

The ACTING SPEAKER: To me; sorry, minister.

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

Mr P. PAPALIA: No, I am responding to the member's statement that Western Australian police officers would not want to deal with surrendered firearms under the enduring firearms amnesty. Tell me which police officer told the member that?

Mr V.A. Catania: So you can hunt them down?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The police commissioner might be interested to know if a police officer is failing in their duty, yes, but with respect to that, I do not believe the member. I will pose a couple of questions in response to the member's rant. The member referred to an enthusiast. Who is an enthusiast? Are they a bikie, a terrorist or a family and domestic violence perpetrator seeking to get hold of a firearm so that they can kill their partner? Is that who the member is talking about being an enthusiast? That is the sort of question the member needs to consider. It could be any of them. On the member's question about who commits an offence in relation to diagrams and the like, proposed section 23AK(4) states —

A person does not commit an offence under section 23AH, 23AI or 23AJ if the conduct engaged in by the person —

- (a) is necessary for or of assistance in conducting scientific, medical, educational, military or law enforcement research that has been approved by the Commissioner in writing for the purposes of this paragraph; and
- (b) does not contravene a condition of that approval.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Now that the minister that brought up proposed section 23AK(4)(a), what does "educational" mean? If I send a photocopy of an email to another collector who has paid \$264 for his licence, does that come under the term "educational"? Can I get in strife for that?

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is always going to depend on the circumstances of a scenario of that nature. It is very difficult to quantify or respond to the question posed by the member because it depends on who the individuals are and their purpose for conveying the diagram. As I indicated earlier, in that sort of scenario it might be that the person is providing information to someone else who intends to commit a crime, in which case the police might investigate it and determine that it is unlawful and take action. It also might be that the person in possession of that material might use it to legitimately train someone in the use of a firearm for which that person has a licence. It all depends on the circumstances. We could postulate over any number of hypotheticals. I am not going to address all of them; the legislation is pretty clear. The concerns aired by the member's constituents have been responded to. People should not be concerned if they are conducting themselves in a legitimate and responsible manner in accordance with the act. They will be law abiding and they will be fine.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: We are concerned, and I agree with the member for North West Central on this, because as stated in proposed section 23AJ, "A person who disseminates firearms technology commits a crime unless the person is authorised by a licence". The penalty is imprisonment for 10 years. This will be left to the interpretation of certain people within the police force. Under proposed section 23AJ(2), if a person disseminates firearms technology by sending, supplying, exhibiting, transmitting or communicating firearms technology to another person, they could be liable to that penalty of 10 years' imprisonment. This provision will be left to interpretation and that is why our licensed firearms holders are worried. As the member for North West Central said, it is open to interpretation and there are some grey areas. When the minister says that this is open to interpretation and it should be okay, we are here to question that on behalf of the licensed firearms holders.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am not really sure what the member is talking about. If any licensed firearm holder is concerned about the nature of the material they possess or their transmitting of that material to other people, I urge them to seek advice from the regulator.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I will go back to proposed section 23AC(1). It states —

A person who manufactures a firearm, major firearm part, prohibited firearm accessory or ammunition commits a crime unless the person is authorised by a licence under this Act to do so.

Ammunition is included in that provision, and pursuant to the minister's amendment, will it be likely that ammunition will be included as part of the information on a firearms licence, or will we just stick to the actual firearm? At any time down the track, does the minister envisage ammunition being included on the licence or will that just be an integral part of that particular firearm?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am just dealing with this bill, so I am not sure where the member is going with that question. We have gone past this part of the bill. We have moved on from clause 22 of the bill, but proposed section 16A, "Firearm Licence", states —

A Firearm Licence entitles the holder to possess, carry and lawfully use —

- (a) the firearm named and identified in that licence; and
- (b) ammunition for that firearm ...

It also goes on about other components and materials.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 44 to 85 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

ANIMAL RESOURCES AUTHORITY AMENDMENT AND REPEAL BILL 2021

Second Reading

Resumed from 25 November 2021.

DR K. STRATTON (Nedlands) [12.19 pm]: I rise to speak on the Animal Resources Authority Amendment and Repeal Bill 2021. The Animal Resources Centre is a key aspect of our medical research infrastructure in Western Australia. Medical research is an essential part of our health ecosystem, and never has the importance of a thriving, modern health and research ecosystem been so apparent as during the global pandemic of COVID-19. Indeed, it is the very work of medical researchers that has protected us through the development of a safe vaccine and vaccination schedule. Medical research is a flourishing and thriving industry in our state, with significant contributions made to our individual, national and international health outcomes and practice.

My electorate is home to more than 20 or so medical research institutes, with a focus on some of the major diseases impacting Western Australians and our global community. Indeed, my electorate has the largest footprint of medical research in Western Australia. Between just two of the largest institutes on the Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre site, the Telethon Kids Institute and the Harry Perkins Institute of Medical Research, there are over 1 500 local jobs. That is 1 500 experts or, dare I say, great brains. Medical research is a major employer and a pipeline for early and mid-career researchers as well.

The medical research institutes in Western Australia cover the life span for the period from neonatal to children's health to adult to older person's health. They consider not just, of course, our physical bodily health, but also our mental health and wellbeing, as well as some of the social determinants of health. The health and disease foci of Western Australian medical research institutes include cancer, diabetes, heart disease, rare genetic and neuromuscular diseases, eye health, asbestos-related diseases, kidney disease and stroke—and this barely begins to cover some of the complex medical and health issues that they consider.

Although alternative models are always being explored and developed, animals are used in research to gain understanding of the cell structures and physiological and psychological processes. Animal research provides models for studying human disease and is used to develop new treatments for diseases. Such research provides the essential foundation for improvements in medical knowledge, education and practice. Indeed, the commonwealth draft *National research infrastructure roadmap 2021* recognises the provision of animal models as critical research infrastructure. It is essential, therefore, that our medical researchers have an animal resource centre that is fit for purpose now and sustainably into the future.

The Animal Resources Centre was established to supply high-quality, disease-free laboratory animals for teaching, research and diagnostic purposes in Western Australia. However, only around 14 per cent of the ARC's production has gone to Western Australian research institutions, with the majority of animal stock sold and supplied to interstate and overseas medical research institutes. The ARC is run by the Animal Resources Authority and is currently located at Murdoch University. The authority itself is a statutory body established in 1982 under the Western Australian Animal Resources Authority Act. One of the requirements under the act is that the authority is self-funding. However, it has not met this requirement for a number of years and the state government has been required to step in and provide equity. This financial support has helped the authority to meet its day-to-day running costs, but has also meant that the WA government has subsidised the provision of animals for research purposes to interstate and international medical research institutes. The existing funding model therefore cannot meet and manage infrastructure and operational costs. Further, the current physical facility is tied to a lease at Murdoch University, which has advised that it is proposing to redevelop the site where the ARC is located. The ARC is therefore required to vacate those premises. As it is, the facilities have reached the end of their functional life and need to be replaced.

Given these factors, the WA government has had to consider what a financially sustainable model for the ARC looks like, and this requires a plan for a transition to a new model and to new facilities. This means the WA government exiting from both ownership and operational control of the ARC. The bill will allow the assets, ownership and operations of the Animal Resources Centre to be transitioned to a third-party provider. The focus will remain, however, on keeping that capability in Western Australia and securing a sustainable future with a new operator, while minimising the impact on and disruption to the ARC's internal and external stakeholders and customers.

As I noted earlier, there are a number of medical institutes in my electorate and I have had the pleasure of undertaking site visits and briefings with many of them. Being aware of the change coming to the ARC, researchers and leaders have spoken to me of the importance of the ARC to their research processes and outcomes. Their express concern has been that the ARC retains a Western Australian focus, as without that, our access to the resources risks becoming limited. I am very pleased that the bill responds to this concern by ensuring that two of the selection criteria for the third-party operator relate to Western Australia—namely, demonstrated benefits to Western Australia and local capability. Additional criteria for determining which third party will take on the operation of the ARC address issues of business continuity, commercial vision and capacity to deliver. A small number of parties have been invited to participate in a limited request process through which a preferred party will be selected. This decision, and the following transition to new ownership, is expected later this year, and this bill is about managing the timing and sequencing of that transition. The functional change is required to enter into an agreement with the third party in order for it to take over operations. This transition process will be supported by a project team, technical advisers and key stakeholders. The key objectives of this group are to ensure a process of both selection and transition that is ethical, equitable and efficient. This transition period will also ensure minimal disruption to stakeholders, including customers, suppliers and industry, and, in particular, for staff employed at the ARC. There is a framework for the ARC to provide staff with guidance on their employment options and commencing planning for the next phases of their career and employment. The capabilities and expertise of staff within the ARC are well recognised.

I outline these kinds of details to demonstrate that this has been a very considered decision, with a very considered process behind it. The financial performance of the authority has been a long-running issue, yet its contribution to medical research here and beyond our borders is well recognised. This transition will ensure the ongoing capacity of the ARC, ensuring that our medical researchers have access to all they need to ensure that world-class research into our ongoing health needs can occur.

Of course, ensuring the sustainability of the ARC is just one way that the McGowan government is supporting medical research to have an impact in Western Australia and beyond. The WA Near-miss Awards have recently been announced, making funds available for local health and medical researchers to set them up for success with the National Health and Medical Research Council grants process, in particular ideas grants. The ideas grants scheme supports innovative research projects, funding researchers at all career stages and funding any area of health and

medical research from discovery through to translation and implementation. The awards target researchers who are assessed in the formal category of being a near miss for NHMRC grant funding and give researchers the opportunity to enhance their application for resubmission by providing \$100 000 for a 12-month period of research activity.

Coming from a research background, I understand how important these grants are for not only making research impact, but also career progress. Such grants provide the opportunity to build research partnerships and collaborate with senior researchers and stakeholders; provide a structure and opportunity for conference presentations and publications; and provide the opportunity to develop a recognised research track record, which is itself a precursor to successful research funding. It also means that important medical research is undertaken in WA, with our early and mid-career researchers given the opportunity to stay in Western Australia as they reach their full potential. Ultimately, though, this medical research contributes to the health and disease experience of all Western Australians.

This program is one of many funded by the state government's future health research and innovation fund, which provides a secure source of funding to drive health and medical research and, just as importantly, innovation and commercialisation. Decisions about the fund are guided by an inaugural strategy—the activating research and innovation strategy—developed through extensive stakeholder consultation, as well as through identifying best practice nationally and internationally for the development and promotion of research. The purpose of both the fund and the strategy is to provide a secure, long-term source of funding to support the development of the sector, including stimulating economic and workforce growth, attracting investors, and creating new industries and specialised jobs, while also directing resources to the areas of highest need and opportunity. It will also continue to elevate the position and standing of Western Australia as a centre of excellence in health and medical research, innovation and commercialisation.

There are four key platforms to this strategy: people building the capacity of all our stakeholders, from consumer advocates to early and mid-career researchers and leaders; partners in stimulating local, national and international partnerships and collaborations across the development, research, innovation and commercialisation pathway; enhancing digital platforms, technologies, data linkage and infrastructure; and in policy through streamlining governance and ethical review and reporting. Other initiatives include the research excellence award program to recognise and support Western Australia's most outstanding researchers by providing discretionary funding that can be used for strategic research opportunities. Just this morning, the Minister for Medical Research announced that \$10 million will be available over two years through these awards. The awards look to drive outcomes such as improving efficiency and effectiveness of medical research, improving commercialisation of medical research, improving stability for research staff and increasing our success rates for competitive research grants.

I would like to take a moment to outline some of the impact and the work of one of our key medical research institutes, the Telethon Kids Institute. In 2020, this research institute celebrated 30 years, and it is fair to say that most Western Australians would acknowledge the Telethon Kids Institute as a key community asset. People's participation in and generosity to Telethon, which is a major supporter of the Telethon Kids Institute, demonstrates this to be so. Again, the Telethon Kids Institute covers a range of child health research initiatives from leukaemia to bullying, autism, type 1 diabetes, youth, mental health and brain cancer, to name a few. World-leading infectious disease experts from the Telethon Kids Institute played a pivotal role in working towards better understanding of, and solutions to, responding to the global pandemic of COVID-19. They did this in three key fundamental ways. First, they did it through leadership by providing expertise to a number of state and national advisory and reference groups. Associate Professor Chris Blythe is the chair of the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation—otherwise known as ATAGI—directly advising Australian governments on a vaccine program and rollout. Telethon Kids Institute director Professor Jonathan Carapetis was on the National COVID-19 Health and Research Advisory Committee. I am sure that many of us have heard him on radio and television giving guidance to parents in particular about the vaccine rollout and how to manage our kids' anxiety in the face of a global pandemic. Dr Asha Bowen from the institute was the paediatric and child health division representative on the Royal Australasian College of Physicians' COVID-19 expert reference group.

The second way that the institute has responded to and influenced our experience of the global pandemic has been through advocacy by providing an independent voice of guidance and reassurance, providing key messaging to the public and to parents, and translating much of the health messaging for children. It very successfully translated complex medical concepts into easy-to-understand language. The youth mental health team, in particular, developed and delivered tips for families with children who are anxious about the ongoing uncertainty that COVID-19 continues to present to us—in particular, the impact of the disrupted school experience. As the parent of two school-aged children, who throughout the pandemic have transitioned to high school, have survived the ATAR process and have had experiences of online schooling—lockdown changed work opportunities, particularly for my teenager—the institute's advice and reassurance has been welcoming for both me, as a parent, and my children.

The other advocacy activity that the institute have been involved in is the vaccine rollout in culturally and linguistically diverse communities—a significant target for participation in vaccination—and it has mounted and delivered grassroots campaigns to spread the message amongst many multicultural communities in Western Australia. In strictly medical research terms—which is how many of us might understand it—the institute has also participated

in many local, national and global partnerships, undertaking research across aspects of experience with the pandemic, including mapping the spread of COVID-19, as well as being able to see how the spread of COVID-19 changed as we adapted and adopted different regulations such as mask wearing, lockdowns and vaccines. It ran the DETECT Schools study to assess any asymptomatic spread of COVID-19, with over 14 000 WA schoolchildren and teachers participating in that study. It is also part of the Coronavax study to look at vaccine hesitancy in our community and consider therefore how we can adapt our messaging and communications to bring people along to be vaccinated and address any concerns they may have that result in vaccine hesitancy. It has also carefully examined transitions in mental health delivery for children and young people through the Mind the Distance study that examined the efficacy of telehealth delivery of mental health services, finding that telehealth will be a successful way of delivering mental health services both during and beyond the pandemic, and that it meets the needs of particular children and young people alongside, of course, face-to-face delivery.

I would like to commend this bill to the house for the opportunity that it will create for the ARC to continue to provide essential infrastructure for Western Australian, national and international medical research.

MS M.J. HAMMAT (Mirrabooka) [12.37 pm]: It is a great pleasure to talk on the Animal Resources Authority Amendment and Repeal Bill 2021. The member for Nedlands has already given quite a detailed background to the legislation and its context, so I just want to briefly echo the comments about this bill and why it comes to us today. It deals with the Animal Resources Centre, currently located at Murdoch University. It is a statutory body established under its own act, the Western Australian Animal Resources Authority Act. Part of the provisions of that act require that it be self-funding, but as the member for Nedlands has already outlined, in recent years, that has not been the case. It provides essential support to many facilities here in Western Australia, and also around Australia and internationally. It is an important resource, but one that has been making a loss. For those reasons, the Western Australian government is required to review its operations, which it has done. This bill comes before the house to ensure that the transition can be made for this service, so that it continues to perform its important work of supplying high-quality disease-free laboratory animals for teaching, research and diagnostic purposes. So that it can continue to do that, it is to be restructured in a way that will make it more self-sustaining and will avoid the current situation in which, in effect, the WA government subsidises the provision of these animals not just to Western Australian facilities, but more broadly to Australia and around the world.

In preparing my comments today, my mind turned to a few things that I wanted to acknowledge. First, one of the things that is really interesting about this bill is that it presents a really interesting example of some of the work that happens in the public sector in Western Australia. The unique organisations that are part of the responsibility of the public sector are highlighted by this bill. I did not think much about the production of animals for medical purposes before I put my hand up to speak on this bill. I know many others have not spent many hours contemplating that, and I confess it was not something that had been at the front of my mind. It was very interesting to me to consider the work that the authority does. As its mice and rodents are in demand, the authority is obviously well regarded not just here in Australia, but also internationally. This highlights the wide variety of work that is undertaken in the public sector in not just Western Australia, but also the whole of Australia. It underlines the fact that a strong public sector is an important part of providing products in this and other cases in which, for a whole range of reasons, services might not otherwise be easily provided. Therefore, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate those who work at the Animal Resources Centre for their work, which is obviously invaluable to our scientific community and has perhaps not been well recognised, because I am sure many other people, like me, had not closely contemplated its work.

I want to make a few comments about medical research in Western Australia. The member for Nedlands has a number of research institutes in her electorate, and she has spoken of them today. I want to talk a little bit about some of the issues associated with the use of animals for medical research purposes. As the member for Nedlands outlined, we have many excellent medical research institutes here in WA, and they are an essential part of our health system. They provide essential research that allows us to extend our knowledge of how to cure disease and provides lessons that have broader application right around Australia and internationally.

Many research institutes are reliant on the supply of rats, mice and other small creatures to help them undertake that essential work. This is one of the reasons why this bill envisages the government winding down its commitment to the Animal Resources Authority, but also ensures that the facility will remain available to supply rats, mice and rodents in Western Australia.

There are many institutes in WA, but I want to focus on just two of them in my comments today. The first of those is the Lions Eye Institute. I recently had the opportunity to go on a tour of its facility in Nedlands, and I am very grateful to the institute for inviting me to do that. Many people here perhaps took the opportunity to learn more about the Lions Eye Institute when it visited Parliament House at the end of last year, so I know that a number of my colleagues would have enjoyed that as well. The tour was a very important opportunity to learn about the work that the institute is doing. I can confirm that there were no rats or mice as part of the tour! I hasten to add that I cannot provide any knowledge about, or comment on, the use or otherwise of those in their research. It was a very interesting place to visit, and I am very grateful for the opportunity to do that tour to learn about not only the institute's research, but also the really important work that it does providing medical services for people who are experiencing deteriorating sight.

I was particularly interested in hearing about the Lions Eye Institute's plans to open services in Midland, which I think would be of great assistance to the people whom I represent in the electorate of Mirrabooka. If the institute is successful in putting one of its facilities in Midland, it would cut people's travel time and make it easier for them to access the services that they need. This is of particular importance to many of my constituents as, unfortunately, in the suburbs that I represent, there are high levels of diabetes, which is one of the key causes of macular degeneration. I wish the institute well with its plans, and I hope it can bring them to reality.

One of the things that I was interested to learn about whilst I was visiting the Lions Eye Institute is that it was named as a result of its early connection to Lions Clubs here in WA. In 1975, the Lions Save-Sight Foundation provided funding to create the chair of ophthalmology at the University of Western Australia, which resulted in people with professional abilities coming to WA. It then worked to establish the Lions Eye Institute in 1983 as a not-for-profit organisation.

I was particularly interested to hear this history because, of course, Lions Clubs continue to operate all around WA, and they are an essential part of our community. I would like to take this opportunity to give a shout-out to the Girrawheen Lions Club. I am a proud member of the Lions Club in Girrawheen and it does a lot of excellent work in our community, providing funding to schools and to many young people. It also runs a successful community market at the Newpark Shopping Centre every Saturday, and it is always ready to lend a hand at community events, often providing free train rides for kids. The Girrawheen Lions Club hosts a free Australia Day barbecue breakfast and a Christmas lolly run. Most importantly, it sells Lions Christmas cakes at Christmas time. For people like me who are fond of Christmas cake, the Lions Club not only enables us to save money, but also gives us plenty of Christmas cake to enjoy, for which I am grateful.

The Lions Club also still collects old frames from glasses. Those donations make their way to the Lions Recycle for Sight project headquarters in Queensland, where they are cleaned, repackaged and sent to the South Pacific, Asia, India and Nepal to be re-used. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the members of the Girrawheen Lions, particularly the president, Eric Snow, vice president, Barry Nielsen, and secretary, Cathy Ormesher, and all the committee members for their great work in our community.

In my comments today, I also want to talk a little bit about the Harry Perkins Institute of Medical Research. I think most people in Perth have heard of this institute because of its great work in research, particularly cancer research. Many people, I think, have also heard of it because of a number of its fundraising activities, including the cycle to conquer cancer, a two-day ride from Perth to Mandurah and back again, which I understand is a major fundraising event for the institute, and which has now been going for more than 10 years.

Mr R.H. Cook: As a cyclist, member, have you done that ride?

Ms M.J. HAMMAT: I have not completed the ride, minister; I was going to confess that many cyclists have, but I have not. I have, however, donated to others who are doing it, and I know that many people in WA have done the same. It is, indeed, a very important event for raising funds for the Perkins institute, and cyclists get a great amount of joy from it, including the minister who has done it in the past.

The Perkins institute is not known for just its cycling fundraising events; it is known for its research. It undertakes important research into cancer, diabetes, heart disease and neuromuscular disease. This is really important work because cancer remains a major contributor to death and disability in our community. One in two people will develop cancer during their lifetime, and every year more than 12 000 people in WA are diagnosed with cancer. Research and screening have improved survival rates, along with education and social health measures. However, there are still many cancers for which survival rates are low and tests for early detection remain elusive. This is one of the reasons that the work of the Perkins institute is so important.

We need to do much more work to find new and better ways to treat cancer, to improve diagnostics and to bring cancer to an end. The Perkins institute undertakes research into many different cancers, but I wanted to give a particular shout-out, not necessarily to the institute's work but to work being done more broadly on bowel cancer.

Australia has one of the highest rates of bowel cancer in the world. More than 15 000 Australians are diagnosed every year. It affects older people, younger people and men and women equally. Bowel cancer is the second highest cause of death from cancer, which is partly because it is very difficult to detect early. Anyone over the age of 50 should have received their free bowel cancer testing kit in the mail from the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program. This national program provides free, easy, at-home early testing that detects bowel cancer before there are any obvious symptoms of the disease. When it is found early, 90 per cent of bowel cancers can be successfully treated. Test are sent free to the homes of everyone aged between 50 and 74, every two years.

These tests often sit unused in people's homes and I believe that that is because we perhaps find it a little squeamish to undertake the test, which requires you to collect a sample of your own stool. However, this test will literally save your life. Therefore, in my comments today, I want to encourage people, when they receive their free testing kit, to undertake the small amount of work that it requires to complete the sample and return it. It is not very often that you get something in the mail that will literally save your life, but for everyone aged between 50 and 74, every

two years, you will indeed get exactly that. Please, do not disregard this test. When you get it, complete it and return it in the mail because it has had a profound impact on the ability to undertake early detection of bowel cancer and save lives.

I want to acknowledge that the Animal Resources Authority is a really important part of our medical research system in Western Australia and more broadly. A number of excellent institutes in WA are undertaking medical research that is having an important impact on the lives and wellbeing of Western Australians.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 737.]

CRIME AND ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR — KIMBERLEY

Statement by Member for Central Wheatbelt

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt — Leader of the Opposition) [12.50 pm]: Earlier this month I visited the Kimberley, meeting with locals in Kununurra, Halls Creek, Fitzroy Crossing and Broome about the crime impacting their communities. I joined the member for North West Central and member for Mining and Pastoral Region Hon Neil Thomson for a series of meetings and forums. We heard firsthand the devastating impact of crime and antisocial behaviour in these communities. This crime wave is not new; the opposition has previously raised concerns in this house, only to have them ignored by the Minister for Police and the McGowan government. It was devastating to hear people say they felt their towns had become lawless, equal parts worried for their own safety and the future of their community.

After months of reports of youth crime on the rise in the Kimberley, Pilbara and Gascoyne, the Minister for Police has finally heeded the cry for help and additional police resources have been sent to provide respite for these communities. Now they must work to address the root cause of the challenges, and if locals are supported by government, they can make a real difference. In the forums we attended locals put forward ideas that have great merit. I congratulate the Kimberley regional councils and groups like Olabud Doogethu in Halls Creek for their initiative. Empowering local communities to address housing, education, health and employment can create the change needed, but it should not have taken a crisis to get the attention they deserve.

DARDANUP FIRE STATION — ALEXANDER POAD

Statement by Member for Collie–Preston

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs L.A. Munday): Member for Collie–Preston, I see that you are seeking the call. You now have the call.

MS J.L. HANNS (Collie–Preston) [12.51 pm]: Thank you, Acting Speaker. Earlier this year, I joined Minister for Emergency Services Hon Stephen Dawson, Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner Darren Klemm and volunteers from the Dardanup Central Volunteer Bush Fire Bridge to open the new fire station. The station was funded by the McGowan government through the emergency services levy and the Shire of Dardanup, along with a generous donation from the estate of a former volunteer firefighter Mr Alexander Poad.

Mr Alexander Poad was born in 1923 and died in 2011, aged 87 years. Alex lived all his life on the farming property at Crooked Brook in Dardanup, where the family ran a dairy and beef cattle farming business. Alex had a very productive vegetable garden. His mother was very involved in the Dardanup Red Cross unit. Alex helped by supplying vegetables to the various street stalls to raise funds for the unit. Alex was also a dedicated fire control officer for the Crooked Brook area. He was a quiet man who led a simple uncomplicated life, epitomised by a life of service to others.

When Alex passed away in 2011, he left a generous bequest to the Dardanup Red Cross with simple instructions: the money was to be used to benefit the local community. The Dardanup Red Cross and Shire of Dardanup carefully considered how best to respect Alex's wishes. The decision was made to grant some of the bequest towards the building of the central fire station in Dardanup, where Alex had been a dedicated fire control officer. It was a fitting gesture to his memory.

WEST AUSTRALIAN NEWSPAPERS — ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT

Statement by Member for Cockburn

MR D.A.E. SCAIFE (Cockburn) [12.53 pm]: I rise today to draw attention to the 110 union members and production employees of West Australian Newspapers Ltd who have been locked out of their workplace without pay. Since late 2019, WA Newspapers' production employees—the same employees who ensure that *The West Australian* is printed each day—have been negotiating for a replacement enterprise agreement. Toward the end of November 2021, the management team ceased meeting with workers, forcing them to take protected industrial action. The response from management was to lock the workers out of the workplace without pay for three days immediately prior to Christmas. Since then, WA Newspapers has twice put out to a vote a proposed agreement that would drastically cut sick leave, redundancy entitlements, shift loadings and the pay of the lowest paid casual workers. Those proposals have been voted down and the workers have been subjected to further lockouts. In total, they have been locked

out of their workplace without pay for 23 days. In August last year, Seven West Media, the parent company of West Australian Newspapers, reported a net profit of \$318 million. In the preceding years, the company received \$33.4 million in taxpayers' subsidies through the federal government's JobKeeper program. I am calling on a profitable company like WA Newspapers to end the lockouts and to return to the bargaining table to negotiate with the workers and their unions for a fair and reasonable enterprise agreement. I thank Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union father of the chapel, Gary Small, and AMWU organiser Alan Lindsey for their hard work leading the workers through this challenging period. I stand in solidarity with all the workers who are simply seeking economic security at work and add my voice in support of their cause.

HORSEPOWER HIGHWAY — GNOWANGERUP

Statement by Member for Roe

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe) [12.55 pm]: I would like to congratulate project manager Cassandra Beeck and the community of Gnowangerup for the growing popularity and ongoing development of the Horsepower Highway, an initiative to revitalise their town and attract visitors to the area. The Horsepower Highway is supported by the GNP 360 Cooperative, which was founded in 2018 by Richard House and a group of community members working to kickstart new business and bring life and vitality back to Gnowangerup. The 75-kilometre trail is a drive-yourself route in my electorate along the Broomehill East–Gnowangerup road down to Stirling Range National Park. New machines are being added regularly, with over 20 tractors of various themes, including Snowy the tractor on skis; the Goreng NAIDOC tractor; Hero the State Emergency Service tractor; and a firm favourite, Lucinda, a colourful tribute to rural women. In November 2021, the Horsepower Highway won the WA Community Action and Wellbeing category at the Tidy Towns Sustainable Communities Awards. It is also a finalist in three categories for the Australian Street Art Awards, the winners of which will be announced in March. This project is driven by a small local community to not only save their town, but also see it prosper, and it is receiving countrywide acclaim. Congratulations, Gnowangerup. I encourage everyone to travel the Horsepower Highway.

LACHLAN BEVERIDGE

Statement by Member for Hillarys

MS C.M. COLLINS (Hillarys) [12.56 pm]: I wish to acknowledge an amazing youngster and local hero who lives in my electorate, Lachlan Beveridge. Lachlan is an 11-year-old Kallaroo resident who was recently named the City of Joondalup's Young Citizen of the Year for his work on autism awareness. Lachlan is the inspiration behind the amazing charity Paint Me a Rainbow–Autism Awareness WA, which was started by his parents, Kylie and Bruce Beveridge, in 2018. Together, this passionate family has created a fun and successful Paint Me a Rainbow campaign within Western Australian schools. Every April, to coincide with World Autism Month, they help bring awareness and acceptance for children living with autism. Lachlan and his mum, Kylie, have also co-written a children's picture book called *Don't Forget to Breathe*, which is illustrated by talented Mullaloo artist Peter Ryan. The book is a tale of two dragons, April and Flash, and shares a message to children about the importance of remembering to breathe when you have anxiety. Every day in our homes and schools there are families dealing with personal challenges that require our understanding and mostly that there is the need for acceptance of people's differences. Lachlan and his parents have increased awareness around special needs kids and families. Awareness equals acceptance and acceptance helps kids to reach their potential at school and in life. Well done, Lachlan and family, for your incredible contribution to our community.

ROTTNEST CHANNEL SWIM

Statement by Member for Cottesloe

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs L.A. Munday): Member for Cottesloe, I see that you are seeking the call. You have the call.

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe — Leader of the Liberal Party) [12.58 pm]: Thank you very much, Acting Speaker. On Saturday morning, 2 300 eager swimmers are expected to descend on Cottesloe Beach, waiting with some excitement, and I imagine a lot of nerves, to start the internationally acknowledged 19.7-kilometre open water Rottnest Channel Swim to Thomson Bay. Starting from humble beginnings, the first ever Rottnest Channel Swim was held in 1991 with just 44 entrants. Only seven years later, the event had eclipsed all competitors to become the world's largest open water swimming competition, a title it continues to hold today. The swim has become such a landmark competition that a virtual Rottnest Channel Swim was created in 2009. This has meant that despite safety caps on the number of swimmers who can compete in the race in person, thousands more have been able to challenge themselves by replicating the race in pools from Seville Grove to Seoul, South Korea. The event would not be what it is today without the training and dedication of the swimmers and their support crews, whether they are looking to raise money for a charity close to their heart or as a competitive swimmer. I wish all swimmers the best of luck in completing this iconic event. Fingers crossed that this year's Rottnest Channel Swim will see all swimmers able to finish the race under the cut-off. I thank Nic Blackburn and his committee for the excellent work they do in organising the race.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 to 2.00 pm

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY CHAMBER — CONVENTIONS

Statement by Deputy Speaker

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr S.J. Price) [2.00 pm]: Members, before we get into question time, I remind ministers to keep their responses as concise as possible. I appreciate the need to get as much relevant information as possible on the record, but if responses to questions could be as confined as possible, that would be great.

I will make one other comment. There is a convention in regard to referring to members' presence in or absence from the chamber. I have noticed recently that this is referred to more frequently. I certainly encourage members to try to revert to the old convention as much as possible.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

SOCIAL HOUSING — KIMBERLEY

86. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Minister for Housing:

I refer to a meeting on Thursday, 3 February, with the Kimberley Regional Group, which comprises the Shires of Broome, Wyndham–East Kimberley, Halls Creek and Derby–West Kimberley, and reports that the minister indicated that any construction of much-needed social housing would wait until after the current critical skills shortage had passed.

- (1) Of the 3 300 houses the minister has announced, how many have been allocated to the Kimberley?
- (2) What is the minister's solution to deal with the crisis in the Kimberley right now, given that overcrowded houses are contributing to the crime issue facing these communities?

Mr J.N. CAREY replied:

I want to thank the member for the question.

- (1)–(2) I am disappointed and saddened by the Kimberley Regional Group's misrepresentation of this matter. I want to be very clear. I had a 30-minute meeting—everyone in this chamber knows that I am highly accessible and responsive to local governments across Western Australia—which turned into about one hour and 15 minutes. At the time, we talked about the current housing market. I have already been on the public record about this: we face a heated construction market and we face challenges, but we are still doing everything we can to deliver and accelerate social housing while also having a \$522 million social housing fund for a pipeline of work once the boom finishes.

It is incorrect to say that social housing in the Kimberley is on hold. I want to be very clear: currently, there are nearly 40 new social homes under construction or contracted for delivery in the Kimberley. I have also worked with the Shire of Derby–West Kimberley to use 15 vacant Government Regional Officers' Housing homes to not only convert to social housing, but also provide accommodation for the council and other staff. We have provided nearly \$3.2 million worth of grants to the Kimberley community housing organisation, and, of course, we have the \$200 million north-west Aboriginal housing fund, of which we have invested \$25 million into the East Kimberley transitional housing program. We had a \$20 000 building bonus grant, which has seen a 195 per cent increase in the number of homes approved last year.

We understand this: it is about not only building social homes, but also creating land supply. As part of our \$116 million Regional Land Booster program, we have provided funding for the Kimberley to release 40 lots, of which the majority are in Broome. I want to be very clear: we are investing in social housing right now. We are doing everything we can through spot purchasing, using timber frames and modular homes, and converting existing affordable product stock that would otherwise be sold to the market. We also have \$522 million set aside so that when the market recedes, we have a pipeline of work.

That was the discussion. I am deeply disappointed that members of that group have misrepresented that detailed conversation.

SOCIAL HOUSING — KIMBERLEY

87. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Minister for Housing:

I have a supplementary question. Can I confirm from that response that the only thing that has happened right now is that 15 vacant homes from Government Regional Officers' Housing have been confirmed? Despite the fact that the minister has sent out 33 media statements and extolled his social housing pipedream more than 118 times in this place, there is no solution to the housing crisis in the Kimberley.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: There was a question at the beginning of that.

Mr J.N. CAREY replied:

I just find that entirely bizarre. What is very clear is that our government is focused on practical solutions to deliver social housing across Western Australia. Given the very tight and heated construction market, we are focused on boosting housing supply overall and land supply. I just listed there nearly 40 new social homes currently under construction or contracted for delivery in the Kimberley, but you just ignored that—you totally ignored that!

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

Mr J.N. CAREY: I remember this member's record when it comes to housing and Government Regional Officers' Housing. Under her watch, she flogged off housing in her precious wheatbelt. That is her record as a minister, so I will not be lectured by a weak Leader of the Opposition whose cabinet, under her own record, flogged off GROH homes. I am doing everything I can as the minister through pivoting the organisation, spot purchasing modular homes and timber homes, and converting affordable product into social housing. We are doing everything we can and we have a pipeline of work for which \$522 million has been set aside. It is very clear that we have a plan, that we are implementing that plan and that despite the challenges we face in the market, we are getting on with the job of delivering social housing in Western Australia.

CORONAVIRUS — BUSINESS ASSISTANCE PACKAGE

88. Mr Y. MUBARAKAI to the Premier:

I refer to the McGowan government's commitment to supporting WA businesses as the COVID-19 Omicron variant continues to spread throughout the community. Can the Premier outline to the house what the COVID-19 business assistance package that was announced today will mean for businesses affected by increasing case numbers and the necessary implementation of level 1 public health and social measures?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I thank the member for Jandakot for the question.

Before I answer the question, I will make a short statement. I am sure that all members join me in expressing our thoughts and best wishes to the people of Ukraine during this very, very difficult time. I also express our thoughts to any Western Australians with relatives in Ukraine or any Western Australians of Ukrainian heritage. I also join with the commonwealth government in condemning the unprovoked aggression by the Russian government towards the country of Ukraine. It is a shocking, shocking thing that it has done.

We are now in the phase of the pandemic that we predicted and knew would be coming. Up to eight o'clock last night, we recorded 617 new cases, most of which were local cases. We now have 2 147 active cases in Western Australia and we expect that we will shortly be recording more than a thousand new cases a day within Western Australia. This will be an uncertain and difficult period, but we know that we are as well prepared as possible for what lies ahead.

Despite all our measures, businesses will still be impacted across the state. There will be staffing issues, isolation requirements, some people who will not go out and disruption to some supply chains. Due to this government's strong financial management over the course of the last five years, we are in a good position to be able to provide support to Western Australian businesses, just as we have throughout the entire pandemic. Over the course of the pandemic, the government has put \$10 billion into pandemic response measures, including \$1.6 billion into direct support for Western Australian small and medium-sized businesses.

Today, we announced a further \$67 million COVID-19 business assistance package, on top of everything else we have done so far. The package will help those businesses that are most impacted by the spread of the Omicron variant. It involves eight programs targeting small businesses. Despite our request that people continue to go out and access businesses, some people have decided to not do that, which has resulted in a drop in trade for some businesses around Western Australia. This new package includes \$42 million in tenant rental relief, providing grants of up to \$3 000 for eligible small business tenants; \$10.7 million in landlord rental relief, to provide support to landlords who match what the government is doing—in effect, some businesses will be able to get up to \$6 000 in rental relief if the landlord matches it; the waiving of rent for government tenants, up to \$6 000; a \$5 million alfresco support program for businesses to put in place alfresco initiatives, particularly cafes and the like; the waiving of a range of licensing fees, including liquor licensing fees, across the state; a \$1.8 million nightclub assistance program; and a \$1.3 million performing arts, theatres and cinemas assistance program, providing grants of up to \$50 000. I was at a Luna cinema this morning. Those sorts of venues will obviously suffer at these times, so we want to provide support to them, particularly the cinemas out there that might suffer a loss of trade. This is a direct set of grants to businesses and forms part of the \$355 million in support that we have provided to business since December last year so that they can cope with what has gone on. As I said, it is because of our good financial management that we have been able to do that.

I encourage Western Australians to continue to access our businesses across the state—retail, hospitality and the like. Just because we have COVID does not mean that people should stop going out and stop supporting local businesses.

SOUTH FREMANTLE POWER STATION — SALE

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

Before I ask my question, I join the Premier in expressing that my thoughts and deepest affection are there for the people of Ukraine, whose country has apparently been invaded by Russia. It must be utterly terrifying for those people. I fully support the comments made by the Premier.

I also send my deepest sympathies to the family of Jack Bendat. Jack Bendat was a giant in Western Australia—an immigrant who contributed an enormous amount to our state.

I refer the minister to recent media reports in *The West Australian*, on 6PR and even in the *Fremantle Shipping News* about the mystery and secrecy surrounding the sale process of the six-hectare heritage-listed South Fremantle power station site.

- (1) Why is the community and the Cockburn city council being kept in the dark about the sale process?
- (2) Who is the successful proponent and what is the purchase price that has been offered?
- (3) What are the conditions of sale, and is the sale dependent on any contributions, in cash or in kind, from the government and/or Synergy?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

- (1)–(3) I am not aware of any of the details of the sale process, other than that which I provided in answer to a question in the upper house the other day. I have previously explained that this process is being conducted independently of me and my office by Synergy. I cannot believe that the shadow Minister for Energy has said that there should be political interference in this process. I think it is extraordinary that the shadow Minister for Energy thinks that politicians should decide who is the best person to buy this site.

I want to remind people that when this matter came before the house previously, there was some confusion by the opposition about what was being asked for by Synergy. Synergy asked at that time for expressions of interest, not a bid, for the site. It asked companies to provide details of their capacity to be involved in such a complex project as the redevelopment of the South Fremantle power station, a heritage-listed site with known contamination in a constrained environment next to a Western Power substation. The opposition thought, and so did a particular journalist, that the bidders were being asked for a bid within two weeks. Nothing was further from the truth. What people were asked to do was to say whether they were interested in bidding for the project and what was their capacity to deliver a good outcome.

Synergy was asked by me to deal with that entire matter as a commercial transaction without political interference, and that is exactly what is occurring. I have become aware, because of a media report, that apparently some heads of agreement are following on from that process. Clearly, as I understand from the answer I gave in the other place, there is a conditional sale. Clearly, the conditions for that sale have not been completed. When those conditions are completed, Synergy will make the decision on whether it wants to dispose of the asset. That is a commercial decision for Synergy. If Synergy needs to make some contribution for the proponent to take this site off its hands, that will be a matter for Synergy and its board to decide. I would not be surprised if that were the case, because this is a very difficult site for redevelopment. We know that from what has happened with the East Perth power station. We know that that is what has happened with other power stations around the world. If Synergy can dispose of this asset for less than the potential cost of rehabilitation, it will have done a great job and I will congratulate it. But what I will not do is to follow the suggestion from the shadow minister and have political interference in this process.

SOUTH FREMANTLE POWER STATION — SALE

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

I have a supplementary question. Surely, given the Premier's commitment to gold-standard transparency, the public of Western Australia deserves to know about the sale of this asset and, in particular, any commitments made on behalf of the public of Western Australia.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

What I say to the people of this state is that if the sale ever happens, the entire issues will be made public. There is no sale. The asset has not been disposed of. The process, properly, is being done by Synergy. Let me make it clear: Synergy does commercial transactions every day of the week. It is a commercial business. It does billion-dollar transactions. The idea that I would interfere in those commercial decisions is outrageous! You are asking for corrupt behaviour by me. I will not join you in supporting corrupt behaviour. You cannot ask a politician to interfere in a commercial decision.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members! Members of the opposition!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: What sort of government was the last lot? What did they do? Did they call people in and say, “Don’t do that; do this. Oh no, that’s the wrong deal; this is the best deal”? Let us go through it. Let us remember what happened when your government was in power—the Muja AB deal. An amount of \$82 000 was paid by a company based in Geelong for a 50 per cent share in that agreement. Do members know how much was contributed by the people of this state? It was \$320 million. Think about that, member. This is what you think is a good deal—\$82 000 for 50 per cent.

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: No, it was not.

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: No, that is not true. Day after day the member’s government came in here and denied the truth. It took us months and months to find out what happened. There was no transparency, just dishonesty. It was \$82 000 for 50 per cent; \$320 million for 50 per cent. That is the sort of behaviour. Then there was the deal for a project in Port Hedland when the government of Western Australia took a 27-year obligation from a gas-fired power station but did not buy any electricity. It did not buy any electricity! It took a 27-year obligation on a power station that stopped renewable energy getting into the grid, worth hundreds of millions of dollars, with direct political interference. I am not corrupt like that. I insist—I directed Synergy on this—that Synergy do this as a commercial decision, and when it completes its commercial transaction, it can tell me what is happening.

CORONAVIRUS — REMOTE ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Kimberley, I see you are seeking the call. Member for Kimberley, you have the call.

91. Ms D.G. D’ANNA to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the outbreak of COVID-19 in the remote Aboriginal community of Bidyadanga in my electorate and the COVID-19 outbreak in Jameson earlier this week. Can the minister update the house on how the government is responding to these outbreaks and outline what action is being taken to support vulnerable people in the region and in remote Aboriginal communities?

Ms A. SANDERSON replied:

I thank the member for Kimberley for her question. I am not sure which screen to look at! I thank her for her incredible advocacy for her community, and remote communities in particular in her region. She is very engaged and active on the ground.

Regional and remote communities across Western Australia have been preparing for COVID outbreaks, alongside the WA Country Health Service, the Department of Communities, local Aboriginal medical services and other local service providers for the last 18 months to two years. There has been enormous cooperation between all parties to support these communities. The state government has run a number of vaccination blitzes across regional communities. The commonwealth government has also provided vaccination support for medical services, but the state government, despite it being a commonwealth responsibility, has stepped in and filled some of those gaps. The WA Country Health Service has established a number of fixed vaccination clinics in the larger regional centres, but with additional in-reach vaccination clinics to regional communities, including door-to-door and doorknocking and talking with communities in the inland towns and some of the remote nursing posts. Vaccination blitzes have also been conducted at pop-up vaccination clinics in conjunction with the Department of Health and Rio Tinto. To ensure clear communication and coordination of support of these important communities with the Aboriginal community-controlled health organisations, government departments and remote Aboriginal communities, we have established the remote Aboriginal community mobilisation unit and community outreach, which operates out of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and within the Aboriginal engagement unit. The unit’s role has been to support remote Aboriginal communities through the pandemic by coordinating information with agencies, ACCHOs and remote communities, as well as ensuring that information is coordinated between the Northern Territory and South Australian governments. I have met with the Northern Territory and South Australian ministers to discuss those in the tristate communities who move across the borders and how we are going to continue to support them and get people to the closest hospital possible should they need it. The focus of the group has very much been working with those communities on the appropriateness of plans for their communities and driven by their communities.

Bidyadanga is obviously experiencing an outbreak. There are around 950 people in the community at the moment, including about 120 students in the local school. Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services provides the primary emergency care to that community and has stood up an emergency team to go in there. The team is coordinating the testing, isolating and contact tracing in those areas. The community itself has imposed a lockdown and the police have provided more support there to enforce roadblocks to stop people going in and out of that community. They are well prepared. I am pleased to say that the double vaccination rate in that community is over 70 per cent, which is above the national average for Aboriginal communities. That bodes well. In addition, Broome hospital is on standby to prepare for a surge in COVID testing and to receive COVID patients, and tens of thousands of rapid antigen tests have been deployed into those remote communities.

I want to thank the communities, the services, WACHS and the departments that are all working together to respond quickly to this outbreak. The next few months will be tough in WA, particularly for those communities, but we are coordinated, we are working together, and we will do the very best we can to support those communities.

METRONET — MOTOR VEHICLE LICENCE FEE REVENUE

92. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Can the minister confirm that approximately \$215 million of motor vehicle licence fee revenue has been allocated to Metronet projects under development, including the Byford extension, during 2023–24 and 2024–25?
- (2) Can the minister confirm whether any additional licence fee revenue will be allocated as a result of the project costing nearly \$2 billion as opposed to the \$1.4 billion originally allocated in the budget?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

I thank the member for that question.

(1)–(2) The member's numbers are entirely wrong in relation to the costing he outlined.

Mr R.S. Love: They are from the budget papers.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: No, it is entirely wrong. The member is entirely wrong in relation to the numbers —

Mr R.S. Love: The budget papers are wrong?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: No, the member's interpretation is entirely wrong.

Mr R.S. Love: It is Metronet projects under development.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member, you have asked the question; wait for the response.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The member cannot read the budget papers and he does not know how to interpret the budget papers. In relation to the funding for Metronet, as people would know, we have sought a variety of sources of funding to fund Metronet, in particular the federal government. Remember that it was those opposite who could not get a dollar out of the federal government for any public transport project. They could not get a dollar for any of those projects. They made commitments like MAX light rail and then failed to deliver. They made commitments like the Ellenbrook rail line twice and did not deliver anything. They could not get a cent from the commonwealth government, and we have managed to get quite a few billion dollars, actually, from the commonwealth government, and it continues in relation to helping fund Metronet.

In relation to the source of funding, yes, we use the special purpose account to help fund road-related projects to do with Metronet. Denny Avenue is an example; we lifted the rail and removed the level crossing, and who gets a lot of the benefit from that? Motorists do because they are not being held up at the Denny Avenue level crossing. Many of our level crossing projects provide a benefit to both the public transport user and the motorist, so of course we would use those funds, as we would use the significant contribution by the federal government. That has been clear in the budget papers now for about four years. There is nothing new; it has been clear. Some of these projects deliver significant benefits to motorists and public transport users, particularly level crossing removals that are as much to do with enhancing the public transport experience as reducing congestion.

In relation to Denny Avenue, the opposition failed to address this project during eight and a half years in government. This project was ranked number one in the RAC's black spot survey. It involves 250 metres of road in Kelmscott, and the former government failed to address it. The late Don Randall took the then Minister for Transport out there, begging for that project to be delivered, and nothing happened under the former government's watch. Of course we will utilise all sources of funds to make sure that we can deliver this project.

METRONET — MOTOR VEHICLE LICENCE FEE REVENUE

93. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Minister for Transport:

I have a supplementary question. Does the minister confirm that, in her view, it is fair for Western Australian motorists to pay for these rail lines, especially the many regional motorists who may never benefit from this project?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

Members may remember that yesterday I read out some comments made by the Leader of the Opposition that the Nationals WA do not want to divide Western Australia. The National Party set up a metro branch of the National Party, where its members can be close to members of Parliament.

Point of Order

Mr V.A. CATANIA: The answer that the Minister for Transport is providing has nothing to do with the question that was asked by the member for Moore.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member, there is no point of order. The minister is working her way through her response.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: In relation to the question about who is paying for what, let us go through the state and look at the projects that we are delivering that all motorists are paying for. That includes the Albany ring-road, the Bunbury Outer Ring Road, stages 1 and 2 of the Manuwarra Red Dog Highway, upgrades to Great Northern Highway, projects in the south west and the great southern region—projects around the state worth billions of dollars. Members, which government secured hundreds of millions of dollars for regional road safety in this state? We did. The former government funded regional road safety programs to the value of about \$20 million a year. Do members know how much we are spending this year? We are spending over \$200 million. We are spending more in regional WA than the opposition could ever dream of. It privatised Westrail Freight. We are working with the commonwealth government to invest in our regional rail lines. We are investing in regional rail, regional ports and roads like people have never seen before.

Members opposite should not come in here with that pathetic metro versus regional ploy. It does not work. We are all Western Australians. The Leader of the Opposition stood up and said that the Premier is too Western Australian. Maybe we are all too Western Australian! We believe that all Western Australians should benefit from road spending, and that is why that road spending is happening across the state—in the goldfields, the Kimberley, the Pilbara, the midwest, the south west, the great southern and the wheatbelt. The wheatbelt has never seen that type of expenditure before, and it is being done under this government. Members opposite should not come in here with that pathetic, nasty metro versus region debate because it does not work. Now their leader is saying that she wants to appeal to the whole of WA. That type of language does not work.

OUTBACK WAY

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Kalgoorlie, I see you are seeking the call.

94. Ms A.E. KENT to the Minister for Transport:

I am, and thank you from the regions. I am in Kalgoorlie.

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's record investment in job-creating road infrastructure across regional Western Australia.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on the work underway to improve our regional roads, including upgrades to our pathway, and outline what this will mean for those travelling through the regions?
- (2) Can the minister outline to the house how it is continuing to work with the commonwealth government to secure funding for major projects and deliver jobs for Western Australians?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

I thank the member for Kalgoorlie for that question.

- (1)–(2) There is one road project that I purposely missed out in my last answer, and that is the Outback Way. That is another major project, something that was on the wish list of the community in the goldfields. In the last term, I went out to the goldfields and met with shires, member, such as the Shire of Laverton, as we know. The shires talked to me about the importance of the Outback Way—the great central road—and how they had been working to get the attention of the former government to try to get the investment and how it needed help from the state government, from Main Roads, to help deliver their vision.

Initially, straightaway we said that Main Roads would take over the management of this project. We put our people there to help support the delivery of that project. We initially secured \$52 million and then \$112 million for the construction of the road. We have created an alliance with Central Earthmoving and Carey Mining. The alliance is all about getting Aboriginal workers on that project. I do not have the numbers in front of me, but I think 30 workers have been trained and employed on that project so far for that first \$52 million stage. Unfortunately, I could not go out there to visit. A number of local Aboriginal people are employed on that project. Now we are in the process of getting stage 2 underway, which is worth \$112 million. There are about 872 kilometres from Laverton to the WA–Northern Territory border. A total of 736 kilometres are currently unsealed. In a joint decision made this week between the Deputy Prime Minister and ourselves, we have allocated \$500 million to that project.

A member: How much have you allocated?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: We have allocated \$100 million and the commonwealth, \$400 million.

A member: Isn't that great!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: That is a great thing! I think the commonwealth does have a responsibility to fundraise in WA, just like it does over east. The idea that we would not ask the federal government for money is another stupid idea from the opposition. Of course, we should ask for as much money as possible because WA taxpayers are Australian taxpayers and they deserve the money, too. Just like the commonwealth spends billions in other states, we will accept \$400 million for what is a nation-building project.

As I said, we have 720 kilometres to do. We will be working with the local Aboriginal communities and with contractors to deliver this project. It will also help improve the resilience of the freight and transport network from the east to the west. As we know, we had a terrible situation with the train line for about 24 days recently and when the Eyre Highway was out due to bushfires. This road will create another east–west link. It will not only be good for freight movements, but also open up that entire region for tourism potential. People who want to travel around Australia will be able to go through the heart of Australia, from Winton to Alice Springs into Laverton. That is the Outback Way. It is 2 720 kilometres long.

I thank the federal government for its partnership. With this work, we will be able to seal the entire length of road to make sure that it will not only improve the freight east–west connectivity, but also create new jobs and opportunities for everyone in the entire goldfields region, including Laverton. Of course, it will also support the mining and exploration activity that is occurring in that region. All up, it is a great project. We are happy to partner with the commonwealth and, again, in this instance, have the ability to spend \$500 million in one part of regional WA.

CORONAVIRUS — TESTING — YALGOO

95. Mr V.A. CATANIA to the Minister for Health:

I refer to concerning reports of a COVID-19 case in Yalgoo and comments from the shire president, Greg Payne, who said that after failing to obtain a PCR test locally, the family had to drive to a mine site for their son to be tested, highlighting the vulnerability of the local health system facing the threat of an outbreak. Yalgoo shire representatives raised concerns directly to the minister and her predecessor for the past five years about the ongoing closures of the nursing post. Will the minister commit to ensuring that Yalgoo has at least one nurse present at the nursing post during the working week plus one nurse for emergencies over the weekend?

Ms A. SANDERSON replied:

The gentleman in question experienced some difficulties accessing a PCR test when he had been directed by the Department of Health or the public health team to confirm a positive rapid antigen test. There are a couple of aspects to that question and those circumstances. The first is that the nursing post was not staffed at the time that he went there. There is funding in the budget to staff the nursing post. There are challenges in filling those roles. That is the reality across a range of remote posts. We fully commit to providing the funding and doing absolutely everything we can. I know the WA Country Health Service does everything it can to ensure that those posts are staffed. It is a challenging area to staff; the presentations are around 0.8 per day and it is extremely challenging. I am not going to shy away from that. But the funding is there, and we commit to doing the work.

There is sometimes unplanned leave when the individual staffing that post is unable to staff the post. There are alternatives for regional communities. In this instance, the gentleman was required to do a RAT, and he did the right thing. He contacted the health team and they asked him to go and do a PCR. The health team worked really closely; they bent over backwards to find the closest PCR. They contacted Rio Tinto and made sure he was able to go to a Rio site and get that PCR test, and not have to drive further to a public testing facility. The public health team did everything they could to accommodate the gentleman.

It is appropriate now that RATs have been approved as a diagnostic tool. If people are in a remote location and a PCR is not always available, the RAT can be accepted as an appropriate diagnostic tool. We do not require people in remote locations to drive hundreds of kilometres for a PCR test.

CORONAVIRUS — TESTING — YALGOO

96. Mr V.A. CATANIA to the Minister for Health:

I have a supplementary question. For the past five years the community has been raising the need for a minimum of two full-time nurses. With another \$5 billion surplus, when will the minister take the health needs of Yalgoo community seriously and fund two full-time nurses?

Ms A. SANDERSON replied:

I reiterate that the number of presentations per day is 0.8. The funding is appropriate for the level of staffing there.

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for North West Central.

Ms A. SANDERSON: We cannot make it compulsory for people to work in those areas.

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for North West Central.

Ms A. SANDERSON: As much as we incentivise and provide very generous loadings to live and work in regional towns, we are criticised for those loadings by the National Party. We provide \$4 000 per day for people working in some of those towns, we do everything we can to ensure that those towns have access to it, but ultimately, people

make a choice. We work with metropolitan hospitals to make sure we can locate people so we can fill those gaps. The funding is there and we are committed to providing that service, but it is a challenging environment in which to staff regional and remote communities.

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for North West Central, you have asked your question.

Ms A. SANDERSON: I put this question to the member: did you staff two nurses when you were in government for eight and a half years?

SEXUAL ASSAULT LAWS — REFORM

97. **Ms M.J. HAMMAT to the Minister for Women's Interests:**

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to ensuring that all Western Australians are safe from sexual violence in their homes, workplaces and communities. Can the minister outline to the house how this government is prioritising reforms to prevent and respond to sexual violence in Western Australia?

Ms S.F. McGURK replied:

I thank the member for Mirrabooka for the question.

As I have raised in this chamber and publicly before, the reality is that this state has a significant problem when it comes to domestic violence and sexual violence. It is an issue in our city, in our suburbs and in our regional areas. In fact, most of us will know someone who has been affected by this sort of violence, and that is why we, as a government, have taken these issues very, very seriously. Of course, on the national stage, a number of women have been very, very determined to make their point clear, and we have seen an enormous amount of public support for their determination to get their perspectives heard, but it is important that we understand that this is not something that happens somewhere else; this is something that we in Western Australia, and throughout our community, need to be concerned about everywhere, as the member for Mirrabooka referred to in her question.

As the Minister for Women's Interests and Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence I am committed to making sure that we address this as comprehensively as we can. What has characterised us as a government—I certainly have appreciated it, and I think it has been noticed elsewhere—is the level of cooperation that we have had across ministries and different departments towards this effort. In a good demonstration of that, I was very proud to stand alongside the Attorney General and the Minister for Health when we announced the commissioning of Western Australia's first sexual violence prevention and response strategy. This piece of work will be done across those three areas and look at how we can not only prevent sexual violence but also respond to it effectively. This work will guide how government will prioritise its efforts to improve outcomes for victim survivors of sexual violence across the areas of, as I said, prevention, support for victims' recovery and holding perpetrators to account.

To complement this strategy, earlier this month the Attorney General and I announced two major reviews into WA's sexual assault laws. We recognise the need to modernise our laws and processes to assist victims to get justice, and we are committed to making that happen. First of all, the Law Reform Commission of Western Australia has been tasked with reviewing the sexual offence laws contained in the Criminal Code and providing advice on possible changes. This will include consideration of the concepts of affirmative consent—something that has recently been adopted in New South Wales; the mistake of fact defence; and how factors like stealthing, which is removing a condom without consent, might invalidate consent. This has been picked up in the ACT statutes. The commission will also consider the use of special verdicts in courts, which could be used to provide a victim with a better understanding of why a verdict has been reached. We know that, for many victims of sexual assault, the experience of the justice system can end up being nearly as traumatic as the offence itself, and we know that sexual assaults often go unreported because of that experience. The other thing the Attorney General and I announced was that the Department of Justice, through the office of the Commissioner for Victims of Crime, will undertake a separate project examining the end-to-end criminal justice process for victims of sexual offending, from reporting an offence to the release from custody of an offender.

All these projects will together ensure that our sexual offence laws are appropriate and that the experience of the victims who interact with the criminal justice system is as respectful, compassionate and empowering as possible. The state government also remains committed to implementing the *Respect@Work: National inquiry into sexual harassment in Australian workplaces* report. There are 18 recommendations in that report—12 for the state government and six that we will do jointly with the commonwealth. This builds on the strong record of our last term of government, when we passed the revenge porn legislation to criminalise non-consensual distribution of intimate images. Of course, we also delivered the Family Violence Legislation Reform Act, which gives WA the most progressive and significant law reform for family violence.

I have had the heavy responsibility but also the great privilege of holding the position of Minister for Women's Interests for the last five years, and I have heard countless stories from members of the public about harassment and assault. I am determined to bring about a safer Western Australia, and I know my colleagues in the McGowan government are also committed to doing that.

It is telling that, despite all the stories and media attention on this issue, particularly over the last couple of years, I have not been asked a single question by the opposition as Minister for Women's Interests in the last 1 000 days. For 1 000 days I have not been asked a question as the Minister for Women's Interests, and I think that speaks volumes. Fifty-two per cent of WA Labor representatives in this Parliament are women.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party!

Ms S.F. McGURK: We have women at leadership levels and we have women from a diverse range of backgrounds, but we have had no interest from the other side in asking questions in this chamber on these important issues facing the Western Australia community.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition! Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party! Members! Leader of the Opposition, your own member is trying to ask a question.

CORONAVIRUS — SCHOOLS — CONTACT TRACING

98. **Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Minister for Health:**

Can I acknowledge the passing of Jack Bendat, OAM, a remarkable businessman and philanthropist. Our thoughts are with his late wife, Eleanor, and family, friends and colleagues. Can I also acknowledge his great contribution to the Perth Wildcats.

I refer to reports of principals waiting up to 10 hours for approval from the Department of Health to notify impacted staff, students and parents of COVID-19 infections in their schools, and to the fact that schools will now be responsible for their own contact tracing.

- (1) Is this a sign that the minister's department is already overwhelmed and unable to cope with COVID testing, tracing and communication?
- (2) Why is communication of critical information from the minister's department to our schools taking so long?

Ms A. SANDERSON replied:

I thank the member for his question.

- (1)–(2) The public health team waits for confirmation of positive results before it allows principals or requests principals to communicate. A range of processes need to happen so that we do not cause undue panic, undue concern and undue unrest. The department works on evidence, and that evidence has to be a confirmed positive result, before principals are asked to then contact their students or notify schools. There is a lag sometimes with getting those tests done. We work in an orderly and focused process that allows for contacts to be notified and principals to put in place the measures that they need to.

It is clear that the opposition has not done its homework at all or read any of the information that the government has put up about what a high case load setting is and moving to a very high case load setting, and what happens to contact tracing, and what happens to testing, tracing and isolating. There are clear parameters around that and clear processes that we go through. If the opposition was paying any attention at all to what has happened in the eastern states, it would know that we as a government have been putting out clear guidelines and information before we get to the very high case load setting—before we get there. Other states and territories were scrambling and changing the rules every five minutes to try to keep up and manage the outbreak and the furlough. We have put out that information before it happens. It is on the website, member; I suggest you read it. It is very informative.

I will outline what happens when we get to over 500 cases. This is a standard public health process. This is not the Western Australian Department of Health; this is standard public health. Once we get to between 500 and 1 000 cases a day, it starts to get very, very hard to contact trace, test and isolate all those cases. Therefore, essentially, public health contact tracers focus on high-risk sites like aged-care settings, hospitals, police and essential services. They focus on those high-risk sites that we need to keep moving. We then shift to a model whereby we ask those organisations that have the capacity to make contact with the people that they need to, like schools and school principals. This is not a shock. It is not a surprise. It is a standard way of operating. It is how we manage a significant outbreak, which is where we are now. I suggest that members opposite do their homework and look at the material. There is a lot to go through, because there is a lot happening right now. I suggest that you actually read the material before you ask those silly questions.

CORONAVIRUS — SCHOOLS — CONTACT TRACING

99. **Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Minister for Health:**

I have a supplementary question. As we are at the beginning of the Omicron outbreak, if the minister's department cannot cope now with contact tracing and communication pressures, how will it cope when the cases peak?

Ms A. SANDERSON replied:

Deputy Speaker, this inability to process information at the time is extraordinary! As I said, it is the standard contact tracing procedure across the world once we hit about 500 cases, whether we have 1 000 contact tracers or 200. We have the ability to surge up hundreds and hundreds of contact tracers from across the public sector, and we are doing that now. We are moving people from other departments to come in and do contact tracing. We are doing that. The reality is that once we hit a certain number of cases, we simply cannot contact trace everyone; we have to start to focus our efforts. We focus our efforts on keeping hospitals running, on keeping schools running and on keeping police offices on the ground. That is what we are doing. That is what the publicly paid contact tracers will do. Organisations like BHP and Rio and schools will be able to contact their own workers and their own contacts to identify them as contacts. That is the standard operating procedure for contact tracing. It does not mean that the system is not coping. It means that the system is working together. That is exactly what it should be doing.

BUILDING BONUS GRANT**100. Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE to the Minister for Finance:**

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's efforts in driving the Western Australian economy and supporting local jobs throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Can the minister update the house on how the state government's building bonus grant program has supported the residential construction industry and assisted more Western Australians to realise their dream of home ownership?

Dr A.D. BUTI replied:

I would like to thank the member for Cockburn for his question.

Before I answer it, as the Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests can I also echo the comments of the Premier that we stand with the Ukrainian population that resides in Western Australia.

As the member very well knows, and as I and others who drive along Kwinana Freeway know, Cockburn is on the rise, with new transport infrastructure and thousands of new homes being built. We are seeing an unprecedented construction of homes in Western Australia. Earlier in question time, the Minister for Housing mentioned the government's building bonus package. It has been an incredible success. The \$20 000 building bonus grant was launched in mid-2020 and has formed a key pillar of this government's economic response to COVID-19. It has not only been exciting for home builders. It has also created a pipeline of construction work that will continue this year and beyond, which is, of course, very needed for the industry, particularly during uncertain times. Incredibly, almost 20 000 Western Australians have now received a grant towards their new home. The Department of Finance has advised that it has now paid out 19 915 grants. That is 19 915 homes across WA that have, at the very least, had the pad put down and building commence.

The data shows that the top postcode for the grants in the metropolitan area, with 1 382 grants, is 6055. Member for West Swan, a lot of that postcode comes within your electorate, in the suburbs of Bushmead, Caversham and Dayton. I am sure that the members for West Swan and Midland are excited by that.

In the regions, coming in at 6 034 grants, in postcode 6210, is Mandurah and its surrounds.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Hear, hear!

Dr A.D. BUTI: That is a hugely popular region. I do not know whether that is because of the coastal amenities or the appeal of the member for Mandurah!

Runner-up in the regions—I am sure the member for Vasse will applaud this great policy of the McGowan government—is postcode 6280 in the south west, with 363 new neighbours for the member for Vasse. I am sure she will be applauding our great building bonus package.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Do you think that is great, member for Vasse?

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members!

Dr A.D. BUTI: This shows that Western Australians have faith in WA and in our strong future. The building bonus has fed that faith and the faith that the WA public has in this government. The building bonus has created a significant pipeline of work for the residential building sector, with a record 27 000 building approvals recorded in 2020–21. I will repeat that: there were 27 000 building approvals in the period 2020–21. More Western Australians are moving into these new homes; more people are moving up the property ladder and perhaps freeing up rental properties for others. The Minister for Housing mentioned that the building bonus is also part of the overall policy of ensuring that Western Australians can live in homes because, of course, if someone builds a home and they are living in a rental property, it frees up the rental property. I am sure members opposite will be applauding us on that.

The building bonus package has been a crucial driver of jobs and activity, and another initiative that has helped Western Australia to reach its nation-leading unemployment rate of 3.4 per cent.

CORONAVIRUS — HOMELESSNESS — OUTBREAK PLAN

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

I refer to comments by the Department of Communities executive director of emergency management, Stuart Cowie, in an article in *The West Australian* today that highlights that the state government is yet to trigger an emergency plan to accommodate rough sleepers in the event of a COVID outbreak because it will be activated only on a direction from WA Health. Why has the Department of Health failed to issue this direction, given we have now seen homeless people begin to test positive for COVID?

Ms A. SANDERSON replied:

I want to be clear, because I think the member is, again, trying to peddle fear and anxiety in the community. We have had one rough sleeper test positive for COVID, sadly.

A government member interjected.

Ms A. SANDERSON: She was not sleeping rough. We have had one person in that community test positive. It is up to the Chief Health Officer to trigger that particular outbreak plan. He is the statutory officer. It does not come from the Department of Health; it comes from the Chief Health Officer. He and the public health team are working hand in hand with the Department of Communities to support that rough sleeping community through this difficult time. We have put together vaccination programs and clinics. We have funded a street doctor and a range of services to support those rough sleepers and those who do not have access to standard primary health care, to reach out and make sure we get them vaccinated. We even had a pop-up clinic at the Mission Australia Christmas lunch.

We are seeing increased rates of vaccination in that community, but it is a challenging community to track. These people are very mobile, and housing status is not listed on people's immunisation records. They are not listed as being a rough sleeper or homeless. It is not that easy to find people and track them, but we make our services available. It is not the case, as the member framed in her question, that we have seen a number of cases. That is wrong. It is wrong and she needs to stop peddling fear. We have seen one case who has been supported and managed through the hospital system. The trigger for the outbreak plan lies with the Chief Health Officer.

CORONAVIRUS — HOMELESSNESS — OUTBREAK PLAN

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

I have a supplementary question. Minister, exactly what is the threshold number of positive COVID-19 cases required in this vulnerable group, given the lower-than-average vaccination rate? That is a genuine question.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members!

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members! The minister has the floor.

Ms A. SANDERSON replied:

I am not sure it is in the capacity of the member for Vasse to ask a genuine question. There is a range of factors that the Chief Health Officer takes into consideration around triggering that outbreak plan, but there are a number of hotel rooms already pre-purchased by the department to put people in if they need to isolate or need support. We do not need to trigger the outbreak plan to do that. That community is being supported. There is a range of mechanisms in place. There are pre-purchased hotel rooms and we provide food, support and access to medical support. There is one confirmed case—one! Stop peddling fear. Stop looking for issues.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Deputy leader, you have asked the question.

Ms A. SANDERSON: We have one confirmed case. It is up to the Chief Health Officer to trigger the broader outbreak plan. We have pre-purchased hotel rooms ready for people to isolate in, should they need to.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members, that concludes question time.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY CHAMBER — REMOTE PARTICIPATION

Statement by Deputy Speaker

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr S.J. Price) [3.04 pm]: Members, we have now had two weeks of trialling members' participation in proceedings remotely. We had a range of members test the technology and by all accounts the result was very positive. I would like to thank those members who volunteered and took part in the trial. With the rapidly increasing case numbers in mind, further consideration will take place as to whether remote participation in the chamber proceedings should continue and, if so, under what conditions.

I would like to thank the Parliament's broadcasting team, in conjunction with the IT department, for their work in setting up those members and making this trial work. In particular, I would like to thank David Graham, David Embry and Graeme Orr, who have worked tirelessly and diligently to prepare members for remote participation and ensure that the audio and visual feed was satisfactory.

I add that the remote participation trial coincided with a heavier than usual use by Legislative Assembly committees of remote hearings and meetings this week. Again, I thank IT and the broadcasting team for their assistance.

ANIMAL RESOURCES AUTHORITY AMENDMENT AND REPEAL BILL 2021

Second Reading

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MS M.J. HAMMAT (Mirrabooka) [3.06 pm]: Before the adjournment, I was talking about the wonderful work of the Animal Resources Centre, and, indeed, the work of a number of research institutes in Western Australia. I was going to reflect at a bit more length, but I will constrain my comments, because I think we are interested in concluding discussion as soon as possible.

I was going to reflect on the very strong reaction I got from people when I told them that I was going to talk about a bill dealing with the Animal Resources Authority. I think it really highlights that for most people, contemplating the work of the Animal Resources Centre causes a bit of discomfort. People do not often think about the animals we use for scientific research. Of course, it is a matter that in more recent years has attracted quite a lot of social commentary, activism and debate about what is appropriate. I acknowledge that it is a difficult issue for many. I will save my reflections on that maybe for a debate on another occasion, other than to acknowledge that I think it is interesting to recognise people's emotional reaction to it, but also recognise the important role that animals have played in the development of important health advances such as the development of insulin, the polio vaccine and penicillin, as well as the elimination of smallpox. I think this is a somewhat vexed issue, but, as I say, I will save those reflections for another time.

I will conclude by returning to where I began, which is to recognise that this bill is important for the Animal Resources Centre to ensure that it is able to move on to the next chapter and can continue to perform its important work in providing high-quality animals to support medical research not only here in Western Australia, but also around Australia and internationally, which can go on to have a profound impact on the health of people not just here but around the world. The centre undertakes important work. We greatly value its commitment to not only producing animals of a high standard, but also animal welfare. On that note, I conclude my contribution and commend this bill to the house.

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe — Leader of the Liberal Party) [3.09 pm]: I rise as the lead speaker on this bill for the opposition. Members may know that the purpose of the Animal Resources Authority Amendment and Repeal Bill 2021 is to close down the Animal Resources Centre. That is made clear in the explanatory memorandum that states —

The Bill provides for the State to exit ownership and operational control of the Animal Resources Authority, including the ability to realise its assets and discharge its liabilities. When the Bill is enacted and receives Royal Assent, the primary focus of the Authority will shift to implementing an orderly wind-up of its business. It is anticipated that this will involve the transfer of assets to an interested party to continue production operations under new a business model. The Bill requires all wind-up activities to be concluded no later than 30 June 2023. After 30 June 2023, the Authority is abolished and the necessary administrative steps are taken to formalise the resolution of matters.

In addition to the wind-up order, the bill will also see the board dissolved and replaced by the minister. That means that on 30 June 2023, the centre will cease to legally exist. The opposition will not support the bill at this time, because we recognise the importance of scientific research and the significant contribution the Animal Resources Centre makes to that effort. I recognise the contribution from the members for Nedlands and Mirrabooka in outlining the importance of the science. I will explain why we have reached that position. We are not opposed at all to the government's intent in this matter; we are opposed to the timing. It looks like it is putting the cart before the horse.

The ARC is an essential service to the biomedical research community. Although the former Minister for Health stated that the government wanted to see the centre's work continue under a third party, this bill does not guarantee that position. If the government is truly committed to the centre's work and the important contribution it makes to scientific research, it would hold back this bill until it has secured the centre's future with another party. As I said, we are not opposed to looking at changes to the legal status under which the centre operates, which would guarantee speedy passage of this bill, on our part at least, if firm arrangements for continuing the centre were already going to be in place. However, winding up the centre in its current legal form should not proceed until other arrangements are assured, because there is no guarantee of the centre's continuation in this bill. We will not vote for a bill that could see the government fail to find other options for the centre and thus declare the centre closed without any continuing service. We therefore oppose what is, at this stage, an unnecessary bill that could do enormous damage to the state and the national scientific research effort.

Some members, perhaps not many—although the minister, given his long service here—may remember that in 1981 the Liberal–National government created the Animal Resources Authority.

Mr R.H. Cook: I was still in high school in 1981!

Dr D.J. HONEY: The minister was very keenly interested in politics, I am sure. This would have gripped him at the time.

Mr R.H. Cook: I was studying politics in year 11 though.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Very good. He was not quite there!

The purpose of that legislation was to establish a body to supply high quality, disease free, specially bred laboratory animals for research, particularly mice and rats. That centre, currently based at Murdoch University, has 64 highly skilled staff. The impetus for the initiative was the difficulty our local tertiary sector had in accessing such animals for research. Local universities and other research bodies were relying on various sources of supply with varying quality, reliability and cost issues. For the past 40 years, Western Australia’s Animal Resources Authority, through the Animal Resources Centre, has provided specific, genetically defined laboratory animals for scientific and medical research. The centre is one of two major providers of research animals in Australia, and sells annually around 200 000 animals to institutions around the state, country and internationally. It is important to note in the context of the government’s bill to close down the animal centre that in 1981, the Labor Party, although supporting the bill, did note that a lot of people were utterly opposed to the use of animals for any form of research, as was alluded to by the previous member. I hope that is not influencing this closure, but I am reassured by comments made about that by other members. It is true that there was an expectation that the centre would be self-funded by generating revenue from the sale of animals, and it is true that the centre has relied on modest subsidies, a cost that should be readily accepted as a small contribution to the critical science that is enabling a much bigger research effort. Most research centres utilising animals are undoubtedly publicly funded to some extent. The subsidy for the animal centre is no different and is a relatively small investment in the broader scientific research effort. The subsidy, the annual shortfalls, are about \$1 million or less depending on demand for the animals. Last year the deficit was \$350 000, which, in the context of the position of the state government’s budget, is a very small amount of money indeed.

It seems very clear that at the initiation of this bill, the subsidy was the government’s prime rationale for closing the centre, explaining it on the basis of a need for budget repair, and even more so in that our briefing was led by a member of Treasury. I quote the government’s response to my grievance on this subject. The minister replied —

... I am sure he can see that the problem of the financial viability of the ARC is not the sort of thing that a government with a focus on fixing the budget bottom line can accommodate ...

It is remarkable that that rationale was offered in August 2021, when the government was looking at multibillion-dollar surpluses. The budget is well and truly in a healthy position. Admittedly, some might say that that is ephemeral given it is due to iron ore prices and the federal Liberal government’s GST fix; however, the government will have no shortage of revenue for some time. This is not going to make any material difference to fixing the bottom line. As I said, it was very clear in the initial discussions that that was the primary motive. I know that the government has received many solicitations subsequent to that, and I think it has become more aware of how critical the centre is to scientists and medical professionals across Australia and internationally.

Scientists are very concerned about this. The announcement of the centre’s proposed closure was a surprise for the scientific community and it came without consultation with the people who rely on the centre and the supply of animals that it provides. The government’s decision to close the centre is, in fact, creating panic for scientific researchers across the nation who use animals provided by the centre. Numerous research projects depend on the centre’s supply of animals. The science and medical research community is greatly concerned about where it will find an alternative supply, because it is not easy to establish a centre to supply such a large number of animals bred specifically for specific scientific and research purposes. I quote Dr Malcolm France, a laboratory animal care and management consultant and former President of the Australian and New Zealand Laboratory Animal Association, who, in *The Guardian* of 9 July 2021 said —

“Closure of ARC would not just affect the many medical research programs that depend on these specialised strains of mice and rats, there is also the potential loss of the technical expertise required to breed them,” he said.

Michelle Haber, executive director of the Children’s Cancer Institute in Sydney is worried because 80 per cent of the animals they use come from the ARC, including one strain of mice not available from any other supplier. That was reported in *Nature* on 9 July 2021. I personally discussed the matter with emeritus Professor Miranda Grounds from the University of Western Australia, who was kind enough to enlighten me about some of the work being done using animals provided by the centre. One of the specific types of animals bred in the centre is the dysferlin-deficient BLAJ mouse colony. There are no alternatives to this supply of mice. The BLAJ colony, a model for the human disease dysferlinopathy, held at the ARC is funded by the overseas Jain Foundation, which is a single issue group focused on trying to solve this particular disease. The mice are held at the Animal Resources Centre and provided by the

ARC laboratory. It is the only supplier for the whole of Australia. Dysferlinopathy—I am sure that someone will correct me on the pronunciation, so have fun with that one!—is a serious muscle-wasting disease. It is a critical area that is related to muscular dystrophy. At least four research groups across Australia depend on these mice for all their funded research—research groups in Queensland and Melbourne and two collaborative groups at the University of Western Australia and Curtin University. At one stage, the Jain Foundation tried to send mice from its international colonies at the Jackson Laboratory in Maine in the United States, but it was an administrative nightmare and highly inefficient and it cost an enormous amount of money for the researchers. Of course, that has obviously been exacerbated at the moment with the disruption to flights into Australia because of COVID.

One of the huge strengths of the ARC is its specific pathogen-free status—its SPF status—because it meets high standards and is formally affiliated with what are called the Jain labs in Jackson in Maine. The JAX labs are major supplier of mice for global research. This means that all ARC mice are accepted by animal houses across Australia and, in fact, around the world. Without this guaranteed SPF quality, mice cannot be readily transferred between animal houses within Australia. We need one major guaranteed SPF professional supplier in the country. Pregnant and newborn mice are required for studying the early development of childhood diseases. Timed mating, pregnant mice and young litters are available from the ARC but are not available from the international JAX labs, even for researchers in the USA. It is a unique supply of animals. That is a huge bonus of the ARC. Such mice are essential for studies into muscle development, especially for our many studies in the dystrophic mdx mouse model of the lethal childhood disease Duchenne muscular dystrophy.

Another area that perhaps not many members would be aware of is the provision of older mice. Older mice are utterly critical in studying the diseases of ageing. Over the last 20 years, the ARC has been highly productive—or at least Australia has been highly productive—in the research on ageing. Initially, ageing mice were not available commercially from anywhere in the world. It was only around 2020 that the JAX labs established colonies of mice that could be purchased from 15 months of age. Before that, there was nothing. Such old mice are very expensive, plus there is the cost of importing them into Australia. Potential flight restrictions are also a big and current problem. The ARC established and maintains these colonies for us here and now more widely. It takes two years to age these mice. It is a very expensive and time-consuming commitment. This now includes major collaboration with other groups at Curtin University. The whole field of ageing health and disease is a rapidly expanding research area. Without the professional service of the ARC, none of that research would have been possible. There is also great concern about sustaining future animal supplies at the required quality standards if the task is scattered across facilities that come and go across Australia.

Research requires the reliable availability of high-quality mice. Planning for this extends for many years into the future, especially for old mice that need to be accommodated and monitored until they are two years of age. The government's Animal Resources Authority Amendment and Repeal Bill 2021 to wind up the centre provides no comfort or assurance that the supply of needed animals will continue beyond the centre's closure on 30 June 2023, which is demanded under the bill.

The decision continues to perplex people familiar with the centre and concern remains that it has not been well thought out. It certainly cannot be that this is simply about budget repair. Whatever the reason, we know that the decision to close the centre does not have a credible financial argument. The Labor government has responded—I know that the minister has received the same solicitations that I have received—to the great concern expressed by the scientific community and has sought to find a third party to continue the centre. In the statement it issued in November 2021, the government stated —

The State Government and the ARC appreciate that stakeholders need confidence that the range of services and the high quality product they have come to expect from the ARC will be maintained, so that research can continue without disruption.

That was a welcome statement. However, under the amendment bill, the centre will close without any certainty that the operations of the centre will be guaranteed by some other means. Given the government's previous statement, I do not understand—I did have a briefing on the bill—why this bill has to progress through this house before those negotiations are complete. If the government had seriously acknowledged the importance of the centre, it would have first established a way forward with certainty by establishing a new centre before winding up the ARC in its current form. Instead, the government is moving to close the centre; make no mistake, this bill, once it has passed, puts an absolute finish date on the centre. In fact, the principle is for the centre to wind itself up. If that is done before we find another party to take it over, the government will cause enormous harm to the enormously important scientific work in Western Australia and Australia and, in fact, around the world.

As the minister can guess, I am not being dogmatic in saying that we would oppose this bill under any circumstance—it is quite the opposite. My only concern is the continuation of the centre. What I cannot understand is why the government has not gone down the same path that it does with state agreements. The minister would understand those very well given his other role. In the case of a state agreement, the government enters into a contractual agreed position with a third party and then the legislation comes into Parliament. I genuinely do not understand why this could not have been done in exactly the same way, with an agreement being finalised before the bill came to

Parliament. I understand the argument that was put in the briefing that the centre's remit does not allow it to negotiate this transition of its own volition and that it may be limited in some way. I am not sure whether that is true, but that is what I was told and I trust that what was said was done so with genuine belief. I am not alleging that there was any subterfuge in the answer that was given to me. But, as I have said, I cannot understand why the government could not complete its negotiations, guarantee transition to a third party and then bring a bill before the house. I can guarantee the minister that I would have given the shortest second reading contribution that he has heard in this place in supporting the legislation going through the chamber.

A government member: Third reading.

Dr D.J. HONEY: A third reading contribution perhaps.

If the government is sincere—I am sure that it is—in wanting this centre to continue and it realises just how enormously important it is to Western Australia and Australia and, in fact, for medical research on a global scale, I believe it should withdraw or at least prevent this bill from progressing further until it has agreement in place with a third party. Otherwise—this is the problem—if the bill passes through both houses, by June 2023, if no other arrangement is in place, that will be it. The whole operation of that centre will cease.

That would just cause chaos for medical researchers across the state, the country and, in fact, the world. We do have concerns, but I will not labour the original point. It was very clear from the second reading speech and the supporting information to the bill that concern around this matter was based on the financial outgoings of the government to an organisation that was supposed to pay its own way. Clearly, when the government came to office in 2017, it genuinely wanted to embark on budget repair and looked at all sorts of areas. Treasury, as it does, went through and identified areas in which it thought it could achieve those savings. However, in this case, I think it misidentified a target. The philosophical argument could be mounted that this organisation should have funding provided by another means that does not place a burden on government, but we would never contemplate a situation in which the output of this centre should be wound up. It would be a highly egregious outcome if that were to happen.

When the former health minister, who is also the Minister for Science, responded to a budget question on the Animal Resources Centre, he noted that there will be a \$6 million equity injection, but that is expressly for the purpose of dealing with all the issues that will come out of winding up this organisation. As I said, it seems that the position was clear at the start—that this would be a financial saving. The government realises the importance of this centre. That being the case, I think it is time to put a halt to this bill at this stage. We need an ironclad guarantee that this centre will continue. I fully accept the minister's good intentions to find a Western Australian-based group if possible, and my understanding is that there are some highly reputable groups that will possibly participate. I accept that the minister is genuine about finding that, but that should be done outside the confines of this bill. Only once we have that guarantee should the bill be passed through Parliament to wind up the centre, because, despite the good intentions of the minister, there is nothing in this bill that guarantees a continued service. That is why we are saying that the bill should not proceed until the government has an agreement in place with a third party to take over the centre or its activities, and that is publicly revealed. I call on the minister to do that. As I say, I do not doubt the minister's good intentions in that matter.

The opposition has no philosophical objection to this moving from a government-provided service to another provider that can reliably provide the types of animals that are needed; however, we do not want to be in a position, for whatever reason, in which negotiations fall over and the medical and scientific research community is left without these critically important animals or has their supply disrupted. When I spoke to Professor Grounds and others, I was told that these research programs run for decades. The other thing that I had not intuitively thought about is that a comparison of the results of medical research for particular diseases can be done only when the research has been done on genetically identical animals. If research by the Jain Foundation in the United States was being compared with research by Curtin University, they would have to know that the same animals were used; otherwise, it would make a comparison of that research difficult. This is a critical service and it is critical that we maintain it. That is why I say that, at this time, the opposition does not support the passage of this bill.

MS S.E. WINTON (Wanneroo — Parliamentary Secretary) [3.34 pm]: I, too, rise to make a small contribution on the Animal Resources Authority Amendment and Repeal Bill 2021, and through that I will take the opportunity to talk for a few brief moments about the future health research and innovation fund, which demonstrates the McGowan government's strong emphasis on research, innovation and science in this state. Before I explain the purpose of the bill, I want to talk about the Animal Resources Centre located at Murdoch University.

The centre was originally set up to provide highly disease-free laboratory animals for teaching, research and diagnostic purposes in Western Australia. Over the last 40 years, the ARC has become a major supplier of laboratory animals, providing resources for researchers across Australia. In fact, it now supports not only a national research capability, with the majority of the stock supplied interstate, but also research institutions overseas. The ARC is run by the Animal Resources Authority, which is the statutory body that was established in 1982 under the WA Animal Resources Authority Act. Critically and importantly, the act states that the authority must be self-funding. However, the authority has not been able to maintain a financially sustainable model, with the state government having to contribute in recent years to cover costs. The 2020–21 annual report detailed the challenges faced under

the current model. In the 2019–20 financial year, the ARC had an operating loss of \$1.2 million. In the 2020–21 financial year, the ARC had an operating loss of over \$340 000. The 2020–21 annual report details those losses. It states —

Major factors contributing to the deficit included:

- Impairment costs of \$556K ...
- Increased mouse production in immunocompromised and niche lines
- Continued high repair and maintenance expenses ...
- Mouse custom breeding revenue fell by 30%
- Rat custom breeding revenue fell by 42%
- The number of rat and mouse custom strains lines decreased

The aging infrastructure at the ARC poses risks in terms of potential equipment failure and ongoing high maintenance costs.

It is good to remind ourselves that the ARC was originally intended to supply animals for use within Western Australia alone. However, over time, the activities of the Animal Resources Centre expanded. As it stands, only around 16 per cent of the animals supplied by the ARC remain in WA, with the balance of that stock—around 80 per cent—going interstate and overseas. The result is that both overseas and interstate medical research institutions are in fact being subsidised by the Western Australian taxpayer, and that is not a sustainable model.

Given the lease at Murdoch University is due to expire, the opportunity and time is right to reassess that business model. The state government undertook a review of the ARC, which identified that the existing model cannot operate and manage infrastructure and maintenance costs. It found that change is needed now for the capability to be continued in Western Australia. The purpose of this bill is to transition the assets and operations of the centre to a third party provider. This bill will repeal the act and provide the legislative means to transition the ARC function to a third party operator. The WA government is aiming to exit ownership and operational control in a way that retains the capability in WA, secures a sustainable future with a new independent operator, and minimises the disruption to ARC stakeholders.

I will not go further into that. However, I do want to focus on the comments of the Leader of the Liberal Party. The government will invite a limited number of parties to participate in a single stage limited request process, the outcome of which will be the selection of a third party to acquire the ARC's capability. Parties will be invited to participate in this process as a result of the expressions of interest submitted during the market sounding process. The Western Australian government expects to be in a position to choose a preferred party by approximately June 2022.

This bill will allow us to maintain the ARC's capability in Western Australia, and the state government again reaffirms its commitment to local jobs and the health and medical life science sector. I will take just a couple of minutes to talk more broadly about the importance of medical research, innovation and science, particularly for this state. It might be interesting for members who were not here in the fortieth Parliament to do some research into a very important bill that was passed in that Parliament. Of course, I refer to the Western Australian Future Health Research and Innovation Fund Act 2012 that was passed in our first term in office. That legislation in effect repurposed the \$1.4 billion future fund, allowing interest earned on it to be directed to local health and medical research, innovation and, very importantly, commercialisation. In real terms, it has meant for the medical research community in WA that they now have a secure and ongoing source of funding to the tune of \$37 million in its first three years.

Whenever I get to my feet, I like to talk a lot about what this government is doing, but in doing so also highlight what the alternative is for Western Australians. When the future health research and innovation fund legislation came to this chamber, and also when it was before the other place, it was not supported by the Nationals WA. The National Party did not support research, science and innovation in this state, and it did not support that bill. It begs an important question when we talk about an opposition. At the moment the opposition could be best described as an alliance of convenience in the sense that together they have only six members in this place, but when we see such clear differences between the Liberal Party and the National Party, and when we talk about research and science and Western Australia trying to become a global leader in research, the National Party did not support our government's future health research and innovation fund. I do not understand how in the next few years they can build on selling themselves as a creditable alternative government when between them they are so clearly at odds in key social and economic policies that impact this state. That is no clearer than when it comes to research. They were not united when they were in government. National Party ministers contradicted what the Liberal-led cabinet wanted to do. They were not united in opposition in the fortieth Parliament and they certainly are not united in the forty-first Parliament because now, instead of the Liberal Party forming the opposition and having the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Central Wheatbelt is the opposition leader. She stood here in 2020 and voted against the establishment of a future health research and innovation fund that now pours millions of dollars into this important industry in our state.

The pandemic has highlighted the importance of medical and health research. Often we think about medical research when it impacts us. I know that people who have loved ones with diabetes or cancer take a bit more interest in research in this state, Australia and across the world. However, since the COVID-19 pandemic people are increasingly interested in medical research and appreciate its worth in assisting us to manage this pandemic. I highlight that as part of the future health research and innovation fund, the government has already delivered over \$6 million to support 18 important projects across three streams. Medical research is important for us. It is not something that happens in far-off areas and impacts only small sections of the community. The medical research undertaken in Western Australia right now is what guides and supports the health advice that we so often talk about. It is an important plank on which we are going to get through this pandemic. This government values a medical research industry that is important both now and obviously for the future.

The industry is important for future jobs, and I always try to swing it back to education. We have a strong, vibrant medical and health research sector in Western Australia that also creates career paths for our young people so we can keep them in WA. We are doing much in our schools in science, technology, engineering and mathematics and innovation, but it is very important that we also have a thriving and growing medical research industry in our state. The future health research and innovation fund will allow WA to move forward to promote this state as a global leader in health and medical research and innovation.

I pivot back to this bill in particular. The government is not abandoning the Animal Resources Centre, but acknowledges that private industry and private research institutions need to do this work and the government, through this bill, is supporting third parties to take on that work so that the ARC's capability can be maintained in Western Australia and so our commitment to local jobs and the health and medical life science sector in Western Australia continues.

MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Thornlie) [3.47 pm]: I am pleased to rise to make a contribution to the second reading debate on the Animal Resources Authority Amendment and Repeal Bill 2021. It has not been mentioned, but it strikes me that the origin of this legislation—the need for it—is that Murdoch University has decided it does not want to renew the lease. Murdoch wants shot of it. Murdoch does not want the Animal Resources Centre on its grounds because it wants to develop the land. That raises an interesting issue about the governance arrangements around our universities. Public universities are enormous beneficiaries of taxpayer money, but when it comes to the governance of universities, we the public do not always have much say, and as a Parliament, we do not have much say. This is another example of that strange arrangement between our public universities and this Parliament. After all, those universities are constituted through statutes of this Parliament. The governance arrangements and the accountability of our universities is a question that I keep coming back to on this issue and on others.

Also in this debate I was interested to hear reference to animals as though all animals were mice. I do not think that is quite right, and I notice that the head powers in the legislation we are amending are that the legislation supplies laboratory animals for teaching, research and diagnostic purposes. Section 15 of the Animal Resources Authority Act 1981—legislation that is over 40 years old—states that the minister may direct the authority as he thinks fit.

I am not clear whether some policy arrangement is in place, but I understand that the term “laboratory animals” very often refers to a whole host of animals, including mice, rats, rabbits, monkeys and dogs. I am probably overlooking any number of other animals that are used. I am not so sure that it is as active now as it was, say, 20 years ago, but the anti-vivisection movement was very strong globally. I think it made some great headway. As a result, the medical research and scientific community was forced to look at the alternatives. It made some great headway. Indeed, there are many alternatives to using animals for medical research. In fact, there is some good evidence to suggest that we get far better results by cultivating stem cells because that involves using a stem cell from a human being rather than trying to use something from another species.

I welcome the winding-up of the Animal Resources Centre. I see that there has been some discussion about handing over assets. We know that there is no lease to hand over. I gather that the cages, the breeding apparatus and other equipment at the university is very aged. I am not sure that there is a lot of value in those assets. But, of course, some company will try to step into this space and no doubt wave some sort of blessing or halo over them, saying that it is the continuation of the Western Australian government's Animal Resources Authority. We would have to guard against that because if it comes to fruition, it would be a completely private operation. We need to protect ourselves against that. Once it becomes a private body, we do not know what activities it will undertake. I speak here for the various animals that have gone through the centre. Where they have ended up has not been under any sort of control or surveillance from the Animal Resources Centre. These creatures are sold nationally or internationally. We know that there are grave concerns about all sorts of traffic in animals, the illegal transport of animals, live animal exports et cetera. There is no question that we have no say or control over what sort of experimentation goes on in the laboratories in which these animals end up.

I can only accept that the situation would become more serious when a private body is involved. I hope that it would be licensed.

We have to look at the power of the market. I recall that when we were setting up the original legislation in Western Australia in 1981, a very successful commercial business, the Body Shop, was being set up by Anita Roddick. That organisation was a huge success because it traded on the idea, which it promoted first and foremost, that it

was against animal cruelty and it did not use any form of animal testing. That became a real hallmark of that company and many others as well. It is a priority for companies to be able to say that they are against animal testing. It is almost a standard logo that we see on cosmetics counters and in many other areas. I accept that in some cases there may still be the need for animal testing in medical research.

I come back to the point that there are alternatives. I noticed one paper in the *Regulatory Toxicology and Pharmacology* journal, a peer-reviewed journal. It states —

Along with unique abilities of stem cells including self-renewal, infinite proliferation, and differentiation into multiple lineages, human stem cell-based in vitro systems have been proven valuable to increase predictive power of toxicology through providing with better scientific information related to toxic risks in humans without inter-species variability.

This theme comes up constantly. Using other species, we get all sorts of variabilities. When we stick with human stem cells, we get a more accurate picture. I do not take it as a given at all. I come back to the point that not only was it very different in 1981 compared with today, apart from those like the Anita Roddick group and its forward thinking, but also science has also come a long way. Now we say that we do not need to do nuclear testing anymore because we can model it. There are all sorts of modelling capabilities around. It is a very different world. That is something about which we really have to be mindful. It is perhaps why there is not great enthusiasm. It seems quite remarkable that this centre has been in operation for 40 years and has not been met with fierce competition from other groups trying to drive a government-subsidised entity out of the market—probably because there is not much money in it and not much of a future in it. My suspicion is that there are better alternatives and they give more accurate results. I am very interested in the idea that we will be transferring assets to a new independent operator. I am unclear what they are—perhaps some old cages and things like that. There are certainly no premises because they are gone. Murdoch has pulled the rug out from underneath the Animal Resources Authority on that one.

This is a very interesting piece of legislation. I will be supporting it because I think it is good that we move on. Many people in my electorate will be asking me questions about the animal welfare provisions around this whole entity and what kind of animals are there. I am sure that we can all recall horrific images of situations in which animals have been tested. I will not torture the chamber with a recollection of the sorts of tests that have been and are still done on animals in many cases. When we know we can get better results elsewhere, we want to be sure that we can do so.

Some people whom I have enormous respect for, like the Chief Scientist, have mentioned to me that there is still a need for some sort of animal resource centre. We have to ensure that we are doing all we can to drive towards alternatives. We shall see whether it is left to the private sector, but I hope that if a private entity picks it up, we will have the controls over that body to make sure that it operates only under the highest standards of animal welfare and it does not seek to undercut the market where there may be stem cell options, which may be somewhat more expensive. I am not sure whether that is the case. The stem cell options may be better value for money than the breeding of various animals, whatever the species may be. I emphasise again that I do not think it is just mice. Given the complexities around breeding animals, the generational wait that we have for the testing of genetic images and what have you, there may well be better options.

I conclude my remarks, offering my support for the legislation. I will be very interested to see who, if anyone, emerges to acquire this state government asset.

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade) [3.58 pm] — in reply: I want to respond to members' second reading contributions. I thank them. There is obviously a great deal of interest in this area, particularly from the member for Nedlands, who has the premium or the most important medical research precinct in the heart of her electorate. She talked about the importance of medical research to not only the Western Australian health system, but also the Western Australian economy. I could not agree more with her. This is important legislation because it is about medical research. Medical research is a very important part of what we do as a community and the governance and funding of that is very important to what we do as a government.

Indeed, this is legislation that, as a number of members have observed, has been around since 1981, and a lot has happened since that time. When the legislation was initially struck, it was under the stewardship of the government in partnership with tertiary institutions and universities. The vision was for the authority to be a self-funding institute that could provide its services to the Western Australian medical research community. But the world has changed, and the situation now in relation to the governance and management of the Animal Resources Centre and the demands around it have also changed. The resources centre no longer supplies products just to the WA medical research community; as the member for Wanneroo observed, only 16 per cent of the animals it supplies to the research community are actually in Western Australia. I guess that is very much part of our thinking: what is the future for the Animal Resources Centre as part of the national research infrastructure? This is essentially something that should be managed, funded and resourced by the commonwealth government. It is an important part of our national research infrastructure and it is the biggest facility of its kind in the country; there is only one other such facility, in New South Wales. It is something that should be part of national critical research infrastructure and it should be resourced as part of the national research infrastructure road map.

We put that very point to the commonwealth government and said that this is a centre that has operated under legacy arrangements in Western Australia, but it is really now part of our national research landscape and should be funded by the federal government. Indeed, the government has formed the view that it is now no longer appropriate for this organisation to operate under a state structure. We undertook a review of its arrangements and came to the view that the existing model could not operate and manage infrastructure and maintenance costs. We found that change was needed for this important capability to be continued in Western Australia.

We do not want to see this facility wound up, but at the end of the day, it is not the role of the state government to continue to prop it up when there are other, more appropriate models of governance and resourcing that can be brought to bear.

I will address one specific part of the Leader of the Liberal Party's commentary, but before I do that, I want to go to one of the issues that the member for Thornlie raised—that when we do these things, we should do them in a manner that is ethical and does not bring unnecessary harm to these creatures. I, too, struggle with the ethics associated with this, and it is a moral conundrum that is managed by people who are cleverer and have more insights than I. All medical research is undertaken under the stringent oversight of ethics committees, which make sure that any research that is undertaken, whether with human or animal subjects, is done so in a manner that is highly ethical and meets all the stringent standards we would expect in a modern medical research community.

I am very pleased to say to the member for Thornlie that the Animal Resources Centre supplies product, for want of a better word, only to medical research projects that have ethical accreditation. We can be confident that wherever we send them, the research will be carried out in an ethical manner consistent with ethics committee accreditation. I put that on the record to provide the member with that assurance. It does not go to the heart of the philosophical point that he was making, but I hope it goes some way towards providing him with some comfort that animals do not meet with unnecessary and unethical harm in the work of the Animal Resources Centre.

The 65 staff who work there do a great job. They are highly skilled individuals who provide important national research, and we want to see their work continue. But it is important that we look at modern ways in which to manage and resource this centre to meet the modern challenges it will confront. The government undertook a market sounding to ascertain any interest out there in the community to take over this facility. There is a high level of interest, and it is my understanding that those conversations are at a mature stage, which is why this legislation has been brought to the Parliament.

That brings me to the points raised by the member for Cottesloe. He raised concerns around guarantees on the operational future of the centre and wanted to know why we are bringing this legislation in now. He also made observations on our approach to state agreements—that they come at the end of the conversation, not the beginning. I will deal firstly with the issues around guarantees. Legislation is not the place to provide operational guarantees in relation to these things. Legislation is there to facilitate the policies of the government of the day, with the concurrence of the Parliament. From that perspective, it is not appropriate to seek political reassurances in the statutes of Parliament. I can provide the member for Cottesloe with an assurance that conversations with participants in our market-sounding process are mature and that they have expressly called for the passage of the bill to facilitate timely transition to their control.

Under a state agreement, the subject of the agreement is publicly revealed and we debate in Parliament how we will facilitate the agreement that has been made. In this case, because of the confidentiality that comes with the commerciality of those conversations, we cannot expressly discuss the participants who are in conversation with the government; it would not be appropriate to do so. But we would not have brought this legislation into Parliament if these conversations were not at a mature stage and if we were not ready to execute the transactions that will be required to transition the Animal Resources Centre to new ownership—that is, to the minister, and then to the new arrangements under a transaction that will take place in the coming months. We are now in this place to pass this repeal bill so that we can finalise those transactions, which will see the Animal Resources Centre continue to provide outstanding and, indeed, world-class services to the medical research community.

I will now finalise a couple of points. The member for Thornlie raised the issue of the conversations with Murdoch University. It is fair to say that Murdoch University has ambitions for the site on which the centre is currently located. In my previous role as Minister for Health, I had good discussions with Murdoch University, and it is happy to cooperate with new owners and to find solutions for a better siting for the Animal Resources Centre. Again, that underpins the need for us to move now, as the member observed, to make sure we have these new arrangements in place so that we have a more nimble and appropriate ownership and governance structure so that they can make those decisions and move forward with the appropriate discussions.

Finally, I want to put on the record that the member for Mirrabooka has committed to riding in the Ride to Conquer Cancer later this year. I want to provide an assurance to all members here that I will hold her to that commitment. I very much look forward to her raising buckets of money for cancer research in Western Australia as part of her efforts. I am sure she will thank me for reinforcing this point and making sure that it is well and truly etched in *Hansard* that the member for Mirrabooka will later this year be undertaking the Ride to Conquer Cancer.

Finally, I thank all the members for their contributions to the debate. I thank the opposition for its sincere consideration of this bill. I am sorry that we do not enjoy the opposition's support on this occasion, but I can provide opposition members with the assurance that their ambitions for this bill will be achieved, albeit not in the manner that they seek. On that note, I commend the bill to the house.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

[Leave denied to proceed forthwith to third reading.]

Consideration in Detail

Clause 1: Short title —

Dr D.J. HONEY: I think the minister has a pretty clear understanding of my concerns. I note that the minister said in his reply to the second reading debate that the proponents want some certainty in this matter. The minister also stated that those parties would want those discussions to be confidential. Is there any reason that the government cannot conduct commercial-in-confidence discussions with those proponents outside the framework of this legislation? With state agreements, the government conducts those discussions privately before it brings the matter before the Parliament, and although the outcome is announced at the end of that process, the detail of the negotiations is not a matter of public record. Is there any reason that similar discussions could not be progressed with third parties on behalf of government, and the commercial-in-confidence aspect, which we hear a lot about in this place on other matters, would apply to those discussions so that we would not be revealing sensitive commercial information from those parties?

Mr R.H. COOK: As I said in my second reading speech, the passage of the bill was expressly called for by those who are participating in the market sounding process. It is really just a matter of the sequential nature of how we go through that process. In the event that those discussions are finalised with the final bidder, we want to be in a position to be able to execute the contract; and, from that perspective, this is the correct timing. Obviously, we are essentially passing the ownership of the Animal Resources Centre from the Animal Resources Authority to the minister. Once we have done that, we will finalise the contract and be able to execute it.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Thanks, minister; that is clear. Let us say that despite the minister's best intentions, those negotiations falter and other circumstances then occur, would it not be the case that we could end up with the situation that the centre will cease to exist altogether? Although the minister might think that is improbable, this bill will put a death sentence, if you like, on the centre as it exists; if no alternative is found, its function will simply cease.

Mr R.H. COOK: That does not really characterise the risk profile of what we are doing here. We have undertaken lengthy discussions and are now confident that this is the appropriate way to go to facilitate the transaction.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr D.A.E. Scaife): Before we go on, Leader of the Liberal Party, I want to be clear. The minister is indulging your questions, and I am happy to indulge them, but, technically, questions are supposed to be relevant to the short title of the bill, and I do not think either of the questions you have asked strictly are. I am happy for this to go on for a little while if the minister is happy to indulge it, but there will come a point where I will raise questions about the relevance and whether the questions are in order.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Thank you, Acting Speaker. I appreciate your indulgence. This is traditionally where we ask general questions, but I fully appreciate that you are indulging me in the matter.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Leader of the Liberal Party, I need to take that up. You should not argue with a decision of the Chair. I also want to make the point, because it has been said before in this place, that that is the practice in the other place. It is not the practice in this chamber that general questions can be asked on the short title of bill.

Mr R.H. Cook: Take the victory!

Dr D.J. HONEY: I will. I genuinely mean this. I am always happy in this place to be educated. I mean that sincerely, and I am grateful for that.

Does the minister have any idea about what will happen to the land once this facility is closed? I will cut straight to the chase; I am not trying to drag this out in any sense whatsoever. Does the minister know whether that land is intended to be used by the university, or will it be used for a private purpose?

Mr R.H. COOK: To supplement my previous answer, I guess the member is saying that he wants the transaction concluded before we pass the bill. I imagine that the people on the other side of the transaction want the bill passed before they do the transaction. They want the same assurances that the member does, I suppose, in this particular instance. They are the purchaser, for want of a better description, and they would like these things in place before they finalise the negotiations, rather than accepting what would then be our assurances that we can pass the legislation.

To go to the point that the member made, I understand that this is part of the university's future ambition for the redevelopment of the campus. I cannot give the member any indication or idea about what the university has planned; ultimately, that is the university's business, not ours, in this context.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 2 to 7 put and passed.**Clause 8: Section 9A inserted —**

Dr D.J. HONEY: Just to clarify, proposed section 9A, “Authority to continue performing its functions for certain purposes”, reads —

- (1) The Authority must continue to perform its functions under this Act, but only for the following purposes —
 - (a) to prepare reports and financial statements ...

And the like. I will not read it all. It continues —

- (b) to wind up its affairs (including realising its assets and discharging its liabilities) ...
- (2) The Authority may do all things necessary ... to be done for or in connection with the purposes specified in subsection (1) ...
- (3) This section overrides sections 9 and 10 ...

Will the centre keep supplying animals during this period? I have been told that that is the case, but when I read that, it could be read as it will cease doing that. What in this bill or otherwise guarantees that the centre will, in fact, continue operating as it is at the moment when this bill passes this Parliament?

Mr R.H. COOK: Member, I am advised that the powers to wind up affairs includes realising its assets and discharging its liabilities. It essentially allows for the ongoing management and discharge of its duties as the oversight entity for the Animal Resources Centre, and from that perspective, it will be able to continue to undertake its work. Obviously, the main limitations it places on this is that it does not provide the Animal Resources Centre with the authority to make radical policy decisions, wind down its production or ramp up its production, make a significant purchase of assets or other larger decisions. Essentially, winding up affairs is a fairly broad statutory responsibility. It provides for its ongoing work, but, ultimately, guides it in what its ultimate objective should be.

Dr D.J. HONEY: On the same clause, would that include the centre being able to take new orders? I appreciate what the minister said; we would not want to see a substantial change in its business and I am not saying that this will be the case, but if perhaps a research program is coming to an end and there is a replacement research program being continued, would the centre be authorised to enter into a new contractual arrangement under this? I mean a new supply arrangement.

Mr R.H. COOK: Member, yes to the last point; it would be able to continue to operate and enter into new supply arrangements. It could not enter into a big contractual arrangement that would not be consistent with its day-to-day operations.

Clause put and passed.**Clauses 9 to 11 put and passed.****Clause 12: Part 6 Division 2 inserted —**

Dr D.J. HONEY: I refer to the way staff will be treated. Is the minister able to explain what will happen to the staff? If I understand it correctly, in effect, before the transition, the staff will become public sector employees and may be relocated. Could the minister clarify for me how the staff will be dealt with, particularly if they do not transition to a parallel organisation?

Mr R.H. COOK: I am advised that there are essentially three pathways for the staff in this process. One is obviously redeployment, as they are members of the public service, so they can be redeployed to other parts of the public sector; they could take a voluntary severance arrangement if they believe it is in their interests to do so; or, indeed—I think this will be the majority of cases—they will transition to the new entity. I draw the member’s attention to my second reading speech, in which I said —

The government will facilitate a voluntary severance scheme for these employees, consistent with other recent schemes in the public sector. Importantly, a voluntary severance scheme will provide flexibility to employees while also maintaining essential staff to meet current obligations. Animal Resources Centre employees who do not express interest in voluntary severance will be able to seek redeployment in the public sector. These employees have extremely valuable skills and I am confident that there will be demand for these skilled workers in Western Australia.

Clause put and passed.**Clauses 13 to 16 put and passed.****Title put and passed.**

[Leave granted to proceed forthwith to third reading.]

Third Reading

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade) [4.27 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a third time.

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe — Leader of the Liberal Party) [4.27 pm]: I thank the minister for, as always, the highly professional way that he has conducted debate on this bill, and I also thank his officers and advisers for helping us in the briefing and with the answers today. I wanted to cover a little bit of the content that was covered previously, particularly some of the comments in the second reading speech. I will not drag this out; that is not my intention in any sense.

I want to reinforce this. I know that the member for Thornlie, for whom I have very high regard, was perhaps musing as to whether we could replace these animals with stem cells. As the minister put well, I do not know any medical researchers who would want to experiment on animals if there were another credible alternative. I do not think it is something any of them enjoy. They do it because there is no alternative. Particularly when they are looking at not chemical effects, but trying to understand things such as muscular dystrophy and other complex diseases, they simply cannot do that by those more remote means. It is impossible. This is critical. I again reinforce the comments that the minister put well. I have every confidence of the places that these animals, the highest end supply, are going to and I think the whole western world has moved enormously in this area. Ethics committees and the like make sure that we do not see the abuse of animals.

I know that the member for Wanneroo was trying to be perhaps a little provocative, but perhaps if she is concerned about coalition support of medical research funding, she could look no further than the outstanding Harry Perkins Institute of Medical Research that was established under the coalition government led by former Premier Hon Richard Court. That is now a globally iconic research facility, carrying out the most marvellous research. I do not intend to go into any more details. The idea of the future fund—I will not go into a long discussion—is that it would generate income so that this state could move to the position in which it does not rely on debt. If we are not relying on debt, it frees up money for medical research and other purposes. In any case, the government made a decision on that.

I will put on notice here that I have had some involvement with the medical research community, and a major problem it faces is the uncertainty of funding and short-term grants. It is highly destructive. Just as a slight anecdote, with your indulgence, Acting Speaker, I attended an Australian Society for Medical Research function at the conference centre on the river and I spoke to a number of medical researchers there. Almost every one of them who are completing their PhD are moving on to a medical degree because of the uncertainty in funding. I applaud the effort on both sides to increase certainty in medical research funding. It is something that this Parliament needs to give certainty to, given its importance to us.

Certainly, as I made clear, I have no contention with the government deciding to wind this up. I understand what the minister has told me, in the sense that the proponents the government is talking to at the moment want this, and I can understand why. They want the certainty that they will not suddenly be left competing with what they would see as a subsidised government organisation, even though it is subsidised by only a very small amount. I am still concerned that we could end up in a situation in which we would lose this centre. That would be an absolute tragedy if that were the case. Regarding mature conversations, it could be that we do this as an agreement with government and then put this bill in, and confidentiality could be maintained. For that reason, I still do not support the bill.

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade) [4.33 pm] — in reply: I want to thank all members who participated in this debate, particularly the member for Cottesloe, the Leader of the Liberal Party. I understand his concerns and I hope to some extent we went somewhat to satisfying those concerns. I want to thank all who have been involved in the passage of the Animal Resources Authority Amendment and Repeal Bill 2021, in particular the advisers who have been on this journey. Can I just for a moment take the opportunity to thank Ms Kirsty Moynihan, the acting CEO of the Animal Resources Centre. I think she has done an outstanding job stepping up at a difficult time in the organisation's journey and dealing with some very difficult issues. In particular, it must be difficult to provide the 65 staff under her leadership certainty in their future and our intent is to make sure that there is a future for the Animal Resources Centre. I want to thank her and all the scientists who work in that building and the people who support them. They do an outstanding job providing a tremendous service to the community, in particular the medical research community. I want to make sure that I put the government's appreciation on the record. On that note, I commend the bill to the house.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE*Special*

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Leader of the House) [4.34 pm] — without notice: I move —

That the house, at its rising, adjourn until Tuesday, 15 March 2022 at 2.00 pm.

Very briefly, I congratulate the Presiding Officers and staff of Parliament for this first two weeks of the Legislative Assembly's sitting and on how we have been able to adapt quickly and rapidly to the COVID-19-related arrangements. It is important to note that the house is operating very differently from how it would normally. I offer my appreciation as Leader of the House to the staff, the clerks and, of course, the Acting Speakers, including yourself, in how the house has been able to operate over the last two weeks. I also want to acknowledge the wonderful work of the government Whip, who has done a great job, as has the opposition Whip. I thank them for their cooperation and I congratulate members on the way that we have been able to conduct Parliament in a bit of a different, historic way, given that during question time and through some debates this week and last week some members participated remotely. I want to place on the record my appreciation, in moving this adjournment motion.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 4.36 pm
