



Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

FORTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION
2023

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 16 March 2023

Legislative Assembly

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

PAPER TABLED

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

LEGACY — CENTENARY

Statement by Minister for Veterans Issues

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Veterans Issues) [9.01 am]: The year 2023 is very special for an iconic Australian veteran family support organisation. Legacy is celebrating its centenary. In 1923, Major General Sir John Gellibrand formed the Remembrance Club in Hobart. Months later, Lieutenant General Sir Stanley Savige established a similar club in Melbourne, which was named Legacy. These organisations were initially created to assist returned veterans to find work. In 1925, Legacy began assisting the widows and children of deceased or injured servicemen. This mission is based on a concept known as “The Promise”. In the trenches of the Western Front during World War I, a soldier said to his dying mate, “I’ll look after the missus and kids.” That statement became known as The Promise, and its sentiment has endured through the work of Legacy for 100 years.

To commemorate this milestone, Legacy is conducting a torch relay beginning in Pozières, France, travelling around the world and stopping at all 45 Legacy clubs worldwide. Hon Bill Johnston, MLA, a Legatee himself, will be representing the state government in Pozières for the launch. Hon Kim Beazley, AC, will be Legacy’s inaugural torchbearer and will launch the nationwide relay on 3 May 2023 from the National Anzac Centre in Albany. The route through WA will initially traverse the south west on its way to Fremantle. On 6 May, the City of Perth will assist Legacy by hosting a community open day at Wellington Square. Legacy WA will then take the torch to the Gascoyne, Pilbara and Kimberley regions before later, in 2023, taking it to the goldfields and great southern. Legacy is keen to engage with local members to drive community participation in the relay. I would encourage all members to reach out to Legacy WA to find out how they can get involved.

I would like to acknowledge Peter Emmett, the Legacy WA president, and Leanne Shepherd, Legacy WA board member and Legatee, who have joined us in the Speaker’s gallery this morning. Thank you for the massive contribution that Legacy has made to our state and, indeed, across Australia and the world. I am looking forward to the launch of the relay, and encourage all members to get involved in Legacy’s centenary celebrations.

YOUTH WEEK WA

Statement by Minister for Youth

MS S.F. MCGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Youth) [9.04 am]: I rise to inform the house that on 2 March, the state government announced over \$80 000 of funding to support community organisations and local governments to run activities during Youth Week WA 2023. Youth Week WA will run from 14 to 21 April with the theme “Becoming—With Others, We Dream”. Through this grant funding, 40 successful applicants will receive up to \$3 000 each to run activities and celebrations that acknowledge the positive contributions made by young people in the community. I am particularly pleased to see a large representation of grant recipients coming from regional and remote parts of the state. I am looking forward to meeting with one of the Youth Week ambassadors, Amy Astill, when I travel to Kalgoorlie–Boulder to kick things off on 14 April. Amy, along with the City of Kalgoorlie–Boulder, is working to put together a youth forum so that young people will have the opportunity to discuss the issues that matter to them, and I look forward to hearing what they have to say. Other Youth Week activities will include a youth festival put on by the Shire of Carnarvon. This will feature art workshops with Yinggarda elder Raymond Edney and include activities such as yoga in the park and mental health yarnning sessions. Goldfields Pride, in partnership with headspace, is planning an art workshop for LGBTQIA+ young people. In York, the local community centre will hold a mini careers expo, which will provide information on post-school training and employment options. These are just some of the wonderful events the state government has provided funding for during Youth Week 2023. It is fantastic to see so many different initiatives planned for Youth Week, and I look forward to attending as many of these events as I can, and encourage members here in the chamber to do the same. This is a great opportunity to showcase the positive leadership that so many of our young people are demonstrating every day and to be reminded of the vital role young people play in our communities.

DISABILITY SERVICES ACT — REFORM

Statement by Minister for Disability Services

MR D.T. PUNCH (Bunbury — Minister for Disability Services) [9.06 am]: I am pleased to stand today and inform the house of the McGowan government’s commitment to reform WA’s decades-old disability legislation. The current Disability Services Act 1993 primarily relates to the provision and regulation of state-led disability

services and related matters in Western Australia and will be reformed to promote inclusion and positive community attitudes relating to people with disability. The legislation is almost 30 years old and, as we know, the state's disability sector has undergone significant change during this time. Over 49 000 eligible Western Australians have joined the National Disability Insurance Scheme; the Disability Services Commission has become part of the Department of Communities; the Office of Disability has been formed; *A Western Australia for everyone: State disability strategy 2020–2030* was published; and the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability is ongoing.

The state government recognises that consistent and contemporary reforms are needed in WA's disability legislation to ensure that it meets the needs and expectations of today's community. The Office of Disability has released a consultation paper and is inviting people with disability, their families and carers, the many stakeholders and all Western Australians who have an interest in Western Australia's disability legislation to provide feedback during the three-month consultation period, which is open until 10 June 2023. Key issues for discussion in the consultation paper include the principles applicable to people with disability, appropriate safeguards for people with disability, the access and inclusion needs of people with disability, and ongoing service provision for specific cohorts. The voice of lived experience is vital in this process, and I strongly encourage people from diverse backgrounds, locations and experiences to provide their feedback. The daily experience of people with disability should be one of inclusion and positive community attitudes, and it is important that the WA disability legislation supports this position. The consultation paper is available on the Communities website, and I ask all members to consider it and share it with their constituents and contacts.

PERTH CASINO ROYAL COMMISSION: FINAL REPORT

Government Response — Statement by Minister for Racing and Gaming

MR R.R. WHITBY (Baldvis — Minister for Racing and Gaming) [9.09 am]: I rise to table the McGowan government's response to the *Perth Casino Royal Commission: Final report*. Twelve months ago, my ministerial colleague and then Minister for Racing and Gaming, Hon Dr Tony Buti, tabled the *Perth Casino Royal Commission: Final report* and began the process of implementing the recommendations. I would like to thank the minister for his work.

Members will recall the royal commission found that the casino licensee and the associated Crown entities were not fit to hold the casino licence or be associated with casino gaming operations. Of the PCRC's 59 recommendations, 49 are supported, eight are supported in principle, and one is supported in part. One recommendation does not require a government position, because it is relevant only if the ban on poker machines is lifted. I can assure the house in a very clear way that under the McGowan government, poker machines will not be allowed in Western Australia and electronic gaming machines will not be allowed outside of the Perth casino. These bans will not be weakened under this government.

The government has taken immediate action and is implementing major reforms to address the PCRC recommendations. Importantly, we have strengthened the governance and effectiveness of the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries. Mr Paul Steel has been appointed as the independent monitor. He and his office will oversee the remediation of the Crown casino. Mr Steel was previously an assistant commissioner with the Western Australia Police Force. He brings decades of experience in organised crime investigation, organisational transformation and senior leadership to this important role.

The maximum fine that can be issued under the Casino Control Act 1984 has been increased to \$100 million. The maximum fine for noncompliance issued by the Gaming and Wagering Commission has been increased to \$250 000. When it comes to strengthening the regulatory framework, six new members and an independent chair have been appointed to the Gaming and Wagering Commission, who bring relevant skills, experience and governance expertise to their positions. The commission and the department are working with the Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre to strengthen anti-money laundering and counterterrorism financing measures. Great strides have been made in reforming the management and regulation of the Crown casino.

Although work still needs to be done to embed these improvements and ensure effective risk mitigations, the government strongly supports the cultural and structural change required to ensure stability and accountability. I want to assure the house that the government is committed to restoring the community's confidence that the state's only casino is managed in a responsible way, and provides a safe, well-regulated environment for patrons and the 5 000 people who work there. I now table the government response to the *Perth Casino Royal Commission: Final report*.

[See paper [1862](#).]

PRACTICAL DRIVING ASSESSMENTS — AVAILABILITY

Grievance

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Leader of the Opposition) [9.12 am]: My grievance is to the Minister for Transport. I grieve on behalf of learner drivers who cannot get a practical driving assessment booking in the metropolitan area

this year. The frustration and bitter disappointment of these learners and their parents is real. They spend countless hours online trying to book a driver's test or searching for a cancellation, to no avail. Those with slow internet face obvious disadvantage. This is a matter I have raised in previous years, in budget estimates and question time.

There is no doubt that getting a driver's licence is a milestone event for a teenager and a step towards greater independence. These would-be drivers are desperate to go to work and to study; still they endure the agonising experience of logging into the DoT Direct website and hitting refresh in the hope they can book a driving test, months down the track if they are lucky. I remind the minister that the worker shortages in Western Australia are very real. Employers are desperate for staff. Not everyone is able to make public transport work for them to get to work and study. It is a matter that inhibits productivity.

I want to highlight several cases raised with my office and in the news that illustrate the impact of the backlog of driving tests. I refer to the PerthNow story "Perth Mum forced to fly daughter to Esperance for driving test" of 8 March 2023. Perth mum Narelle tried for a month to book a test for her daughter, only to find there were no bookings in the metropolitan area for the remainder of the year. She searched for a cancellation and then gave up looking for a metro test. She explored options in Esperance, South Hedland, Tom Price and Broome. She was all set to fly her daughter to Esperance, but I understand that she has now secured a metro test.

Seven news ran a story yesterday about a Mindarie teen who, after months of trying to secure a Perth test, travelled to Geraldton for her PDA—an 830-kilometre round trip. Another Perth teen drove with her mum to Bunbury seven times to sit a test. Each test cost \$126. There was another case in which a mum drove with her daughter to Kojonup, a seven-hour return journey, only to fail that particular test.

A Yanchep resident contacted my office in frustration, as he has been unable to book a test for his wife. According to my notes, his email states —

I have an expensive 70km drive to work. I am the only breadwinner in a family of five, and the cost of living has us surviving hand-to-mouth. My wife wants to work, and this is something we need, to survive at this time. But in order to work, she needs to pass her driver's licence. In order to pass her driver's licence, she needs to be able to book a test. There are no available bookings at all, ever, for any testing centre, on the DoT website.

It continues —

I called DoT and after waiting forty five minutes to speak with someone, they let me know that "it's because of Covid 19". This is a staggering admission that DoT is not handling things well; not handling things at all. Covid 19 has ceased to be a problem. DoT have dropped the ball and are now doing nothing to facilitate the people of Western Australia being able to get their driver's licence. He says one obvious consequence of this failure is that people will drive without their licence. This is an obvious risk to safety and could well end in the individual being banned from driving in the future.

Yet another family contacted me from Hovea in the Shire of Mundaring. According to my notes, their email states —

'we were astonished to find that there are no available Metro or regional bookings for out to one year beyond our daughter's eligibility date. This is farcical and completely unacceptable. We live on the outskirts of the city where public transport is limited. The ability to drive, in our circumstances is not a luxury but rather a necessity. 'My daughter started looking for a test booking in January but has been unable to secure any bookings in Midland, Northam, Toodyay, York, Cannington or Kelmscott. In mid February when I looked on the booking system, there was nothing available looking out to six months in any centres'.

In a WAtoday story on 18 December 2022, a Department of Transport spokesperson said that learner drivers should be "prepared for a long wait". I repeat that: "be prepared for a long wait". This comes on the back of DOT recruiting 17 additional assessors last year, with an additional seven due to start this year. The article quotes a driving instructor saying there are "no spaces available until at least 2024". The desperate lack of driving tests sees some driving instructors cashing in on the situation and onselling tests. Driving instructors, or perhaps bots, are making block bookings and then onselling those tests. A recent ad on social media quoted \$25 per slot.

Alternative arrangements may involve the learner driver taking a minimum of three lessons with the instructor to access the test slot. Last September, I raised with the minister a concerning situation of a Perth mum who had tried to book a test for her daughter for 4 November, being her daughter's seventeenth birthday. She could not get a driving test at Cannington, Midland or Kelmscott until the last week of March 2023. She then found an ad on Facebook marketplace offering PDA tests for \$50. When she contacted the driving school, she was offered a test on 4 November at her preferred testing location. The proviso was she would have to rent the car for the test at a total cost of \$200. The driving instructor was pushy and wanted her to send her daughter's learner's permit through immediately.

In March 2022, DOT announced a driving instructor learner's permit audit via Driving Instructor Bulletin 04/2022. The audit was to stamp out driving instructors making multiple PDA bookings. A threat was issued to driving instructors that they would be removed from the online booking system if suspected of making multiple bookings. Audits commenced in March 2022 and were to take place every six months.

Speaking on 6PR two weeks ago, Iain Cameron, the Department of Transport's managing director, said the PDA booking system had capacity, but it was being locked up unfairly with bots searching the system and grabbing available tests. He said that 300 to 400 tests are released daily, but the system is not working. He said the department had seen 100 or so tests disappear in 27 seconds. Mr Cameron said driving instructors see a business opportunity and make multiple online bookings and sell those test slots.

Minister, the department acknowledged the problem of multiple and speculative booking of practical driving assessments 12 months ago and introduced the audit. Clearly, the audit has not been effective. I call on the minister to immediately address this raft of issues preventing many learner drivers from booking a test, getting their licence and heading their own way to get to work and to explore our state.

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan — Minister for Transport) [9.18 am]: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the grievance. Fortuitously, I have a press conference later today to announce changes to our PDA system to address many of the issues that have been raised over the past year. Just for some background, we did have COVID, which, of course, impacted the ability to service people wanting to get their driver's licence. We are emerging from a time when, in some instances, it was the assessors who were not available, and there were also cancellations because people had COVID or were not able to get to their test.

Over the past couple of years, we have been trying to manage the effects of COVID. I have gone through all the historical data and information to look at whether anything extraordinary has happened around the number of tests released each day compared with demand. Nothing has really changed over the past three to four years in relation to demand or availability. We release around 300 tests every day. Some people are happy to sit their test in either the southern suburbs or the northern suburbs, so they grab a test and manage the system well, but it is clear that something is happening to the system that sucks up that capacity, as the Leader of the Opposition mentioned and our unit has identified. Bots have started to sweep up all the available tests, so we are going to improve the system to reduce the ability for that technology to do that. The booking system in Western Australia allows driving instructors to book a range of tests and swap the names of their clients linked to those tests. WA is the only state that has that system. It was put in place to service that industry, but it appears to be also causing a problem, and I will be making further announcements about that. Those are the two main issues that have been identified.

Cancellations are also an issue. The COVID pandemic caused cancellation issues for the assessors, but that is starting to be addressed. Five to seven per cent of test bookings are cancelled or no-shows and that also impacts test availability.

Another point of note has been the fluctuation in tests in the regions. For example, people have been unable to sit tests in Bunbury. We have moved another assessor there and that seems to have rectified the problem. I have also instructed the department to make sure that if a regional person wants to sit a test in their home town, they get preference. I do not want people missing out on sitting a test in their town because tests have been taken up by people coming from other places. The Esperance example, as outlined by the member, has been rectified. I understand that that person got their licence at one of the metropolitan testing centres.

I completely understand that in many instances people need a driver's licence to access employment opportunities. That is why in regional WA we are rolling out the driving access and equity program that targets regional Western Australians, particularly those in remote areas. That program has already seen some success with people who would never have normally got their driver's licence. We have already helped over 100 people to get their driver's licence in the Pilbara and Kimberley, and we are rolling out that program in the midwest, Gascoyne and goldfields. These people have no ability to get supervised driving lessons or access to vehicles. That issue also extends to some parts of the metropolitan area in which people find it hard to obtain the supervised hours required to sit their driving test.

As I said, I acknowledge the issue with tests disappearing. Each day 300 to 450 practical driving assessment appointments are released. About 300 of those tests are for C-class licences. We continue to make spots available, but they do not seem to exist by the end of the day. We understand the issues and I will be making further announcements on what we will be doing to make it easier to get a driver's licence in WA.

The other issue is with people failing their test. People sometimes turn up to their test with perhaps not the confidence or the experience required to pass, so we continue to see a significant failure rate, but on checking the data, we see that has been consistent for a long time. I know that sitting a driving test is sometimes quite daunting. People get nervous and sometimes they make errors that they probably would not make in an ordinary situation. I think that all of us have experienced that. I have, personally—maybe!—as have our friends and family. My niece could not work out how to use the demister and then failed her test.

Ms S.F. McGurk: I sped.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The member sped. On my first driving test, the assessor had to use her brakes, so that was not good, and that happened when I was getting out of the car park. That happened a long time ago. I could not even get out of the car park! Yes, it is a tough process and it always has been. As I said, my niece went out on a rainy and misty day and could not work out how to clean the windscreen and failed instantly. She has since got her licence and all things are good. There are lots of different examples.

Sitting a test is a tough process, and it needs to be a tough process, but we are doing all we can to ensure that Western Australians get access to driving tests.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, minister. I do believe that assessor intervention during a test is an automatic fail.

Ms R. Saffioti: Yes, it is, but they still got me to go out for the next half an hour anyway!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, minister.

CHRIST CHURCH GRAMMAR SCHOOL — PLAYING FIELDS ZONING

Grievance

DR K. STRATTON (Nedlands) [9.25 am]: It is good to know that I am in good company. My assessor also had to put the brakes on during my first test! My grievance this morning, however, is to the Minister for Planning, not that assessor. I thank the minister for taking my grievance on an issue that I appreciate is important to both of us—ensuring accessibility to green space for our growing communities and, in particular, maintaining playing fields for girls' participation in sport.

I will give a brief outline of the history. Eight hectares of pristine playing fields in Mt Claremont were acquired by Christ Church Grammar School in 1958 from the City of Perth. At the time of this transaction, it was represented by the school that the land would be used for playing fields. When the land was gazetted in 1985 by the City of Perth, this use and purpose was again reinforced with the land specifically reserved for parks and recreation. In recent years, the school identified the playing fields as being surplus to its needs and made an application to have them rezoned to a development zone and therefore have the reservation removed. On 25 February 2022, Town of Cambridge councillors voted unanimously to uphold the town's local planning scheme and reject a scheme amendment request by Christ Church Grammar School to rezone the fields. The school has sought an intervention by the Minister for Planning under section 76 of the Planning and Development Act 2005 to remove the reservation so that the playing fields can be developed. It is on this note that I grieve to the minister to confirm that she will take no further action as there are no planning or community reasons for providing a section 76 exception.

The planning reasons for this grievance include the fact that in April 2021, the Western Australian Planning Commission confirmed that the reservation was appropriate as part of its formal acceptance and endorsement of the Town of Cambridge's local planning strategy. The Town of Cambridge is also meeting its density and infill targets without the need to impinge on local reservations. It has focused increased density around key local centres and high-frequency transport corridors. At no time has it been a local or state government policy or requirement that reservations be used for densification purposes.

The community reasons are both highly local and of state significance. Locally, members of the Friends of Mt Claremont Fields, many of whom are here today, collected close to 5 000 signatures on a petition calling for the playing fields to be protected by ensuring that they remain reserved for parks and recreation, consistent with their creation, zoning and land use for the past 60 years. People from across generations collected and provided signatures, including Walter and Beth Pigeon, local residents who stood outside the Good Grocer in Claremont every day for months on end and collected signatures. The group presented this petition on 20 September 2022 to Hon Dr Brad Pettitt, MLC. I want to thank the Friends of Mt Claremont Fields for its ongoing and positive engagement in working for the fields to be protected and remain as a reservation.

Community playing fields are in short supply more broadly in metropolitan Western Australia and government reports indicate that this shortage will increase substantially with time. This is especially the case for girls' sport, which has seen the largest participation growth of any group and, as we know, suffers from significant historic and systemic inequality in access to broadacre playing fields for sports such as football, soccer and cricket. As we continue to meet our targets for infill and development and as the population in the western suburbs continues to grow, so, too, does demand for active green space.

I will highlight growth at just one of our local clubs and use the sport of football as an example. The Swanbourne Tigers Junior Football Club, which is located in the City of Nedlands, has experienced an increase in enrolment of more than 30 per cent in just the past three years. This has put pressure on existing facilities at Allen Park, which cannot sustain this growth. Home games for the Swanbourne Tigers are now played every weekend at various fields, subject to availability. These fields include the upper park behind the Shorehouse, the Allen Park rugby fields, the John XXIII College fields, the University of Western Australia sports ground and the Scotch College playing fields.

The Swanbourne Tigers have access to only the minor fields within those facilities, so none of those locations has access to toilets, shelter, change rooms, permanent goalposts or boundary lines, which makes game preparation more difficult and the game experience for players and spectators much less engaging. All three football ovals within the Mt Claremont playing fields have permanent goalposts and boundary lines, permanent shelter and toilet and change room access.

I would like to particularly emphasise to the minister the crucial issue of access to playing fields for girls in the western suburbs. We are both mothers of daughters and know that participation in sport is essential for their mental, social and physical health. Although there are still barriers related to accessibility and inclusivity for girls' participation, they are barriers we can help to reduce by protecting those fields.

Taking just AFL football as an example, in the female competition for ages six to 17 years in the past four years since 2018, female participation in the metropolitan north region, where the playing fields are located, increased over 90 per cent, with almost 2 300 female participants playing in the zone in 2022. Another four-year comparison for Auskick shows a 53 per cent growth in girls' participation from 300 to 458 players. There was an 80 per cent growth in juniors, from 528 to 952, and for youth there was a 138 per cent growth, from 369 to 878 girls and young women who now play. When considering the female competition for ages 18 and over, in the past four years since 2018, female participation in the Perth Football League has increased almost 300 per cent. Today, Western Australia has more female teams in the 18-plus amateur league than the equivalent league in Victoria, which is a credit to WA given that Victoria traditionally considers itself the home of Australian Rules Football.

Adding to this, not one of the girls' schools that participates in the Independent Girls Schools Sports Association has its own venue suitable for those broadacre sports, including AFL, soccer or cricket. In order to participate, the girls' schools must negotiate for time and space on council-owned ovals or with the boys' schools to allow them to play. At age 14, girls are dropping out of sport at twice the rate of boys, and the availability of playing space is a factor in that. Given the importance of the Mt Claremont playing fields to our local community, and for girls' sport in particular, today I seek reassurance from the Minister for Planning that the zoning of Mt Claremont playing fields will remain as it currently stands—that is, reserved for parks and recreation—thereby upholding the Town of Cambridge's decision to reject the rezoning application, meaning that the playing fields will continue to be active green space for the local community.

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan — Minister for Planning) [9.32 am]: I thank the member for Nedlands for that grievance. I also acknowledge the supporters of this grievance in the public gallery. As the member pointed out, a request was made for me to ask the Town of Cambridge to rezone the playing fields to residential. As members would expect, I get a lot of requests from all parts of the community on different fronts. As I have said on radio, I treat every proposal on its merits. In this instance, we analysed the benefit to housing, the amount of housing and the location of the proposed housing and compared that with the loss of the playing fields and other local amenity that would be lost—but particularly the playing fields. I am glad the Minister for Sport and Recreation is sitting next to me because we fully understand and acknowledge this issue. We sit here and talk about the massive demand for playing fields in the community, particularly in areas where, as the member said, more people are moving. As increased demand occurs and more people move to the area, there is an absolute explosion in the popularity of girls' and women's sport. I have two girls who are very much into sport, both football and soccer. As I traverse the suburbs every weekend to watch them play, I know the massive demand there is for training and playing. A key factor in my decision is making sure that we continue to have playing fields for the growing popularity of sport more generally, but girls' sport in particular. This situation did not exist 10 years ago. Girls were not playing AFL at the rate they are today. Now we see it absolutely everywhere, with other outdoor sports as well, such as soccer. The FIFA Women's World Cup this year will again increase the sport's popularity.

On its merits, we considered what would be the benefit to housing. We need more housing in WA; there is no doubt about that. The government continues to support more housing. We asked what would be the amount of new housing, noting that this area is very much surrounded by Bush Forever. The setbacks required to comply with fire and emergency rules would mean that the number of houses that were supported there would not be a lot, but the loss of the playing fields to the local community would be significant.

I understand what the school was trying to do, to get its playing fields closer to its campus. I understand also that it is a challenge, particularly for many schools in the member for Nedlands' area whose students must catch a bus or travel a distance to playing fields. Other schools such as Trinity College have the same problem. I understand the challenges they have, but more generally, this would be just too big a loss for that community, and that is why I made that decision. Going forward, I will probably write to the council asking what other measures exist to support those fields into the future in relation to the ownership of those fields. The next questions to be asked are: Who manages it into the future? Are there any other mechanisms to make sure that they are publicly available in the future? Questions about who is going to manage the fields into the future and what shared responsibility, potentially, will occur, are always tough. Perhaps that is something we can talk about in the future.

I have considered all the factors. I listened to the point of view of both sides and read through the documents to get across all the detail. I am very happy with the decision I made. I do not think there should be housing there; I think we should retain the playing fields. One of this government's first decisions was to retain Subiaco Oval in its form and size, because there were plans before we were elected to change the nature of Subiaco Oval. We need playing fields. The member highlighted the lighting, change rooms and accessibility at the fields. As Minister for Planning and someone who is very much interested in sport, I have discussed with the Minister for Sport and Recreation what else we can do to create more opportunities to get more playing spaces. As we all lament that kids

do not get out and play, we have an obligation to create places for them to play. Girls in particular need better access to change rooms. I have had to take my kids into a lot of change rooms that are absolutely disgusting and awful. Sometimes my kids just refuse to go in there. We need to consider types of change rooms and, in particular, how they impact on girls who want to play sport. Lighting is always an interesting issue because sometimes local residents are not keen on the lights. However, now with more targeted LEDs, we can be smarter with our lighting and provide the ability for people to train safely in the evening. Sometimes having lights still does not help people see the ball! Better lighting, change rooms and the joint management of these facilities is needed. The Minister for Sport and Recreation and I, as the Minister for Planning, want to continue having these types of playing fields available to schools and the community, supporting our younger people playing sport.

FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES — GNARABUP COMMUNITY FIRE SHED

Grievance

MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Leader of the Liberal Party) [9.39 am]: My grievance is to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Emergency Services and I thank the minister for taking my grievance. This grievance addresses the government enforced closure of the Gnarabup community fire shed, which ensures the safety of the Wallcliffe Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade during operational measures and provides a rapid response to bushfires.

As the minister is aware, Margaret River has experienced several severe bushfires. The 2011 bushfire in particular devastated the community, with 39 properties destroyed, 26 homes burnt or damaged and the historic Wallcliffe House, built between 1855 and 1865 by Alfred Bussell, one of WA's pioneers, destroyed. This is not a distant memory for the wider community but one that is in the forefront of their minds. The decision to close the Wallcliffe Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade's second unit has overlooked the needs as well as the concerns of a coastal community that has been affected by bushfire on multiple occasions. I have been contacted by business owners, community groups and residents who understand a minor fire could ignite at any point, and if not extinguished within minutes, could potentially move to be a major bushfire incident.

Last November, a member of the Wallcliffe Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade was in the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions fire-spotting truck patrolling Wooditjup National Park on Carters Road following a fuel-reduction burn. This is the content on the brigade's Facebook post —

Just imagine if any of this bushland ignited in the middle of summer with a 20-knot wind behind it ... Frightening stuff.

We cant stress enough that bushfire is inevitable if you live in the Margaret River region. You really need to be taking immediate steps to work on your preparedness for this summer. You can already see how volatile the bush is now and fire authorities are predicting an above average fire risk season.

In the same vein, it is the government's responsibility to ensure our brave firefighters can respond safely and quickly to avert a potentially serious bushfire. This region continues to enjoy visitors to our beautiful coastal destinations and surrounding bush. Wedding season is in full swing with our wineries, breweries and hospitality venues heavily booked, and all it would take is a cigarette butt to spark a fire.

The location of the fire shed, maintained for years by members of the Wallcliffe Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade, is in a critical position to enable a rapid response when protecting the coastal hamlet of Prevelly from a possible bushfire. The light tanker that was removed has been used multiple times over the past 20 years on a range of fires. St John Ambulance support has been used over a dozen times, with the service arriving within minutes of an emergency call-out to the Gnarabup–Prevelly area. The volunteers live close to the fire shed and can be on location and despatched on the fire truck to respond to any call-out within minutes. The closure of the fire shed and relocation of the firefighting appliance to the main headquarters on Wallcliffe Road will result in an increase to response times of more than 20 minutes, which will jeopardise the ability to distinguish or contain a minor fire before it escalates. The location of the fire shed and fire truck is critical in the brigade's firefighting strategy in Prevelly and to ensuring a rapid response.

The Westin Margaret River resort and spa has been a contentious issue for the Margaret River community, with opposition from the Margaret River Coastal Residents Association. The association has recently been quoted in the *Augusta Margaret River Times* as being “alarmed” at the shed closure. The president, Adrian Wilson, said —

“Once a fire starts in coastal heath it is very difficult to control.

“For very little cost, this unit provided extra protection and might have made the difference between a small incident and a major fire.”

This decision is hard to believe when a submission from DFES recommended against the proposed Westin Margaret River resort and spa and associated village development at Gnarabup due to bushfire safety concerns as the area faced a major population increase. On the one hand, DFES is concerned about Gnarabup being an extreme bushfire area and its ability to effectively mitigate a potential bushfire risk, and, on the other hand, it relocated the fire truck critically positioned near Prevelly for rapid response in a high bushfire risk area.

The West Australian reported last month that firefighters had held peaceful protests outside every WA fire station to highlight what they claim are major resourcing shortages posing dangers to themselves and the community. It was reported that firefighters were at “breaking point” and were worried about gaps in coverage and their own health and safety. Our amazing firefighters and volunteers play a critical role in protecting our rural communities and they must be adequately supported. I am concerned this decision by the government to remove the fire shed potentially puts our volunteer firefighters at unnecessary risk. An incident could happen at any time. I respectfully request that the minister reconsider this decision and take into consideration the impact this closure could have on our firefighters’ ability to respond rapidly. An extra 20 minutes could be the difference between the ability to extinguish a small fire and putting firefighters and the community in a potentially life-threatening situation.

I again thank the parliamentary secretary for taking my grievance on behalf of the Minister for Emergency Services.

MS H.M. BEAZLEY (Victoria Park — Parliamentary Secretary) [9.45 am]: I thank the member for Vasse for raising this issue and giving me, on behalf of the Minister for Emergency Services, the opportunity to discuss how her community is being better served through this decision in terms of bushfire readiness. The state government recognises the risk that bushfires present to communities throughout Western Australia. Management of bushfire risk is a shared responsibility between state government agencies, local governments, various organisations and private landholders. They all have important roles to play on this in our community.

In July 2020, the Shire of Augusta–Margaret River formally wrote to the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner proposing the transition of the Rosa Brook and Wallcliffe Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades to Department of Fire and Emergency Services management. The advice provided to DFES was that the council had voted unanimously to support the transition, which was also requested and supported by both brigades. The Wallcliffe brigade transitioned to DFES management last month, on 2 February 2023, and has been gazetted as the Wallcliffe Fire Services Brigade. As part of the transition to DFES, a review of the brigade’s current facilities, including the shed the member mentioned, and assets was conducted to ensure they were fit for purpose and essential for operational requirements. During the assessment, DFES identified that the single-bay bushfire appliance shed in the Gnarabup–Prevelly gazetted fire district did not offer suitable infrastructure to support the requirements of an operational fire station.

The Wallcliffe Fire Station is located less than five kilometres from the Gnarabup shed and provides storage and infrastructure capabilities to meet the brigade’s and local communities’ operational requirements. DFES advised the Shire of Augusta–Margaret River and Wallcliffe Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade that as part of the transition agreement, the Gnarabup shed would be surplus to operational requirements, as it lacked the necessary infrastructure. Advice was also provided that the light tanker housed in the Gnarabup shed would be relocated to the main Wallcliffe Fire Station. This upgraded station now houses six appliances—three light tankers and three heavy-duty appliances. In addition, having appliances in one location minimises complications when responding to bushfires. As I said, the main Wallcliffe Fire Station is situated less than five kilometres from the Gnarabup shed and is well located to support the Gnarabup–Prevelly area. Whereas, the shed has no road to the south. The Shire of Augusta–Margaret River also currently supports eight volunteer bush fire brigades that provide bushfire protection over the broader local government area.

The member mentioned the devastating fires of 2011—and they were. Following the 2011 Margaret River fire, the state government enhanced the structural firefighting capability across the capes. During the southern high threat period, an enhanced response arrangement called the capes zone response is in place and covers the Gnarabup–Prevelly area. This zone arrangement provides enhanced response coordination and bushfire suppression and includes a volunteer fire and rescue appliance, a bush fire brigade appliance, two fixed-wing aircraft, two rotary wing aircraft, one Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions officer and appliance, and one DFES officer.

The Shire of Augusta–Margaret River owns the Gnarabup shed and associated land, which can now be repurposed for the local community. In addition, the local government chief executive officer has on several occasions provided confirmation, in writing, of their support of the DFES position. In addition, as the member is aware, the allocation and placement of operational assets is the sole responsibility of the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner and he is confident that this is the best decision for the continued operation of the bush fire brigade in the area.

VENUE HIRE FEES AND CHARGES POLICY — CITY OF JOONDALUP

Grievance

MS C.M. COLLINS (Hillarys) [9.49 am]: I thank the minister for taking my grievance, which relates to affordable provision of community sports and group activities in the electorate of Hillarys. The City of Joondalup “Venue Hire Fees and Charges Policy” was drafted in August 2022 and is set to be introduced from 1 January 2024. The policy will update the city’s venue hire scheme by introducing extra financial costs to the booking of venues to ensure that every booked space is used and the city’s venue use is maximised to its full potential. This is a worthy aim but a path forward should not generate considerable future costs for some of the most active clubs in the Hillarys electorate, which in turn will be passed on to the families.

On 7 March, at the City of Joondalup electors’ annual general meeting, Mullaloo resident Phil O’Donnell put forward a motion calling on the city to revoke the proposed “Venue Hire Fees and Charges Policy”. The motion

called for a comprehensive community engagement program for the facility hire fee process prior to any new fee policy, as well as a review of the support provided by the City of Joondalup to all hirers. The motion recognised that all hirers should have some exposure to the city's operational costs such as through user-pays. It also requested an extended transitional period to gradually introduce changes to enable existing clubs to adapt their business plan. Electors overwhelmingly supported this motion. The vote was a demonstration of the love the local community has for the great range of sporting and community groups that call the Hillarys electorate home. City of Joondalup grounds and venues are used for sporting activities and host arts, music, exercise, meditation, karate and dancing activities, just to name a few. These activities greatly enrich community life and provide social opportunities for senior citizens and install a love of physical recreation and teamwork in kids and young adults in the area. Initiatives like this should be promoted and made more accessible for all Western Australian families.

I will highlight just some of the local clubs that would be impacted by this potential new policy. Whitford Junior Football Club is a community club run by a very dedicated and committed group of volunteers who are passionate about providing their members and families with the best footy experience in WA. They also run emerging mental health initiatives and community events, and approximately 1 000 families across the Hillarys electorate have a child or a family member who is part of the club. The club caters for both male and female players from pre-primary to year 12. I want to make a special mention of the club's exciting work in developing the next generation of female football stars; 175 local girls are participating in the footy club and this year we are seeing two new teams rising to the West Australian Football League level. The club is subsidising women's footy to bring it to the level at which it can stand proudly on its own feet. If this policy were put in place, the junior footy club would face an annual fee of \$25 000 from 2024 onwards. There is no guarantee that this funding would be reinvested into the sporting grounds or the clubhouse. The volunteers have questions for the city, such as: will the fee be indexed to CPI and will there be a cap on this? The volunteers need answers before they can take on additional work to secure the club's future.

Another club that could be impacted is Padbury Scouts. Graeme Stickland has been involved with leadership roles in Scouts WA for over 45 years and runs Padbury Scouts. He is passionate about the education of boys and sees the modern scouts as youth led and adult supported. We can tell the satisfaction he gets from his volunteering when he shares stories of boys' capacity for learning and leadership skyrockets when they get unchained from a desk and back out into nature. He is worried about the future of access to Padbury Hall and the affordability of the program as it is looking at an increase of over \$5 000 from 2024 onwards. Padbury Scouts has built up a strong track record of supporting the Joondalup RSL and Lions Club of Whitford. In addition, it does a lot of charity work for other environmental groups such as the Craigie bushland group, the Friends of Hillarys and Kallaroo Foreshore, and Mullaloo Beach Community Group. Mr Stickland saw the City of Joondalup try a similar policy in 2012, but the attempt was roundly rejected by the community and he is surprised that the policy has emerged again after 10 years.

The Whitford Senior Citizens' Club is one I hold dear to my heart. It is just across from my office on Banks Avenue. There is a warm and inviting community resource centre where hundreds of local senior citizens take up activities like yoga, aerobics, table tennis, bingo, bowls and more. It offers a place and a resource for older people who need to maintain social connections, particularly during the COVID pandemic. I will not forget bringing the Premier to the electorate of Hillarys where we played a frantic game of ping-pong against the seniors last year. All this good work happens, but with such an active club, the seniors club is potentially one of the hardest hit. The amazing president, Doug, mentioned that the club may have to pay upwards of \$45 000 a year.

These are just a few of the examples of the clubs in my electorate that may be impacted by these changes. Judging by the broad alliance of sporting clubs and community groups allied against these changes, it is clear that the public has spoken. I respectfully ask the minister to please write to the City of Joondalup to reconsider the policy in the interests of our community.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Sport and Recreation) [9.56 am]: I thank the member for Hillarys for an excellent grievance. It is a really important grievance and I thank her for her stoic support of sport and community organisations. The member mentioned seniors, arts and others, and, of course, some very, very well known and revered sporting clubs in the City of Joondalup. I know her concerns are also shared by the member for Joondalup. The member raised a policy position that I think needs to be very firmly reversed.

Mrs J.M.C. Stojkovski: And the member for Kingsley.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: And the member for Kingsley. It is ill-founded. It is, unfortunately, an example of a policy that is out of touch with the reality of community life and community sporting life. The member bringing this grievance here on behalf of her constituents is a very, very important move and I support wholeheartedly the passion that the member has for this matter.

Let us highlight this to the councils, and I think they actually know this: this is an example of bureaucracy not being analysed closely by elected members. I hope that the member's plea will be heard because it is not a good decision. I will write to the City of Joondalup. It is not a good decision not only for all the reasons the member has highlighted, but also, of course, because we know that research shows unequivocally that physical healthy lives that allow and incorporate participation by all children, young people and people of all abilities creates much more

well balanced human beings. All those young people whom the member has highlighted through the clubs and organisations, and those seniors from the seniors' club whom the member mentioned, benefit from that participation and coming together and being involved in something positive. That is what community sport is all about. It is what community activities through the arts, seniors' gatherings and things like that all contribute to. They roundly support a healthy and vibrant community, and I think this is where the council has it wrong. It has perhaps listened to a couple of bean counters and not understood, quite frankly, the impact that this policy will have on those groups.

The member has highlighted some stark statistics, I might say. When clubs are going to be up for \$20 000 or more—or even smaller amounts, a few thousand dollars—that can make every difference, and the capacity of those organisations to continue is drawn into question. Of course, we know, as was highlighted by previous grievances this morning, that the demand for spaces for playing fields is ever-increasing because many great clubs, like many of those that the member mentioned, focus on making sure that girls and young women are focused on participating at record levels, as they should be. We have to promote that in every way we can, because it is positive. I plead to the City of Joondalup to reassess this decision. It is sad that the council unanimously supported this policy change. That is sad. I would ask all those councillors who supported this policy change to review this decision immediately and recognise that it is not a good move because it will have lasting negative impacts on those community organisations and great sporting clubs that the member mentioned and on the activity that they generate. Those activities generate positive behaviours in children and young people and positive community participation. Both those things are positive. I am hopeful that this was perhaps an unintended decision by the council but that it will realise the impact it will have and will reverse the decision. As the member said, none of the clubs is asking for a free ride, but they are asking for fairness. I understand that the consultation process was also very poor. There is a whole range of reasons why this decision by the City of Joondalup needs to be reviewed very quickly. If that happens, the council will be commended for it. Sometimes councils make decisions that are not well thought out, and I think this is a great example of that.

I urge the member's community and electors to get behind the member's campaign and that of other members of this place who understand the importance of reversing this proposal. I hope that they get in contact with the member and support her campaign to do that, because it would be a great outcome if this policy was junked and a more appropriate process was put in place. As the member quite rightly said, there is absolutely nothing wrong with wanting to get better efficiencies out of the use of buildings and facilities, but the process that has gone on here is totally misguided. I will write to the mayor immediately. I know he is a decent fellow. I think he will read that letter and I hope he will respond appropriately. All the other councillors need to realise that sometimes things are presented to them in a report to council and that the councillors really need to analyse and think carefully about the impact that may have. I am hopeful that they will look at the groundswell of public response due to the member's campaign and at the concerns raised by the groups, many of which the member highlighted this morning, and that this poorly thought out policy will be reversed and that the children, young people and seniors can continue to do their magnificent work in the member's electorate and deliver high-quality outcomes for the community more broadly. It is a great grievance. I thank the member for Hillarys for raising this. It is very important in the whole picture of how we provide ongoing support for communities in the future, so thank you.

TREASURER'S ADVANCE AUTHORISATION BILL 2023

Second Reading

Resumed from 23 February.

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Leader of the Opposition) [10.03 am]: I rise to speak to the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill 2023 and I say at the outset that the opposition will be supporting the bill as it progresses through Parliament. We will not be doing anything to interrupt the finances of the state flowing through. We understand the need to make the payments that are required and to ensure that the state continues to function smoothly. In the United States, from time to time, we see the problems that emerge when the government runs out of money and schools have to be shut down and the police force is left unpaid and all sorts of chaos ensues. We will not be doing anything to block the supply of money to the government and, through that, the payments that are required for the employees, contractors and all the other people who will be recipients of money throughout the rest of the coming financial year. I understand that not all the money that is to be approved or authorised will necessarily be spent in that period, but I will be seeking to get an understanding from the Treasurer; Premier, when we go into consideration in detail, about some of the details of the expenditures that are sought to be approved and why it is necessary in the circumstances for this money to be authorised. We know that some of it is highlighted in the midyear review and that some other expenses have occurred since then. I asked a question in this place about what a \$500 million contingency item, I think it was, might be for, and the Premier indicated in response that it was to prepare for the recovery from the floods in the Kimberley, so perhaps I will try to get a bit more detail around that.

I remember this time last year when we had a similar bill. On that occasion, I think that was the year I learnt that we were actually, as a state, purchasing 110 million rapid antigen tests. It is fair to say we have been infested with RATs ever since in Western Australia. I know that it was a different time and people were making decisions quickly, but I always thought that 110 million RATs was a stretch for 2.6 or 2.7 million people. I still wonder to this day

whether someone in the Department of Health put an extra zero at the end of that number. I think that 11 million might have been a good ask, but 110 million seemed to be a long haul from what was needed. Unfortunately, we have got to the stage now at which some of them are expiring, so that very large investment of roughly \$500 million in RATs probably was not the wisest of investments. But, of course, it was made at a time that I acknowledge was different and people were concerned about and unsure of what the future might bring. Perhaps someone in the health department was so concerned that they put an extra zero after it.

Nonetheless, we support the bill. We do not necessarily support the fact that, year on year, we have to come to this place and ask for extra appropriations to be authorised. Actually, it would be better if the government could have a stronger way of budgeting and perhaps had more realistic budget expectations rather than having to come in here, year on year, asking for a very large amount of money that is required to keep the state running. As I said, we will not do anything that will impinge on the ability of the state to do just that. We will do what is necessary to ensure that the state's finances stay on track.

The annual Treasurer's advance limit, as we know, is automatically set by section 29(1) of the Financial Management Act, and that is set at three per cent of the amount appropriated in the previous financial year, which, on this occasion, was \$977.5 million. Nearly \$1 billion of leeway was already built into the budget, but now we know that even more will be required so that the state can continue to meet its expenditure expectations until the end of the 2023 budget period.

Looking at the breakdown of the funding contained within the now \$3 billion-plus sought, we know that some money already has been expended. I think at the time the opposition was being briefed, around about \$709 million had already been expended between the midyear review and the date on which the briefing took place. We have not been provided with any details of those expenditures, so it will be good to tease some of that out during consideration in detail. I remember that last year—the Treasurer is now in the chamber—we had quite an interesting discussion throughout consideration in detail. The Treasurer provided a detailed list of the expenditures before we went into consideration in detail so that we could go through them line by line. We will be seeking to do that in consideration in detail this time around.

More generally, as I said, the Treasurer pointed out the need for further expenditure because of the Kimberley floods. The government expects to spend the \$500 million in the contingency fund, but how can it possibly spend that money in the few months left in this financial year? Given that we are not that far from the end of the financial year—roughly three and a half months—in reality, how much of that \$500 million will hit the ground?

I note that householders in the affected areas of the Kimberley have been given a \$1 000 emergency payment to make good on some of the losses of their personal effects. Given the limited amount of shopping and retail opportunities in the Kimberley, it is good that a cashless debit card system, more or less, has been used to provide that money so that it will be used for its intended purpose. I wonder whether the government has considered how best to fully ensure that those families have furniture, household goods et cetera going forward, once their houses are repaired, because a good amount of the housing stock in Fitzroy Crossing is social housing. I am supposing that a number of householders are not insured. It is not normally the case that the government stands in the place of an insurer—it is a moral hazard to help people who have not taken the opportunity to take out insurance—but given the circumstances in Fitzroy Crossing, what is the government's attitude towards that? It is a unique situation and the approach that is taken needs to look at the goods needed by the families who live in the area, how they can best be provided and who should be responsible for that provision. We need to work through those questions because people in Fitzroy Crossing already have low morale given the two to three months they have been living in temporary accommodation and been cut off from each other. We need an understanding of how the government intends to rectify the situation in that unique circumstance. Some of the \$500 million that has been set aside will no doubt be spent on infrastructure, such as repairing the bridge across the Fitzroy River, which is very much a necessary expenditure. I do not know whether any of that money will be spent before the end of June. Of course, other emergency road repairs are needed elsewhere. All this highlights the need for a stronger road network through the north of the state to ensure that not just one road services the Kimberley. Last week, people in East Kimberley experienced a lack of food supplies after they were cut off from the Northern Territory because of flooding on Victoria Highway. With flooding on the west and the east, the people in those areas had no access to fresh produce, which highlights the fact that, in the long term, we need to ensure that the infrastructure that leads into and out of the Kimberley is reinforced and that there are more ways of getting in and out.

The government has a number of issues on its plate that need to be addressed, and the need for money to allow that to occur is quite obvious. Over the last six years, this government has had the opportunity to put in place measures that would have led to better outcomes in health and housing, which are experiencing pressures at the moment. We know that we do not have enough housing stock in the metropolitan area and our regional communities; indeed, housing stock is at an all-time low and rental availability is scarce. The government's provision of social housing has been problematic; in fact, we have seen reports of people who have been left homeless. We understand the need for strong tenancy arrangements in social housing but, at the same time, the reality is that the government needs to provide shelter for those who are affected. This has placed further pressure on the government because instead of dealing with people who might have been problematic tenants, it now has to deal with people who are homeless.

The Minister for Homelessness has frequently outlined in this place the challenges he faces in finding accommodation for people who are homeless. I wonder how that will affect the Treasurer's advance going forward and what housing measures will be addressed.

In most circumstances, the seeking of authority for so much extra money would lead to a lot of questions, and a lot of questions will be asked throughout consideration in detail. I will not detain the house much longer because other members, such as the member for Cottesloe, want to contribute to the second reading debate on the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill 2023. I understand that there is an imperative to pass the bill today. As I said, the opposition will not in any way be obstructive and will ensure that the finances of the state are carried forward. Opposition members may have some criticism about the need for some of the money, but they will not do anything to hold up the supply of money because the reputation of Western Australia as a reliable, steady and dependable state needs to be maintained. We will add to that by ensuring that the flow of money continues in the next few months in the lead-up to the next budget. Of course, we look forward to the Treasurer handing down the next budget in the house in May, which is not a long way ahead, to see how the government will address the health and housing situations, as well as the situation in the Kimberley and recovery efforts in Northampton, in my electorate, Kalbarri, in the member for North West Central's electorate, and other communities that are still feeling the effects of cyclone Seroja, which was almost two years ago. Indeed, when the budget is handed down in May, it will have been more than two years ago. Many people in the areas affected by cyclone Seroja are homeless and either living in caravans or borrowed accommodation. My hope is that they have a speedy return to normality in the coming year and that there are measures in the budget to make sure that people in the Kimberley are able to return to life as normal as quickly as possible.

With that, I will wind up and allow other members to have their say.

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe) [10.19 am]: I will not hold up the member for long as I have only a brief contribution to make on the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill 2023. As has already been indicated by the Leader of the Opposition, the opposition supports this bill. I think it has always been the case, in the history of this Parliament, that oppositions have not attempted to stand in the way of appropriation bills. I must say that when I first saw the quantum of this, it was a little eye-watering—a \$3.1 billion Treasurer's advance. However, as pointed out to me by my colleague in the other place the shadow Treasurer, Hon Dr Steve Thomas, the government had flagged the great majority of this expenditure in the midyear review—some \$1.8 billion was itemised in the midyear review, including an additional \$463 million for public service wage increases following the negotiations the government had with those unions. This will not really increase the size of the budget; largely, it will just bring expenditure that was in the budget before this place for approval. There are some significant components, including \$289 million for road construction. I imagine that with all the destruction in the Kimberley in particular, that money will be chewed up pretty promptly. There is also \$200 million for community housing and \$357 million for various grants, including realisation of the COVID grants. I note that the COVID grants have taken a very long time to be put in place. I think this is an opportunity for us to look collectively at how we can get the money from these various grant schemes to recipients quickly, because I suspect that for a lot of people, that money comes too late. I appreciate that the government needs to undertake due diligence and be prudent when dealing with public money, but it also seems to take a long time to get money to the people who require it after a crisis. The amount being sought is obviously well beyond the three per cent automatic extension that applies under the Financial Management Act, which is around \$1 billion. It is significantly more than that. I am told that whilst this has become a regular occurrence, historically it did not happen regularly every year.

One point I want to make about this is that there is a general challenge for both sides in government to recognise that dollars are not a proxy for action. I do not intend to repeat all my comments from my contribution to the debate on health failings yesterday, but I see it reported a lot that something is being done because dollars have been allocated, but what we do not see on the ground is sufficient, timely action. One area of the identified additional expenditure that I will highlight is the \$200 million for community housing. We are still in a situation in which the social housing that the government sold at the start of its term—I appreciate the government's argument that it is part of renewal—has not been replaced six years in. It is the execution of that work that has definitely been a problem, but what I also never see in this place is anything about efficiency. I come from an industrial background and was president of the Kwinana Industries Council for six years. During that time, nearly every business on the Kwinana strip reduced its workforce by about 30 per cent and significantly tightened its belt in terms of expenditure; however, every one of those businesses increased their output while doing that. I do not see the equivalent in government—that is, everything seems to be cost-plus. More money is allocated and more money is spent, but we do not see the equivalent efficiencies coming in. I do not mean the old AI Dunlap—"Chainsaw AI"—way of coming in and just chopping people and budgets because I think that is a really agricultural and destructive way to work; what I mean is that we need to work cooperatively with a whole-of-government facilitated program and with the unions and the workforce to identify waste in government and reduce government expenditure. We focus a lot in this place on dollars allocated. The government can blame the opposition as well, because we come in here and say that the government is not spending enough money on X and Y, but I think we need a parallel discussion about what the whole of government is doing to enable a more efficient spend of money and be careful that expenditure does not cause problems.

My last substantive point is about the first home buyer scheme. Pump priming went on at both a federal and state level, based on solicitations from the building industry—I understand that—in terms of pouring money into first home buyers, but we have ended up, as I predicted at the time, with a disastrous outcome. We brought a whole heap of young people into the market on a false belief that the absolutely historic low interest rates would persist forever. That was clearly nonsense. The average interest rate since Federation has been 7.5 per cent. I know that a number of people sitting in this room, like me, paid 17 per cent interest not so long ago. Those young people were enticed into the market by very substantial federal government subsidies—that was my side of politics—topped up by significant state government grants as well. Many of those people would never have entered the market of their own volition. As a consequence of the grants, we saw an immediate jump in the value of new house and land packages above the combined total of the two grants, so young people were actually paying more for houses; they were not making a saving based on the prices before those schemes were introduced. Then we had the disastrous situation of an industry that was utterly unable to cope, not just because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but also because it had real problems with labour and the like. We now have a situation around Perth in which thousands of blocks of land have a cement slab on them—the property developer has got their money because that is regarded as substantial commencement—but young people are still going to be waiting another two years or more to get a house. Of course, there are going to be some implications from that, perhaps even for government in terms of insurance. My plea, if you like, is that although we focus on budgets in this place, it would also be good to have a focus on what we are doing to improve the efficient use of government money. This is not just a problem for the other side; I reflect that this has been a problem for both sides as we have tended to allocate more and more money but we have not necessarily fixed problems. Otherwise, I commend the bill to the house.

MR M.J. FOLKARD (Burns Beach) [10.27 am]: I rise to discuss the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill 2023, which is about the continuation of budget supply. Before I go into it, I have to say that we are so lucky here in WA. I keep pinching myself. We are getting it right. I noticed that the national unemployment figures were announced this morning and we are still under four per cent. I think we are still at 3.5 per cent. I suggest that those figures could be influenced by one company alone, with Fortescue Metals Group laying off 2 000 employees. That will affect our unemployment figures.

I am going to do a bit of a comparison. Over Christmas, I did a lap of Australia. We put 12 000 kays on the clock. We went from WA through to New South Wales and up through the central coast. I will start off with the drive coming out of WA. We get our infrastructure right; there is no other way of saying it! Our freeways, Roe Highway, the interconnector of Tonkin Highway and moving out onto Great Eastern Highway—we get that right. We do not have the transport malaise that they have over in New South Wales. We were able to leave our residence and drive down the freeway onto Roe Highway, out onto Tonkin Highway and up onto Great Eastern Highway with virtually no traffic whatsoever. We should be commended on that. I think our infrastructure is second to none—certainly not second to any regional or major city in Australia—because we invest in our infrastructure.

I am quite unique as a metropolitan member because I tend to drive everywhere in the regions. When there is the opportunity to fly to seminars or the like in Karratha, Geraldton, Albany or Kalgoorlie, I drive; I do not fly, and there is a reason for that. It is because I can get a sense of what is going on in regional WA. At Christmas, when we did the drive across Australia, we got to listen to and get a feel for what is going on across the country, because we got to see the country. It might be the cleanliness of a small country town or the state of the roads. I must commend the Minister for Transport on how well we do our roads. On the run out to Kalgoorlie, an extra metre has been added on both sides of the carriageway and there are rumble strips to alert people when they drift too far to the left or right. Our overtaking lanes are set at decent distances apart; they are not too far apart. There are some roadworks underway close to Coolgardie, and that is all about continuing the improvement of our road infrastructure.

Also, our roads are flat. Members might ask: what? When we were driving in New South Wales and heading to Port Macquarie, we went through a place called Laurieton. We were driving to Maitland, following a road train. Over there they govern road trains to 80 kilometres an hour, whereas over here in Western Australia our road trains are governed to 100 kilometres an hour. New South Wales road trains are governed to such a slow pace because of the condition of New South Wales roads. Some of them that are called major highways are no better than dirt tracks. I take into account the recent heavy rains and all that, which accounts for potholes et cetera, but we were following a road train over undulating highways. By that, I do not mean that vehicles rock left and right as they drive along; the vehicles go up and down on the roads because the roads are not flat. One would have thought that one of the major freeways would be flat, but it is not. The condition of the roads in New South Wales is criminal, so why is it not investing in that space? I do not know.

We can be very proud of the infrastructure we have here in Western Australia. The roads were that bad around Maitland that we blew a tyre. We were following a road train that was jumping two to three feet across the road because of the state of the road and we blew one of our tyres. We pulled off the road and managed to change it. I have to commend a young fellow who is a prison guard at a local prison there who stopped and gave us a hand changing the tyre. He was a nice fellow and I have not forgotten that. I have written to him and wished him well. He wants to become a policeman, so good luck with that in New South Wales! I said we have plenty of jobs over here for him, so why not stick his hand up over here? He said he would think about it!

Anyway, we got to Port Macquarie and surprised my mother, which was the whole intent of our trip, and that was fantastic. We spent a few days there. In Laurieton, there is a major lookout to the south of the town. It overlooks the estuaries and the ocean, and it is a beautiful view; no question about it. However, the lookout was an absolutely abysmal piece of infrastructure that had not been maintained; its timbers had dry rot. There were two structures that were claimed to be lookouts, and the second structure was overgrown to the point that it was more of a tree walk than a lookout; it was completely overgrown and was disgusting. Compare that with the Kalbarri Skywalk. I have to say that that is a world-class piece of infrastructure in Kalbarri National Park. I say to Mike Paxman, the head ranger up there: mate, you have got it right. There are two skywalks where visitors can look out over the national park and the gorges, and they are spectacular. The walks have little explanation plaques and there is a coffee shop and quality toilets. It is something we can be proud of. In comparison, what they have over east is a joke.

I go back to what I said earlier: we are getting it right. The Minister for Transport has reinvested in bringing road maintenance crew employees back into government employment, including the crews based out of Narrogin and Norseman. The state of our roads and the cleanliness of our pullover spots across the whole of Western Australia is something to be proud of. To give an example, we drove up the Pacific Highway in New South Wales, and one particular pullover rest area had been signposted for about 50 kilometres. When we pulled over into it, there were five permanent toilets there. To their credit, they had installed about four blocks of six transportable toilets because it was a holiday period, but when we got there, every one of them was blocked and overflowing, and the place stank like a sewage farm. There was toilet paper strewn about for hundreds of yards either way. It was not only me who thought this was a disgusting lack of maintenance; I watched a hire car pull in containing people from either China, Japan or Korea. They pulled in, all the doors opened and everyone walked over to the toilets. They were so disgusted that they walked straight back, got back in their car and drove off. I thought, “Really? That’s something to be proud of, New South Wales?” We were disgusted, and we saw that right through New South Wales. The facilities were terrible compared with our facilities over here.

When we drove from Coolgardie through to Eucla, we did not see a single piece of roadkill on any of the roads. I must commend the road cleaners, and I hope the Minister for Transport hears this: they are doing a fantastic job. There is no roadkill; it has all been removed. One can see where the animals have been hit by a vehicle, and they are immediately collected and removed from the road. Our rest areas are clean, the bins are maintained and the toilets look like they have been cleaned. They are all long-drops out there, but I would suggest that they are being sanitised regularly. That is not the case in New South Wales.

We continued on up through Queensland to Roma. We drove through a couple of the areas that were recently flooded, and we could see the despair in those communities. We saw the high-water marks, and I hope they have a brighter future than what we saw. Roma looked reasonable. We went out to Longreach and got to see the Qantas Founders Museum—a spectacular place. If we could do something similar over here in Western Australia, I would encourage that. We saw the 747s and the Catalinas they used to fly on the empire route. I recommend it; it is definitely worth seeing.

We then continued on to Mt Isa. Our drive between Mt Isa and Tennant Creek was an interesting exercise. We did 12 river crossings on that small stretch of highway. I have to say that we were never the lead car. I was a bit lazy. I would always follow the big, flash four-wheel drives or the trucks rather than be the lead vehicle so that if there was any difficulty in front of us, they would find it rather than us. The road between Mt Isa and Tennant Creek is an interesting piece of infrastructure. It made me reflect on our difficulties with the flooding in the north west of this state. In 2023, it is about time we had an all-weather road around Australia. We need it. We have invested about half a billion dollars into sealing the Great Central Road, which goes through the centre of Australia and Uluru, Docker River and Warakurna. I have driven that road. The sealing of that road is a must. In this day and age, we need to lift our game and have a national all-weather transport route. We need to have that conversation. I am certain that we would do our bit. The problem is whether the other states would follow. I can tell members that I seriously doubt the chances of it being sealed the moment it hits South Australia through to Docker River and out to Uluru. Some of our interstate colleagues are not willing to invest in that type of infrastructure. South Australia is a perfect example, with the recent national highway on its side of the border being cut off and the rail infrastructure washed out. We need to do better. These are issues of sovereignty. If COVID has taught us anything, it is that we need to address these issues. They are national issues, but as a state we should be doing our bit.

I can rave about our transport infrastructure in WA. However, I have to say that we need to do a bit of work on our Western Australian entry statement, because the “WA” has fallen off the sign. I am not sure whether that is the responsibility of the Minister for Transport or the Minister for Tourism, but I have given both of them a bit of an ear up on that.

In saying this, we also need to be wary of what our eastern states colleagues are contemplating with our fair share of the GST. I have talked to people at a local level, and they still cannot understand why we kept our border closed. I said it was so that they could have food on their table. I said that had we not done what we did during COVID, this country’s economy would have imploded to the point that we would be in absolute strife compared with where we are now. My friends and my family on the east coast, particularly those with more far-right views, do not get that.

They do not get that the reason they are able to enjoy their standard of living is because of how we were protecting the Western Australian resources sector. They think we are just being greedy and do not want to share our GST. They think we closed the border to give everyone, pardon my language, the shits. That is not true. We did it to save and protect our community. We were so well led during COVID that it scares people on the other side of the country. We need to be very wary of those buggers trying to have a crack at our GST. We have worked hard for it. We absolutely believe in equalisation, but if the GST floor were to fall below 70¢ in the dollar, I suggest we would be duded yet again. The people on the east coast will not open up their resources. That is why they are in the position they are. That is why their power bills are going up by 25 per cent annually. I have an aunty who is a pensioner and lives in Tweed Heads. If she has to pay an extra 25 per cent on her power bill, it will smash her. Those bills keep coming, but those buggers do not understand. They do not care about people who are vulnerable. We need to be mindful of that.

Acting Speaker, may I have a small extension of time, please?

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms M.M. Quirk): So long as you keep away from the toilet discussion, that would be fine.

Mr M.J. FOLKARD: For you I will, Acting Speaker.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr M.J. FOLKARD: I went to Wagin Woolorama on the weekend. That was an interesting exercise. It was good to listen to our regional colleagues, and, more importantly, the punters out there—the stakeholders. They gave me a couple of gems that I took away with me. Child care is still a problem in regional Western Australia. I would have thought that since my time working there as a police officer maybe we would be doing things better, but no. There is still a lot of work to do.

Another problem that cropped up is the ability to find effective tradesmen. I am building a home at the moment, and I must give a shout-out to Shelford Quality Homes, and Russell, my building coordinator. That is a very good builder and I hold it in high regard. In regional Western Australia, it is difficult to find good tradesmen who are willing to work the long and hard hours five or six days a week. There is an absolute lack of quality tradesmen out there. That is a challenge that we face as a community and we need to address it.

I witnessed some very poor behaviour at Woolorama by the colleagues of some of our Liberal members. It is a shame they are not in the chamber now to listen to this. One of them came up to me and abused me, and I took it on. I actually enjoyed it. I will not say what I think about him, but it starts with an “i” and ends with a “t”. I will leave it at that. A couple of us were standing in the Labor Party booth and they had a crack at us about how we dealt with COVID. One of them was whingeing about how we should have opened up the state, and I asked him, “Do you enjoy your job?”, and he said, yes, and I said, “If we had opened up the state, you probably would not have that job now.” He did not accept that argument, and I did not accept his either. Someone also had a crack at us about the firearms reforms that we are making and asked why he could not have a 50-calibre firearm. I asked him what he was using it for and he said to shoot camels. I said, “Mate, I was a police officer in Wagin. I don’t think a camel would have been seen anywhere in Wagin in the last 25 years unless it was lost.” The need to use a .50 calibre firearm to destroy camels is a nonsense. That is a highly overpowered calibre firearm. Farmers do not need it. The agricultural sector does not need it. If there was a need for such a firearm, there is currently the ability to do that.

Another person had a crack at us about our demersal fishing bans. He agreed that we need to preserve our fisheries stock. I said it should have been done 10 years ago, and he said no. I said if it had been done 10 years ago, we would not need the demersal fishing restrictions that we have now. I commend the Minister for Fisheries for the stance that he is taking to protect our fish stocks for the future. This gentleman did not accept the fact that we have lines on a map that tell people where they can and cannot fish. He agreed that we need to protect our fish stocks, but when I asked him how he thought we should do that, he did not have an answer. Typical. People like him would rather whinge about problems than be a producer.

The last thing I would like to do before I go on any more about our trip is recognise a couple of the volunteers in my community, particularly those on the P&C boards of my schools. I would first like to recognise Dale Beaton, the new principal at Kinross College. Dale will be presiding over that school that has students through to year 12. It has taken me four years of lobbying for that to occur at that high school; it finished at year 10. Now, after this year the next lot of year 10 students will progress to year 11 and the following year to year 12. I would also like to thank the P&C: Patrick Mallows, president; Theresa Harris, secretary; Emma O’Leary, treasurer; and, finally Geoffrey Marchant, executive committee member. Without the support of those individuals, this change to Kinross College would never have occurred. I thank them for their efforts and for keeping me on my toes to make sure it occurred.

The next person I would like to thank is the principal at Kinross Primary School, Therese Gorton. She has arguably one of the nicest primary schools in my electorate. Not to say the others are poor, but—I cannot remember the gardener’s name—their school is beautiful. It is clean and well maintained, and all the toys are up to scratch. We invested in a sustainable garden at the school to teach the kids about growing vegetables. We invested \$50 000 to

make sure that happened. I have seen the results in the produce. They have had pumpkins the size of basketballs, they have had zucchinis and they have had a feed of corn come out of it. It is all used to teach young kids how a garden grows. For their fantastic support of Therese and the school community at large, I would like to thank the P&C of that school and its executive committee: Emma Oliver; Muriel Davies; the stalwart of the school Margaret Patullo—I hope I have pronounced that properly, Margaret, you will shoot me later!—Wendy Pinion-Jones; Angela Little; Serena Lacase-Hitie; Michelle Murnane; Ai Shin Cruz and Rachael Oliver.

From Somerly Primary School, I would also like to thank Zoe Stenhouse, who is currently on maternity leave—I have seen her lovely baby and I wish her well—and, more importantly, Louise Carroll, who is acting in her place. Members may not be aware that two years ago the school was flooded and it lost all the furniture in the library. We were able to find \$5 000 to replace the library furniture damaged during that flood. Zoe and Louise are a brilliant team that runs and leads that school, and they need to be recognised. I would also like to recognise P&C president Kylie Rudd, vice-president Rose Manson, secretary Kris Watkins and, finally, the most important lady, the money lady, the equivalent of our Premier, Tanya Viandante. I hope I pronounced that right, Tanya! These are the people who support Louise and Zoe in the running of Somerly Primary School.

The next school I would like to recognise is Clarkson Primary School, with its new principal, Sarah Chaloner. Sarah gets it. I do not have to say anything more about her values in leadership. She has a fantastic team that supports her, including her associate principal, Lloyd Morris, and more importantly, P&C chair Heather White, secretary Jade Morrison and treasurer George Woolston. George is a lovely fellow. Without their support, Sarah would not be able to get on and achieve what she will achieve this year and, I have no doubt, in the years to come.

The last school I would like to speak about is Quinns Rock Primary School. It is one of the oldest schools in my electorate. It dates from when Quinns Rock was basically a small hub. I do not want to call it a town site because there never was a town site there, but it is one of the oldest schools.

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

Mr M.J. FOLKARD: Fishing might be a way to put it! It was like that. You could camp on the beach back in its early days. This was the original primary school. The old principal retired last year and the school has been run by Nigel Rogan, and Nigel is lovely fellow, very passionate, and we will help him go forward. More importantly, I would like to recognise Helen Nolan, president of the P&C; Gillian Walters, treasurer; Ingrid Ryan, canteen manager; and committee members Julia Gavan and Michelle Wynhorst.

Without those volunteers, schools would struggle to be productive. We have our budgets, but that is not what makes a school. The school is a community, and without the volunteers in that community it is hard for them to grow or, more importantly, to create an environment in which the kids can achieve. Our government supports that environment. I have to say we set the standards in that space. Nothing more needs to be said. I thank members and I commend the bill to the house.

MR S.A. MILLMAN (Mount Lawley — Parliamentary Secretary) [10.55 am]: I rise to make a contribution on this important Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill 2023. While the Leader of the Opposition is here, I acknowledge the opposition's support for this bill. This is responsible legislating. Later in my contribution I will talk about responsible financial management, which we have not seen as much of from the Liberal Party and the Nationals WA, but as far as responsible legislating is concerned, I am pleased to see that the Leader of the Opposition and the opposition will support the bill.

The reason I stand to speak on this bill is that it gives me an opportunity to talk about the responsible economic and financial management of the McGowan Labor government, not just in this most recent term of Parliament since the 2021 election, but all the way back to 2017. We have seen responsible economic and financial management despite the onset of global headwinds and the economy experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic. It is responsible financial and economic management that has seen ratings agencies like Moody's and Standard and Poor's restore Western Australia's position, which has resulted in the government having a lower interest bill than it would have had if the ratings had remained where they were when we inherited the state's finances from the former Liberal-National government.

One of the reasons I can say we have had this strong and responsible financial management over the last six years of the McGowan government is that we have a cohesive and comprehensive philosophical underpinning. We believe in social democracy and a regulated market economy with a sensible role for the government through government trading enterprises and appropriate investments. I spoke about that earlier this week, on Tuesday, when we were talking about the government trading enterprises legislation. It was funny, as I was making that contribution, I was talking about the privations and problems of privatisation, and I referred to a couple of articles and speeches. I must have hit a raw nerve with the members for Cottesloe and Central Wheatbelt because the member Cottesloe criticised my contribution for being too left wing. He suggested that perhaps I would have been next up singing the *Internationale*. Meanwhile, the member the Central Wheatbelt criticised me for calling the National Party too right wing. For the member for Cottesloe, everyone must look left wing, and we can understand why an agrarian socialist would be up in arms about being labelled too right wing. This shows the paradox at the heart of the

Liberal–National alliance. It shows that it lacks a cohesive economic and philosophical underpinning that we in the Labor Party are blessed to have. It really shows the paradox at the heart of the alliance. It is, frankly, a coalition of confusion. It does not know what it stands for.

One thing that the coalition appreciates, recognises and understands is the incredible financial situation that this state finds itself in. Yesterday, at numerous points, not just once, the opposition praised the McGowan government for presiding over the most financially and economically successful state in the commonwealth. My handwritten notes say that the member for Cottesloe said “best performing economic state” to the Premier, not once but twice during question time. It was right for the opposition to praise the McGowan government for its financial management.

Mr R.S. Love: Was it the member for Cottesloe?

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: The member for Cottesloe said that. He said it at least —

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: What was that? I missed that. Anyway, it does not matter.

Ms H.M. Beazley interjected.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: Everybody else did, and it was the same during private members’ business later in the afternoon.

There are probably four contributing factors to the economic success of the McGowan government but more importantly to the economic success of Western Australia. We have been blessed by strong commodity prices. We have worked hard with rigorous fiscal discipline through our single budgeting process, and I think the member for Cockburn might have something to say about alternative budgeting processes. We had an outstanding COVID response led by the government and invested in by every citizen in Western Australia. The reason for our success in tackling COVID was that the community responded well to the integrity and credibility of the government. Because we worked collectively and because we worked as a community, we had the most outstanding COVID response, and I think that is also one of the interlinking factors that has helped put us in the strong financial position that we are in. The final contributing factor is the GST deal that the McGowan government secured in 2018. I will come back to the GST deal.

I want to talk about strong financial management because it was not a feature of the former Liberal–National government. I have a number of articles that I will refer to. The first one is from all the way back in 18 April 2012 by Courtney Trenwith. The article concerns commentary made by the then Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, to the then WA Treasurer, Christian Porter. It states —

The Prime Minister has criticised Treasurer Christian Porter for blaming the government’s public sector cuts on a smaller share of the Goods and Services Tax, saying his comments suggest he cannot handle the hard work of government.

Then Prime Minister Gillard said —

“What you have to do ... is get the work done, make the hard choices, recognise you’ve lost revenue and look to make savings.

In respect of the federal government, she said —

“We’ve done that ... since mid-2009.

“If the WA Treasurer ... isn’t capable of doing that hard work of government here in WA then he should hand the job over to someone who can.”

...

She also expanded on her comment yesterday that Premier Colin Barnett was a “boom time leader” and was not doing enough to evenly spread the mining wealth.

That was in 2012.

On 14 August 2016, an ABC News article by Richard Baines stated that Saul Eslake —

A leading independent economist believes Western Australia has been “bleating” over its GST share, ...

WA has long taken umbrage with the GST carve-up, but independent economist Saul Eslake is not sympathetic given the money the state made during the mining boom.

...

“While the system was working in its favour, while commodity prices were going up, Western Australia spent the lot, State Government spending per head of population rose by 5.9 per cent per annum.

“Now that Western Australia have in effect spent their lottery winnings, they now want to go back on the pension and get their income tax payments refunded at the expense of the rest of Australia.”

That is what Saul Eslake said in 2016.

I thank the member for Burns Beach for his comments about New South Wales. A state election is coming up in a couple of weeks in New South Wales and some of the problems it is beset with might be remedied by the election of a new Labor government. The problems in New South Wales the member for Burns Beach spoke about are a function of more than a decade of having a Liberal–National government. However, I will give Mr Perrottet his due for this. On 7 October 2021, a 9news.com.au article by Adam Vidler referred to Mr McGowan’s comments on social media. It states —

“If it wasn’t for the GST deal we fought so hard to secure, WA would get back barely 40 cents on the dollar this year, and even less in years to come,” Mr McGowan wrote.

“No other State has ever had its share drop to anywhere near the levels that WA has seen, but more importantly, none are worse off under the revised deal.

“I’m sick of the Sydney Liberals whinging about it. West Aussies shouldn’t have to pay for their budget mismanagement.”

In his first press conference after being elected Liberal leader on Tuesday, Mr Perrottet pledged to “fight” for NSW on GST.

He said it was crucial that the Federal Government not remove the no-worse-off clause.

Mr Perrottet said —

“This is about fighting for our state. (Mr McGowan) fights for his state, but my job is to represent the people of NSW —

I agree with Mr Perrottet —

“The reality is Western Australia got an incredibly generous deal from the Federal Government when it came to GST. It’s not Mark’s fault. It was actually a Liberal government in the middle of the mining boom that wasted all those mining royalties ...

That is the finding and the sentence that was delivered on the former Liberal–National government by its own counterpart in New South Wales. It wasted the mining boom. It wasted all those mining royalties.

All those comments were in the context of financial management. I turn to the GST deal. I am obliged to Hon Dan Caddy in the other place. I had a chat to him this morning about my proposed contribution to the debate on the Treasurer’s advance, and he reminded me of a contribution he made in a similar debate on GST negotiations on 27 October last year. It states —

In 1999, amid all of this, the federal coalition government guaranteed that no state would be worse off. However, the Labor opposition at the time, led by Hon Dr Geoff Gallop, highlighted during debates that the guarantee was based on the commonwealth’s assumptions. It did not care what we thought. On 19 October 1999, the then shadow Treasurer told members in the other place —

... Western Australia is vulnerable because it is still dependent on commonwealth calculations of how it is fairing. If there is a disagreement between the State and the Commonwealth over the amount of revenue the State has missed out on, we may find that the Commonwealth will pay up on the basis of its calculations rather than Western Australia’s calculations.

Hon Richard Court, Liberal Premier at the time, dismissed those concerns and relied on the federal government’s guarantee. It continues —

At that time, when this deal was entered into, WA made a \$2.5 billion net contribution to the Federation, the biggest contributor per capita by a long, long way, with over \$1 350 per capita. New South Wales was next at less than one-third of that. When members want to come in here —

The Legislative Council —

and talk about the GST and say, “Gee, it was a big problem but Scott Morrison fixed it”, they are absolutely rewriting history and ignoring the fact that the Liberal Party allowed the state to get into this position in the first place.

In 1999, it was a Liberal Party problem. John Howard and Richard Court did not act in the interests of Western Australia. The trouble was that ever since the GST deal was introduced, people said that it needed to be fixed. Mathias Cormann, Julie Bishop, Michaela Cash and Linda Reynolds—all these representatives, all operating in elevated positions in the federal Liberal Party cabinet, could not resolve the GST problem. Perhaps the worst offender is Christian Porter; perhaps he is the most guilty. Let us go back to 19 May 2011 when Hon Christian Porter was state Treasurer. He was preparing and delivering the 2011–12 state budget. I quote from his budget speech —

In preparing the 2011–12 State Budget, the Western Australian Government faced one immense structural challenge, and, in the face of that challenge, had to make a central and pivotal decision about the best approach now—for the future of our State’s economy.

The problem is the rapid and massive decline in Western Australia’s share of GST grants.

Spot the hazard; assess the risk; make the changes. Christian Porter spotted the hazard. He said that there was a massive decline in GST grants. The next heading in his second reading speech is “Declining GST Share”. It states —

The formula by which Western Australia’s share of GST grants is returned to us is neither simply understood nor transparent, and it now produces results that are largely inexplicable and wildly unfair.

...

Right now Mr Speaker, our best estimate is that in 2014–15, the final year of our forward estimates, Western Australia will receive back in GST grants only 33 per cent, or one-third of our population share.

When compared to what we would receive back if a 100 per cent population share were returned—this redistribution represents a loss in revenue of \$12.3 billion ...

He has spotted the hazard. He has assessed the risk. The loss would be \$12.3 billion. Then he said —

Critical Decision

...

First, we must not let the loss of \$12.3 billion bring our economy to a halt, rather:

- we must bring in successive surpluses; and
- we must find further savings in the budget.

...

Second, and at the same time, we must pursue the most important economic campaign in the State’s history—being the campaign to reform the GST system, and return to Western Australia a fair portion of the revenue that would otherwise be lost forever.

He said that we will fight for a return of our GST revenue. It continues —

... we reasonably anticipate is that in 2013–14 the CGC will have brought in a new GST system. We expect it will produce a floor of about 75 per cent of our population share of the GST. Therefore we expect extra revenue of \$1.8 billion in 2013–14 and \$2.5 billion in 2014–15.

That is what he said. He did not say how he would go about achieving this share of the GST revenue; he just said that the Commonwealth Grants Commission would make a decision, and, therefore, he can make all these assumptions about budgetary expenditure—which he then proceeded to do. Then, when the Commonwealth Grants Commission did not do what he wanted it to do, he started bleating about it. A media statement on 24 February 2012, “GST cut another slap in the face for WA”, states —

Treasurer Christian Porter has described the further cut in Western Australia’s GST share ... as a slap in the face for all Western Australians.

Subsequent to that, on 18 April 2012 Prime Minister Gillard said that if Mr Porter could not handle it, he should quit and get out. Mr Porter took the Prime Minister’s advice and pulled up stumps and resigned from the state Parliament, and so be it. He then said that he would run for federal Parliament to become the member for Pearce. In 2013 he was elected as the member for Pearce. In 2014 he became the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister. In 2015 he was made a minister. At the same time that Christian Porter was a member of the federal Parliament, a parliamentary secretary and a minister in the federal cabinet, Western Australia had a state Liberal government. From 2013 to 2016, Porter was a member in federal Parliament while we had a Liberal state government, but in 2017, the McGowan government was elected and in 2018 the GST deal was done and dusted. The problem is this: Christian Porter knew there was a problem and was trying to fix it but was hopelessly incompetent or he knew there was a problem and he was not trying to fix it. He was either incompetent or negligent. In 2017 it was reported —

Senior WA Minister Christian Porter has passed the buck on responsibility for WA’s woeful GST share —

Perhaps by 2017 he had woken up to the fact that he was not going to be able to fix it —

claiming the Commonwealth Grants Commission can’t be overruled despite the bureaucrats themselves insisting politicians called the shots.

This is despite the fact that he had said the Commonwealth Grants Commission back in 2011 would be the one to make the decision. He did not know what he was doing in 2011 and 2012 when he was the state Treasurer or he did not know what he was doing in 2017 when he could not deliver the GST deal as a federal minister.

On 7 July 2018, Mark Riley, state political reporter, made the point clearly in his article titled “Opinion: GST overhaul hands Christian Porter a huge win on two fronts”. It states —

First, it gives him a better chance of defending his seat of Pearce.

That was true in 2019. He won the seat of Pearce in 2019, not that it did him much good. It continues —

Neutralising the atomic issue of GST inequity means there is one less thing that could blast him out of his electorate as he stares down a changing demographic that naturally benefits his Labor opponent.

But there is another reason for Porter to feel the comfort of a reassuring wave of relief.

It was he as WA treasurer who made one particularly ill-advised decision that magnified the State's fiscal malaise—a decision that Federal Treasurer Scott Morrison's GST reboot now effectively corrects.

It was an act that implanted a massive miscalculation at the heart of the 2011–12 WA Budget, which has plagued each subsequent State economic statement.

...

His next prediction, though, was far from prudent and close to reckless.

In his ... Budget speech, he said: "What we reasonably anticipate is that ... the Commonwealth Grants Commission will have brought in a new GST system.

Mr Riley then states —

The grants commission didn't bring in a new system and there would be no floor. Indeed, Federal Parliament, including all Porter's coalition contemporaries, voted against one.

But his decision baked in a fatally flawed assumption that allowed the State to spend billions of dollars it was never going to see, inevitably racking up more crippling debt.

... "WA's experience has been an unprecedented outlier, exacerbated by earlier Budget decisions of the WA government."

...

The Productivity Commission then allowed respected economist Saul Eslake to be more direct, —

I quoted Mr Eslake earlier in my contribution —

quoting from his submission: "WA's present fiscal woes are the result not of a flawed system of distributing revenue from the GST among the States and Territories, but rather of its —

The WA Liberal government's —

inability to control its own spending."

With that, I return to the point I made at the start of my contribution. I thank the opposition for legislative responsibility, but I condemn it for fiscal irresponsibility and for a complete inability to manage the state's finances. The opposition still fails to understand this. We have seen fiscal discipline and the making of hard decisions to not only manage the state's finances, but also tackle the federal government to make sure we got a fair share of the GST. The Liberal Party seeks to perpetrate a fraud on the people of Western Australia. Its members say that they are responsible for delivering the GST deal. That is a lie. It was only the election of the McGowan Labor government that fixed a problem created by the Liberals, perpetuated by Christian Porter, and finally resolved by Mark McGowan and the WA Labor government. That is why I commend the government for its strong financial responsibility and its excellent financial management. I commend the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill 2023 to the house.

MR D.A.E. SCAIFE (Cockburn) [11.14 am]: It gives me great pleasure to speak on the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill 2023 this morning and it is always a pleasure to follow the member for Mount Lawley. My remarks will not be as wideranging as that of the member for Mount Lawley, but he has done a very good job of covering off on the recent history of the financial management of successive governments in this state. I certainly concur with his point that financial management under the former Barnett Liberal–National government left a lot to be desired. When this government took over management of the state's finances, it became very clear that those financials had been serially mismanaged by the previous government. We know that there are many reasons for that, some of which include some fairly questionable accounting practices when it comes to forecasting revenue, particularly from our iron ore industry. The previous government made assumptions that significant revenue would flow to the state based on an inaccurate and inflated iron ore price prediction. Because the iron ore price was significantly lower than the prediction, the revenue that underpinned spending in those budgets under the Liberal–National government was significantly lower than what had been used to justify some relatively high expenditure, so I endorse what the member for Mount Lawley said.

The other way in which the former government cooked the books was that it did not apply proper rigour to the budget process. We know from the *Special inquiry into government programs and projects: Final report*, otherwise known as the Langoulant report, that the former government had a practice of running the standard budget process, which involved submissions being put to the Expenditure Review Committee of cabinet for consideration that then received a final sign-off by cabinet and, ultimately, the budget papers were presented to Parliament and the appropriation bills were passed. But we also know that it had a shadow budget process. This was a process by which the National Party ran its own budget process with its own asks. We effectively had backbenchers and different members of the coalition holding each other to ransom over particular projects for which they wanted funding, and a commitment to quite expensive recurrent costs within the budget in addition to capital expenditure.

That had the effect of undermining the rigour needed for a proper budget process. It had the effect of blowing out the expenditure in a way that was simply not sustainable based on the realistic predictions of what the state's revenue would be.

One of the great strengths of this government is that it came in and restored an orderly budget process. There is no shadow budget process in this government; it is an orderly budget process. I know that the Premier; Treasurer and the Expenditure Review Committee keep a very firm hand on the state's finances. They have scrutinised everything that is presented to them. Everyone in this chamber knows that government agencies, proponents in the community, other stakeholders and members of this chamber themselves are always advocating for money to be spent on projects. I think it was Paul Keating who said, "Never get between a backbencher and a bucket of money." We all understand why that is, because we all want to do our job as representatives of our community to deliver for our community, but that can mean that if we let the budget process become uncontrolled and unsustainable, the budget very quickly gets away from the government and it ends up spending more than it can afford. That means that it has to borrow to cover those expenses.

I want to clarify that there are times when it is sensible for a government to borrow, and that is during times of economic crisis when there is perhaps a need to spend in order to support demand in the economy. We saw that during the global financial crisis and most recently throughout the COVID pandemic when state and federal governments engaged in spending programs in order to support demand in industries like the housing construction industry, and the federal government increased JobSeeker payments to stimulate demand in the economy and therefore protect jobs. In conjunction with those circumstances, periods of low interest rates can make it particularly attractive to borrow at those times when, obviously, the government is not saddled with the same repayments on its borrowings. There are times when the government can borrow at a lower rate and invest those borrowings in projects that are going to deliver a higher economic return to the state rather than the rate at which the government is repaying interest. That is a sensible economic calculation to make because it is essentially making investments that produce a dividend for the state.

The last 10 years, prior to the last 12 months, has been a period of historically low interest rates, which means that the borrowings did not saddle governments with the same responsibilities for interest repayments. The difficulty of borrowing at times when the interest rates are low is that inevitably interest rates go up again. When a government like the former Liberal–National government borrows large amounts of money during a period when interest rates are relatively low, the state's repayments obviously increase as the interest rates increase, as we have seen over the last 12 months. Fortunately for the state, this government was elected in 2017 and began the hard work of bringing the budget back under control and also paying down debt. The result of that is we have paid down a significant amount of debt, and that means that we are somewhat shielded from the effects of the higher interest rates that we are seeing at the moment. If debt had not been paid down by this government, we would be paying the higher interest rates that apply now on those significant borrowings that were made recklessly by the former Liberal–National government.

I want to note that the appropriations in the Treasurer's advance, for those members who might not know, need to be devoted towards extraordinary or unexpected costs that have accrued to the state since the budget was put together and appropriated. Members can find those amounts in the midyear economic review that is released by the government each year. In that midyear economic review, which I have read through, in relation to debt, we have actually committed to repaying an additional \$400 million of consolidated account borrowings. That builds on the \$1.2 billion repayment that was already factored into the budget. That is, effectively, a \$1.6 billion repayment that we have made on debt that was largely accrued by the recklessness of the former Barnett Liberal–National government. That has had the effect of saving the state an estimated \$241 million in interest payments. That is a significant saving. Just by paying down that debt, we have shielded ourselves from the full effects of the higher interest rates and have saved \$241 million that is not going to drag further on the government's bottom line. It also frees up money that, effectively, instead of being spent on interest repayments, can be spent on infrastructure and other capital works and put towards making the investments that we need to keep the Western Australian economy prosperous, moving forward.

As I have just explained, I was listening to the Leader of the Opposition's contribution earlier when he referred to the last time there had been debate in consideration in detail of the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill. He said that there had been the capacity to go through line items. I cannot be entirely sure what the Leader of the Opposition was referring to, but he may have been referring to the line items that are set out in appendix 4 of the *Government mid-year financial projections statement*. Those figures are published as part of the midyear economic review and essentially sketch out for anyone who wants to review those documents what those amounts —

Mr R.S. Love: Also, I was provided another additional list of extra expenditures, which I was also referring to.

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: That is what I was not sure about. I appreciate that clarification, Leader of the Opposition.

Just for members' general information, if they want to do a deep dive into where the extra amounts that are being appropriated will be spent, going through the midyear economic review is a really fascinating exercise because it gives members an overview of the additional challenges that the state might be rising to. One of those challenges,

obviously, has been the need to make sure that we are remunerating our public sector workforce. Of course, this government has been responsible in maintaining a wages policy that has kept control of the budget and repaired the budget during our previous term of government. But now, as we are entering a period of very challenging cost-of-living pressures, very significant rates of inflation and higher interest rates, this government has acknowledged that it is important to make sure that our public sector workforce is properly remunerated in the face of those challenges. I am particularly proud that this government has focused very much on making sure that when we are spending extra as part of the government's wages policy, that spending is going towards cost-of-living relief and it is also going towards our lowest paid workers in particular. That is really important because we know that it is our lowest paid workers—our education assistants and our cleaners—who are most feeling the pinch from the current cost-of-living situation. I just want to draw members' attention to that.

As members go through the midyear economic review, and particularly appendix 4, they will obviously find examples of when we have had to appropriate larger amounts than anticipated in the budget as a result of changes to the wages policy. In education, for example, an additional \$274.5 million is being put towards the registration of new industrial agreements for teachers and administrators, education assistants and government services employees. I suspect that came about because at least some of those industrial agreements included terms that provided that although they were settled before a change in wages policy, if there was a subsequent change in wages policy, the employees covered by those industrial agreements would receive the benefits of the change in the wages policy. As a result of a sensible, compassionate and well thought out change in the wages policy, additional payments need to flow to teachers, administrators and education assistants, and that is to be welcomed. Similarly, if we look at "Training and Workforce Development", we see that there is a total increase of \$24 million under the delivery of services, but that is primarily attributable to the new TAFE lecturers' industrial agreement, which is, again, based on the new wages policy. That amount is \$18.4 million. Members can see that of the \$24 million for the Department of Training and Workforce Development, \$18.4 million will essentially be put towards increases in wages and payments that are owing under industrial agreements. Essentially, 75 per cent of that increase will go towards covering the additional costs of changes to the wages policy and, as I said, the government has decided to bear those additional costs, having regard to our strong financial management, the positive economic outlook for the state and the need to make sure that it supports public sector workers and low-paid workers as we face rising costs of living.

There are other interesting bits in the *Government mid-year financial projections statement*. I encourage members to look at it, because it will draw their attention to other projects that the government is working on that were perhaps not anticipated at the time of the budget. One that caught my attention and that I find really interesting—it makes me want to do further research, which I have not been able to do—is the small amount of \$500 000 for the ChemCentre of WA. The review provides that that amount will be provided —

... for a project to test and implement a new forensic technique that will, among other benefits, allow human identification in cases where DNA is insufficient or has degraded.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: It is fascinating that the ChemCentre of Western Australia is working on a project to develop a new forensic technique that will essentially allow us to identify people, which will be particularly relevant in cases in which historical criminal offences have been committed. That was not anticipated at the time the budget papers were assembled so it is being provided for here.

As I alluded to with the changes in the wages policy, one of the other themes in the midyear review is the cost-of-living situation. We can see this taking shape in minor but important ways in the amounts that will be authorised under the Treasurer's advance over and above what was accounted for in the budget. For example, there is the need for an additional \$42 000 for the Bunbury Water Corporation. It is a small amount, but it needs to be provided to reflect higher than expected pensioner and senior concession claims for the year. Similarly, the Busselton Water Corporation will receive an additional \$12 000 to reflect higher than expected pensioner and senior concession claims for the year. I also note that the fairly significant amount of \$356.7 million is due to the carryover of higher than expected costs for the small business hardship grants program and other pandemic support packages.

I want to reflect on the support that the government provided during the pandemic, which it continues to provide, to people who faced hardship by virtue of rising costs of living or economic difficulties that were encountered during the COVID pandemic. One of the things I am proud of is that this government has embraced and improved hardship programs for government trading enterprises, such as the Water Corporation and the electricity corporation, because we know that some people are doing it tough and struggling to pay their bills. It is important that those people are not simply disconnected from essential services. Under the Liberal-National government, there was a practice of simply disconnecting households from essential services, such as electricity and water, when people were unable to pay their bills. Certainly when it came to office, the Labor government did a lot of work, especially in the area of water, and said, "We don't want to switch off people's water. We want to work with people to help them pay their bills. We want to offer concessions when we can and identify for people where they can access concessions." Some people are not aware that they can access a concession on their water bill when they have

a Seniors Card or a Pensioner Concession Card. The government also wants to work with people to come up with payment plans. I have heard the Minister for Energy refer to the hardship utility grant scheme for the agencies that he administers. He has put a lot of effort into making sure that that scheme is promoted and taken advantage of. It is really important to acknowledge that. Some of the spending is attributable to people taking greater advantage of concessions or other hardship schemes that this government provides, and that is to be welcomed because those hardship schemes are aimed at ensuring that people who are feeling the effects of the rising cost of living get the relief they need.

I note that there is also a sense in which members can see increases in prices affecting the government's bottom line. The government is not immune because it is a purchaser and consumer of many supplies and it is also affected by rising costs. Of the additional \$21 million in the midyear review that needs to be appropriated for Horizon Power, \$9 million reflects higher diesel prices. That is an example of how rising fuel costs, which have been driven by a range of factors, but substantially the Russian invasion of Ukraine, are affecting the government. The government has to appropriate a greater amount of money to make sure that it can pay for increased diesel costs.

There are a couple of other things in the midyear review that are worth pulling out. The member for Collie–Preston will be speaking about this so I do not want to steal her thunder, but it is worth noting the amount of \$60.5 million that is attributable to Synergy to primarily fund costs associated with feasibility studies on renewable wind generation and battery storage projects. The projects are significant because they are supporting the government's decarbonisation agenda. Western Australia is now, and over the next 10 years, transitioning its energy system. We are transitioning away from a reliance on fossil fuels such as coal and natural gas. They will continue to provide some of our power, particularly firming power within our electricity network but, increasingly, we will move away from those fuels, as all the world is, and to do that we need to diversify our energy sources. That means being able to take advantage of not just solar and wind, but also battery storage technology.

I was very fortunate to have the Premier; Treasurer in my electorate just a few weeks ago, and I would like to acknowledge him for that visit. One project that we had a look at was at Success Primary School, which was one of the first 10 schools to run a virtual power plant pilot project with Synergy. Basically, the solar panels on the roof of the school had been capturing solar energy, but when they produced more energy than was needed to run the school, that energy was potentially lost as it could not be used or fed back into the grid. The government, through Synergy, has developed a battery storage facility on the site so that any excess energy can be stored in the battery. It is a pilot project to see whether we can use large-scale pieces of government infrastructure like schools to capture energy and then eventually feed it back into not just the schools when it is needed, but also the wider community. It is a really exciting project. One thing that I am really excited about is that as the pilot progresses, there will be opportunities for students to learn about the technologies it uses. They will learn more about solar panels and battery technology, and they will also be taught by Synergy how to use the technology itself. They will see the software that is used to monitor the amount of energy generated by the solar panels and how much is being stored in the battery on site. I think that is really exciting because it combines the government's decarbonisation agenda with teaching our kids about renewable energy and the jobs of the future. It is a really great initiative of the state government. I again thank the Premier for visiting and looking at that particular facility and the school generally.

The battery is positioned on the far side of a car park. The Premier and I, to our amusement, saw why that is. There is a little badge on the battery that warns about battery fires. It is all being safely managed, but there was a sign that said something about the risk of exploding batteries. We hear stories of that happening when people are flying and they have lithium ion batteries with them. It had not occurred to me that that is something that we would have to take into account when we do these projects, but it is great to see that a government trading enterprise like Synergy is totally across how the technology works and has worked with the school so that everything is located in a way that will deliver the new service and pilot project safely.

I am getting towards the conclusion of my comments. I have obviously talked about the public sector wages policy, but I want to draw out one other thing that was mentioned in the midyear review—that is, the government's resources community investment initiative. I congratulate the Premier on negotiating that and bringing it to the table. It is a lot of hard work to get private enterprise to voluntarily—not through taxes or royalties—pay some extra dividend that can be used for the benefit of community infrastructure. The initiative I am referring to was announced in November last year. The state government has developed a platform for direct contribution to infrastructure and social projects by our significant resources companies. There has already been \$750 million committed to that initiative, which consists of \$250 million from Rio Tinto; \$250 million from BHP; \$100 million combined from Hancock Prospecting, Roy Hill and Atlas Iron; \$50 million from Woodside Energy; \$50 million from Chevron Australia; and \$50 million from Mineral Resources. The money committed to that initiative can now be used to support projects that have characteristics of being in addition to business-as-usual operations of government, of state or regional significance, or unique and innovative, and will improve social and cultural outcomes for this state. That is another great thing in the midyear review.

MS J.L. HANNS (Collie–Preston — Parliamentary Secretary) [11.44 am]: I rise to make a contribution to the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill 2023. I would obviously like to cut out the bits that the members for Cockburn and Mount Lawley have already spoken about in terms of the amazing financial position that

Western Australia finds itself in, which is absolutely a product of the McGowan Labor government's incredible financial success and its management of the finances. That is in direct contrast to the position that we found ourselves in when the McGowan Labor government took over from the previous Barnett Liberal–National government in 2017.

The Treasurer requires an advance over and above the potential normal spending in this financial year for very good reasons. I note that it is certainly not unusual. In fact, it has happened every second year of this century. It is very important to acknowledge that part of the reason this advance is required, as the member for Cockburn alluded to and spoke about at length, is that it will enable us to look after our public sector workers, who have done some amazing work within that space over the last couple of years. As a former teacher and deputy principal, I am really pleased to see that teachers, school officers, cleaners and education assistants will all benefit from this decision, which has been made possible because of the strong financial management of our economy. It makes these things possible. I know that schools are very grateful for that. There are other public sector workers who have also either accepted those pay increases or are negotiating them. I absolutely thank all those public sector workers. As all members of Parliament know, our electorate office staff received the benefit of those pay increases as well. I want to say a huge thankyou to my staff, Natasha Putland and Kylie Pilsworth, who have done some incredible work for people in my community of Collie–Preston. They were very grateful and delighted to receive their pay increases. Premier, they thank you. Their message is: keep up the fantastic work!

It is really a result of the McGowan Labor government's strong economic management that we can invest in communities right across Western Australia in some very important focus areas for Labor governments—that is, education, health, housing and, in particular, creating jobs for Western Australians. I am really pleased to be able to talk about those things today. I would like to first reference the fact that I am the member for Collie–Preston and that my community is obviously in a period of transition. That is something that this government is absolutely committed to. As the local member, I am committed to supporting the community of Collie. Importantly, we understand that this will impact not just Collie itself, but also surrounding areas that are also part of my electorate. People drive to work in Collie. It is about doing the work to replace those jobs for people who both live and work within my town of Collie.

I would like to bring to the attention of the house the Premier's personal commitment to this process, and thank him for his continued support for the community of Collie. I want the chamber to understand how committed the Premier is to this process. The Premier distributed some heartfelt words to the whole of Western Australia, and I would like to echo those words today. A couple of weeks ago, the Premier made an announcement through his social media network. I know it is a core platform for this Labor government. The Premier stated —

For nearly 100 years, Collie has been supplying Western Australia with the energy and fuel it needed to grow into the strong economy it is today.

The McGowan Labor Government will not forget the contribution it has made to our past—and is committed to securing for the Collie community a bright and prosperous future. Through our Just Transition Plan, now sitting at over half a billion dollars, we're partnering with enterprise to build new industries, not just in tourism, but in manufacturing, minerals processing, clean energy and in heavy industry.

We're very proud of the work we're doing in the town to drive prosperity and create jobs for those in regional Western Australia.

I thank the Premier for those sentiments, as does my community.

I want to thank the Just Transition working group, which was formed in 2019 when the initial steps towards the Just Transition plan were being planned under the previous member for Collie–Preston, Hon Mick Murray. I want to highlight that that process is a community-led process. It is supported very well by the McGowan Labor government, but it is actually the community and the people sitting around that table who are driving that process. I understand that the Just Transition plan is a world-first transition plan for a whole community. I thank the working group for the work it has done and the work it continues to do on behalf of the community.

We recently held the Collie Labour Day Festival over the Labour Day long weekend. Minister Punch attended that; we joked that we allowed him a passport to Collie, because there is a difference between people who live in Collie and outside of Collie. However, he reminded me that he actually attended Collie Senior High School, so we have agreed that that is perfectly acceptable! He was there in his role as Minister for Regional Development to announce some small grants that form part of the commitment that the McGowan Labor government has made to Collie. They are grants of up to \$100 000 to assist local businesses to expand their current operations, to encourage new businesses to open, and to support cultural and community organisations to promote Collie and create jobs in the area. That investment of \$100 000 may not create hundreds and hundreds of jobs, but every little job that those opportunities can create is incredibly important to the total package that this Labor government is delivering.

The minister announced the latest recipients of grants under the Collie Futures small grants program. A number of people sit on the Collie Futures economic advisory group, of which I am the chair. That group looks at the grant assessments provided by government officers. They make recommendations to our group, and if our group supports a recommendation, it goes to the minister for final sign-off and approval. The oversight of the administration of those funds is a very rigorous process.

There were three grant recipients announced at the Collie Labour Day Festival. One was for the development of ecotourism at Minninup Pool in Collie; the second was support for the Collie Art Gallery and the Collie Art Prize, and I will talk a little more about that in a moment; and the third was for Gibson Country Style Jerky—a new business that has been established in Collie.

ABC South West covered the announcement of those grants, and Minister Punch was quoted as saying how wonderful it was for the Collie community, which it absolutely is. But I was very interested to see that Hon Dr Steve Thomas from the other place was also quoted as calling for more scrutiny and strategy about the effectiveness of the money being spent in Collie. The article states —

“The government is incredibly optimistic about the number of jobs it is going to be able to provide,” he said
 “The government’s focused on tourism but that’s not necessarily going to provide jobs for those exiting the mining industry.”

I will speak to all three of those points today. Hon Dr Steve Thomas was quoted in the same media coverage of the announcement of the three small grant recipients, so he is actually criticising those three recipients and previous recipients of that funding. He is also criticising the Collie Futures economic advisory group, which makes grant recommendations to the minister. The economic advisory group consists of a number of community leaders in Collie. They are chosen to assess and make recommendations on those small grants. I would like to personally thank Michelle Smith, who is the representative of the Shire of Collie—thank you for the work you have done. I thank Phil Rabjones, who is a local business owner. He is also a transitioning worker, and he sits on that group. Thank you also to Narelle Michalak, who is the local Bendigo Bank manager; Ijah Coyle, who used to work at Collie Senior High School and now works with the Stephen Michael Foundation and is an amazing proud Indigenous man from Collie; and Paul Sweeney, who is a local business owner and previous recipient of the Collie Futures small grants program. I am the chair. Hon Dr Steve Thomas is actually criticising those people and the decisions they make, and I think that is appalling. I have some great news for Dr Thomas, and I will be sure to pass his comments on to that group so that they are very aware of his thoughts about our processes of scrutiny and strategy.

I highlight the fact that we are creating jobs for not only blue-collar workers, but also everyone in the Collie community, and I will step members through that support. Hon Dr Steve Thomas’s criticism provides me with an opportunity to outline to this house exactly what the McGowan government is doing to support the community of Collie and to create jobs.

I talked about the range of funding available and the fact that the Collie Art Prize received some money under the small grants program, as did Gibson Country Style Jerky. A previous recipient of funding is the Collie Cycle Club, which organised the Collie Labour Day Festival.

The Collie Art Gallery received support from the small grants process in order to run the Collie Art Prize, which is a \$50 000 prize—one of the richest regional art prizes in Australia. It brings together a huge wealth of talented local artists, and a record number of Western Australian artists entered this year’s competition. A Western Australian artist took out the Collie Art Prize this year, and I believe she is a Fremantle constituent of Minister McGurk. Jo Darvall won the Collie Art Prize with her painting *Boranup Forest Light*. That painting is incredible; I walked in and thought, “That’s clearly the winner”, and there were some pretty amazing artworks in the prize competition. It is really interesting that Hon Dr Steve Thomas took the opportunity to criticise those announcements—one of which was the Collie Art Prize—when he actually co-sponsored the Collie Packer’s Prize at the art gallery that evening, and that \$1 000 prize went to another artist. On one hand, Hon Dr Steve Thomas is complaining about the money that the state government is giving to the Collie Art Gallery to run its art prize, but on the other hand, he is sponsoring it. I am not quite sure about that; it does not make sense to me. Anyway, I am a proud supporter of the Collie Art Gallery. I contributed on the night and, obviously, the McGowan government has also contributed through these projects.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas suggested that the government is not creating jobs for people exiting the mining industry. What Hon Dr Steve Thomas does not realise is that a member of the Gibson family, of Gibson Country Style Jerky, exited Muja power station last year, so he is a transitioning worker. This grant was awarded to Gibson Country Style Jerky in order to create new opportunities and new jobs for him and his family. Michelle, the owner of Gibson Country Style Jerky, is exporting jerky right around Australia and has online orders that she cannot fulfil. The grant that she received will allow the jerky manufacturing to go to a commercial level and she will be able to service a much bigger clientele. When we were there for the official announcement of the funding, she had her family, who work within the business, and an additional worker with her as well. If that is not creating local jobs and assisting transitioning workers, I am not sure what is.

At this point, I would like to caution Hon Dr Steve Thomas about making glib comments and criticising the government, because he clearly does not know the community. He does not live there and he does not know the stories of the people. I get really frustrated when I see those criticisms about Collie from the other house and Hon Dr Steve Thomas, because we are doing fabulous work on behalf of transitioning workers.

The Collie Labour Day Festival was held over the Labour Day long weekend. The state government contributed money to that weekend through the Collie small grants program. Again, it supported not only the creation of new

jobs but also community organisations in Collie. By supporting those community organisations, we are supporting the local economy and creating jobs. I want to say a big thankyou to the state government for its support of the Collie Labour Day Festival and also the amazing sponsors from industry. I can tell members that over the long weekend, thousands of dollars were injected into the local Collie economy.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms J.L. HANNS: I was at the vintage car display, which had a whole range of vintage vehicles. I do not have time to go into the makes and models of all the amazing cars I saw, but suffice to say, over 700 people entered the gates of the show and shine. It was open for about four hours. The Swan Hill Motorcycle Club visited for the entire weekend and it was astounded at how amazing the vintage show and shine car display was. Hundreds of people entered the two-day mountain biking competition, taking advantage of the amazing trails that the McGowan government put into Collie, bringing with them family and friends. In excess of 3 000 people attended the markets on the Sunday of the long weekend. Going back to Hon Dr Steve Thomas's queries about how that grant will create jobs, I can tell him how that is creating jobs. Firstly, all the local hotels and accommodation were at capacity for that weekend—so much so that Collie Senior High School had to open up its school oval to allow people to camp on it. That was an incredible outcome for the community of Collie. Local restaurants were totally booked out and food trucks serviced people who were not able to book into the local restaurants. The local service station worker told me she was run off her feet and said to me, "We are busier than Christmas". The local people were so proud to showcase our community to the visitors who had come to Collie for the weekend. That is how that small grants program can assist my local community and the local economy. It comes back to the support that the McGowan Labor government has shown the community of Collie in its transition.

I have spoken a lot about the small grants fund, but larger funds are also available. Transitioning workers are absolutely targeted with those larger funds. In November last year, the Premier was in Collie to announce three projects that received funding from those larger funds. One was International Graphite, which opened its new Collie processing facility. Graphite is obviously a very important critical mineral to the future of battery production in Western Australia. There was a \$2 million investment to expand Quantum Filtration Medium's Collie manufacturing facility. I know that Minister Whitby could talk at length about Quantum Filtration Medium, having met some of its customers on his trip to Egypt; we will save that for another day. There was also a new investment of almost \$2 million for the next stage of Magnium Australia's proposed Collie magnesium refinery. All those three projects announced out of that funding are set to create more than 400 jobs in Collie. If that is not creating jobs for transitioning workers, I am not quite sure what the opposition expects us to do. That is before I mention that at the Premier's visit in November last year, we announced the opening of the new Collie industry transition fund, worth an additional \$200 million. Expressions of interest for large-scale manufacturing projects are now open. I understand that we have had a number of very significant inquiries from potential industries showing huge interest in that fund.

In showcasing those aspects of the funding that we have received under the Collie transition fund, I want to switch for a moment to the fact that we are not just worried about jobs for current workers within the Collie community; clearly, we are, as we have committed to that and put significant funds in. But I would also like to draw to the attention of the house the fact that we are also looking at creating jobs for young people who live and work in the area as well. Part of the initial stage of the larger funds was the creation of WesTrac's autonomous vehicle training centre. People from all over the state, particularly from Rio Tinto at this stage, are coming to train in autonomous vehicle operation. They then go back to the Pilbara and operate those vehicles remotely. Collie is the centre of training for that workforce, but WesTrac has also partnered with the Motivation Foundation, which is doing incredible work for young people in Western Australia. It has two sites where it runs training for young people—one in the Swan Valley and one in Collie. I am very pleased that in August last year, the McGowan government partnered with the Motivation Foundation and committed to three years' worth of support for the Motivation Foundation. It allocated \$300 000 to the foundation's Motivation Civil and Mining Academy, which supports young people entering apprenticeships in infrastructure, construction and the resource sector. Of the graduates of that program, 90 per cent have gained employment within six months of graduating from the Motivation Foundation project. That is an amazing success rate for young people. Particularly pleasing for me are some of the young people who I taught at the high school going on to further their education, really making a difference in preparing them for the workforce.

As part of the Motivation Foundation project, successful students undertake a cert II in civil construction and in resource and infrastructure work preparation, which are two key areas for Western Australia to develop a pipeline of workers for those future industries. They undertake national training and workplace operation experience one or two days a week, and, as I said, the program takes six months for the students to complete, with a 96 per cent employment rate after six months. Last year 175 young people were engaged by the Motivation Foundation across metropolitan and regional WA—as I said, one location is in the Swan Valley and one location is in Collie—and 28 per cent of those students were Indigenous and 22 per cent young women. That is an incredible opportunity being created for women and Indigenous people to take the step into the civil construction and resources and infrastructure sectors in Western Australia. I am really proud to see that this government is supporting workers right across the spectrum in my area of Collie and I thank this government for its continued commitment to my community.

That brings us back to the point that the economy is being managed very well. The McGowan Labor government has done outstandingly well since we took over in 2017. The record spend and fiscal responsibility demonstrated by this government means that we can do great things in our communities. I am incredibly proud to be part of the Premier's team in delivering the outcomes for my community in Collie and the wider Collie–Preston electorate, and I commend the bill to the house.

MS M.J. HAMMAT (Mirrabooka — Parliamentary Secretary) [12.10 pm]: I am also delighted to make a contribution to the second reading debate on the Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill 2023 because, as others before me have illustrated, there is a lot of great things that we can reflect on in talking on this bill. At the heart of it, the bill provides authorisation to advance funds so that the McGowan Labor government can continue to do the excellent work that we have been doing for some years.

Again, as speakers before me have commented, one of the great success stories of this government, the work of the Premier and the work of the cabinet, has been in restoring the good financial management of this state. It is really important to remember the dire mess that was left by the former Liberal–National government. Unbelievably, in a time of a resources boom, with record prices for iron ore, the previous government failed in the basics of good financial and budget management and left a significant debt to the people of Western Australia. One of the first tasks of this government on winning office in 2017 was to address that in a way that set the state up for having a sustainable and successful opportunity. Of course, history now tells us that that was a very good decision because the unforeseen, unanticipated pandemic that arrived in 2020 challenged the states in ways that we could not have possibly imagined, but it meant that Western Australia could go through that period and emerge out of it as one of the most successful states in Australia and one of the most successful places in the world. That, coupled with strong management of the health circumstances, is an incredible success story and, rightly, one that should be celebrated and that we are proud of. That is the big picture and a really important story that is important to remember.

I also find it really interesting talking to people day to day in my electorate. I spend quite a lot of time doorknocking to really appreciate and understand what is on everyday people's minds—what their concerns are and what is significant to them. They do not necessarily talk about the big picture, although they understand this was first-rate management of the pandemic, but the thing on their minds at the moment is the cost of living. Again, we have an incredible story to tell about the support we are providing everyday people to manage that. It is an important story about what this government has been able to achieve in managing the economy successfully and sharing that good management with everyday people so that their standard of living is improved. We have done that in a variety of ways by not only helping people meet the day-to-day cost of living, but also investing in the economy, skills and the future so that people can enjoy a better standard of living in the future.

I want to reflect on the energy credit because I get a lot of feedback about it in my electorate. There was \$400 provided for in the last budget and that was paid in June. It came on top of the first energy credit, which took effect from November 2020. Both these decisions were incredibly well received in my electorate. Perhaps that is not surprising, because of the high number of low income earners who live in the Mirrabooka electorate. They are incredibly grateful to have had that credit paid on their energy bills. It has allowed them to use money they would have otherwise spent on their bills for purchasing other things that are really important to their households. I still get an incredibly positive response to that initiative, and people will remember it for a long time because it was provided at a time of difficulty.

Similarly, the other thing I receive a lot of really positive feedback about is the free rapid antigen tests. The government program of having free RATs—COVID tests—in the community has been outstanding. It is easy to forget that this is not something other states have done. Our state has ensured that the community has had access to these tests. They are incredibly expensive for people who have to buy them. Again, perhaps it is no surprise that having access to free tests has been an incredible benefit for people in my community and their families. I still find that people are grateful for the supply of tests because they still need them and, as I say, they are incredibly expensive to buy. This government has ensured that our communities have them. It is good public health policy and practice to make sure that the community has the resources it needs to test for COVID, particularly during peak periods. It is an important initiative for making sure that families and individuals do not have to bear the cost burden of purchasing those tests.

Another really important initiative that I get a lot of positive feedback about is the seniors' safety and security rebate. This government is making up to \$400 available to people who have a Seniors Card to upgrade their security. A number of people in my electorate have taken advantage of that. I still find that it is something I talk to people about regularly. They are incredibly grateful for the opportunity to do what might be fairly minor upgrades around the house, but are important in making sure that seniors feel safe and secure in their homes. They can do that in a cost-effective way, so that is another incredibly well received thing in my community.

I also want to make mention of feedback I get about the positive initiative of the two-zone fare cap for people using public transport. The two-zone fare cap has not reduced the fares to get to the city for many people who live in the Mirrabooka electorate, but it means that they can move around the metropolitan area on public transport and travel more significant distances for no additional cost. Again, that has been incredibly well received. It makes sure

that people are able to access public transport. Many people in my electorate do not have ready access to vehicles. They do not necessarily have that opportunity if they are on lower incomes, so the cost of public transport can be important to them. These are great initiatives that have ensured that the benefits of the good financial management and discipline of this government have been shared more broadly with the community.

I will talk about a range of other things that are perhaps more targeted. These are concrete things that everyday people raise with me over and over again. They demonstrate that this government is not only listening to the concerns of everyday people, but also responding to them in a way that is making a real difference to them and their families day to day. These are all very positive initiatives, and, as I say, I get a lot of feedback all the time about them. They are very much on people's minds.

For that reason, in my comments today I want to provide feedback to the Premier; Treasurer about the really excellent initiatives that have underpinned the budget. We should celebrate the success of that excellent financial management and we should also recognise the great decisions that have gone into ensuring that we share the benefits of that good financial management in a way that benefits so many people in this great state. There has also been a range of other, more targeted, initiatives, and we have done other great things. Again, good financial management has allowed us to make those investments. As I said in my opening comments, a number of those investments were designed for the economy, which would set up a successful future for both the state and individuals.

I have talked a lot in this place about schools and education because I feel very strongly about them. In my community, our public schools are an important part of transforming the lives of everyday people. Access to a quality education will set up young people for an excellent future. Our investments in schools are something that I am proud of and passionate about supporting. One of the things I enjoy talking about is the performing arts centre that is being built at Balga Senior High School. This is a great project, and there is an enormous amount of excitement for it in not just the school community but also the broader community. An example of why this is such an important project is, as I talked about fairly recently, the success of the Proud Noongar Boys. It is a rap band from Balga Senior High School and has been supported through the Community Arts Network project, along with a well-known Western Australian rapper named Flewnt. His real name is Josh Eggington. They produced a song based on last year's NAIDOC theme, which they entered in the Triple J Unearthed High initiative. People might be familiar with it. It runs special categories for Indigenous students and high school students. The Balga Senior High School song won. It won national recognition for its great tune. It was produced in collaboration with and sung by students at Balga Senior High School. It was a really excellent result.

Last Friday, I was excited to attend the launch of another such collaboration. This time it involved Balga Senior High School, Sevenoaks Senior College in Cannington and the Kununurra PCYC. Again, they collaborated with the Community Arts Network to produce a hip-hop song called *Your Way*. I represented Minister for Education Buti at the launch of that song, which was held at the cinema complex in Innaloo. It had a red carpet and a media wall. A large number of kids from Balga Senior High School came because they had provided backup vocals and were in the video, and students from Sevenoaks Senior College also came. They had the best time. They were like real celebrities. Can I say, it is a great song. They performed it live. They also made an excellent video. I get really excited when I see the potential for what Balga Senior High School will be able to do with a performing arts centre because it is already achieving incredible success in collaborations and is going about performance in a way that keeps students engaged in high school. It is also cool, frankly. The students love to be involved in it. I think they are amazingly talented, and I am very proud of what is coming out of Balga Senior High School. The performing arts centre will be an important part of engaging students in schooling and helping them to achieve great success, regardless of who they are or where they come from. That opportunity is there when we invest in our schools.

On top of that, we have done some other great things in schools to address climate change issues and provide learning and teaching opportunities for students. Perhaps others have talked about great initiatives like the school battery program. The school battery program will teach students not only about climate change and renewable energy, but also to do something practical about the climate issue. In my electorate, North Balga Primary School, Rawlinson Primary School and Waddington Primary School have received funding to install solar panels. That has been a great initiative for those schools, and people are very excited about those kinds of investments. That is a really important initiative for providing not only teaching and learning opportunities, but also some real practical outcomes around climate. We know that we need to do a number of things and pull a number of levers if we are serious about addressing that issue.

We have also upgraded classrooms to science laboratories or STEM rooms, and I have talked a number of times about that. It is such an important project. As we see the science labs opening and students engaging in learning in them, we understand how important they are. They provide a different learning environment. Instead of a traditional classroom environment, STEM rooms have equipment and facilities and introduce experienced STEM subject teachers. They are creative learning spaces. A lot of students can engage with those subjects in a way that maybe they did not before. By changing the facilities, we provide new opportunities for students to engage in learning. We all understand how important those STEM subjects are to the future of our economy and how we need to do more to encourage people to take them up. We all understand that it is really important to get women and girls engaged in learning about STEM subjects because that will not only deliver benefits for the economy, but also start to address

issues associated with the gender pay gap. Having those facilities in our primary schools will help students engage and learn in a new way. Those STEM subjects are very important in igniting what I hope will be a lifelong passion for many of those students. This is an incredibly important program, and we will see the benefits of it play out over a long period. I am incredibly excited about seeing what will come as a result of that.

I want to mention this government's commitment to introducing free period products in schools and at TAFE. This is a really important initiative, and I have had a lot of positive feedback from my community of Mirrabooka. These are incredibly important products for girls essentially, and women as well now that we are introducing them to TAFE, and will ensure that they remain engaged at school and will not find themselves in a situation in which they cannot come to school or be part of the education system because they are managing their period and dealing with whatever complications around that. This is a really great initiative. I have had a lot of positive feedback about it, and I wanted to take this opportunity to report back here how well received that has been. I have no doubt that that initiative will continue to be a really important program to ensure that people remain engaged in our school and TAFE systems.

I promised to finish around 12.30 pm, so I have only a small amount of time left. I have one final thing that I want to include in my comments. I want to give the Leader of the Opposition time to talk as well.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms M.J. HAMMAT: I want to briefly talk about our TAFE system. While we are making incredible investments in our schools, which will set up our economy for the future and set up individuals to be able to access skilled jobs, we are doing the same thing with our TAFE system. It is really important to contrast the approach of this government with that of the former Liberal–National government, which basically gutted our TAFE system by jacking up course fees. In some cases, between 2013 and 2017, the fees were increased by up to 500 per cent. Unsurprisingly, as a result of that, enrolments fell by about 25 000 students. For a long time, our TAFE system has been a key feature in transitioning students from school into skilled work, giving them the skills they need to go into work and power the economy. The former government gutted it. Unsurprisingly, that has had consequences for workforce and skill supply in the years that came after it. This government has set about rebuilding it because it understands how important it is and that a skilled modern economy cannot be built unless there is investment into the institutions that are going to deliver those skills and that training, especially to our young people.

I think what is really important about TAFE is recognising and understanding that TAFE does not just train young people. It often provides support for people who are going back into the workforce after maybe a career break. This is often women because of their caring responsibilities for young children. However, sometimes it is because people are seeking a career change. We are doing a number of things with TAFE and I think they are all great. Part of them is keeping TAFE fees low and freezing them. Now, there is of course the partnership with the federal government to have fee-free TAFE places. Again, this has been incredibly well received in my community in Mirrabooka. This is making a real difference to the ability of people to be able to go to TAFE and get training in the skills that they need to get a job, in areas that we need people to work in the economy. It is a real win–win.

That initiative has been outstanding, and I think it provides a stark contrast between this government and the former government. We are doing a lot of other things as well. I was very fortunate in December to attend the sod turning for the Balga TAFE with the Premier. That is a very exciting project. It is a huge investment in my community of Mirrabooka. People are very excited to see that take place. It will deliver a first-class learning institution right in the heart of the Mirrabooka electorate. That will not benefit just the people who I represent. It will, of course, provide benefit more broadly to people around Western Australia, particularly as it provides training in some key industries that we need.

We are also doing things like providing finance to assist TAFEs to upgrade equipment to ensure that students are learning in relevant and modern environments as well. We are doing a number of things in TAFE. Time prevents me from elaborating on some of those, but they are very important. I think what that underlines is the point that I was making at the outset; that is, the good financial management of this government has seen us come through the really challenging times of the pandemic in a way that has meant that we are recognised as having the best health and economic outcomes of any state in this nation, and probably any state in the world. We have used that good management to provide a range of benefits to everyday people, things that people in the community talk to me about all the time. We are making important decisions to invest in the things that matter for the future. Those things will make a difference for people who want to access training and education and they will deliver what we need to grow the economy in the future. They will not grow the economy in just a narrow way. They will ensure that it is diversified so that it will be successful for generations to come. That is why this bill is an important part of that overall story. It is a great story. It is a significant success story of this government. I want to congratulate the Premier, all members of the cabinet and all the members of the government who have contributed to the story so far.

MR M. McGOWAN (Rockingham — Treasurer) [12.33 pm] — in reply: I thank members for their wideranging contributions on this bill, particularly the complimentary contributions by members of the government. I enjoyed listening to those. That was very kind. I thank members of the opposition for their contributions as well.

As I outlined before, the Treasurer's advance has happened within this century, in most years. In the majority of the years, a Treasurer's advance was required to deal with unexpected expenditure outside of what was budgeted for. Automatically, there is a three per cent appropriation under the Financial Management Act, which is automatically part of the Treasurer's advance. Under this year's budget, that equates to \$977.5 million. The Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill 2023 seeks to increase the limit by \$2.1 billion to \$3.1 billion. It provides the authority to meet higher funding requirements, but does not commit the state to any additional spending. Anything that is not spent simply lapses at the end of the financial year on 30 June.

To illustrate this point, the Treasurer's advance was increased by \$658 million in 2019–20. It was increased by \$689 million in 2020–21, and by \$1.5 billion in the last financial year. This year's Treasurer's advance was mostly outlined in the midyear review from 14 December last year, at whatever day it was brought down. It actually outlined what would be required under this year's Treasurer's advance. It was, essentially, largely detailed then. It particularly related to increases in the cost of infrastructure provision. This is simply something that is going on all over the world. Western Australia is not immune to it. In fact, our increases seem to me to be a lot less than some of the projects interstate. Secondly, there has been the resolution of some wage claims. As we know, a lot of enterprise bargaining agreements have been resolved. It deals with those. There has also been some Main Roads Western Australia spending, which relates to negotiations with the commonwealth over, I think, the road safety program. That meant that there was an additional spend on the state. There was then a buffer over \$542 million that was not allocated, but a large proportion of that will go towards the recovery from tropical cyclone Ellie. Anything that is not spent will remain in the Treasury. As stated later in this bill, the opportunity to spend that money under this arrangement will lapse on 30 June.

I thank members for their analysis of the state's finances. It is true, we have the strongest budget in Australia. We have the strongest surplus position—I think Queensland might be back in surplus, but we have been in surplus for a considerable period. We got the state back to surplus in 2018–19, after four years of deficit under the former government. Our plan is to stay in surplus. That allows us to have much better management of the state's finances. If we are in cash surplus as well, it allows us to pay down debt. We want to continue our good financial management and our good record of keeping interest payments as low as possible. I noticed just a moment ago that some other states' interest payments are now \$10 million per day. We are obviously not in that position.

The midyear review, in which most of this was outlined, has a \$35 billion infrastructure program supporting current and future generations of Western Australians. Our net debt is predicted to be relatively stable across forward estimates. Obviously, we budget very cautiously and conservatively. We do not put in heroic assumptions around the iron ore and mineral prices and spend accordingly, unlike the last government. Therefore, most of the risk is upside. That is a good position in which to be, rather than the alternative. Some people criticise surpluses. By definition, but means they would rather us be in deficit. There is really not any other alternative. It is one or the other. It is not like a government budgets and every dollar that it raises, it spends, and not a dollar more. It does not really work like that. A budget is either in surplus or in deficit. We would rather be in surplus. We are one of the only governments in Australia and one of the only subnational jurisdictions in the world, I think, to be in surplus.

We obviously received an upgrade to our credit rating last year by Standard and Poor's. I think it was in June. When we met with Standard and Poor's shortly beforehand in Sydney, we explained our processes. They took us back to the AAA. I think New South Wales might have it, which I find rather inexplicable. The commonwealth and Western Australian governments have AAA credit ratings. Obviously, Western Australia is in the best financial position of all the jurisdictions in Australia. Moody's Investors Service has lifted the outlook from Aa1, from stable to positive. I am hopeful that we will get back to Aaa there as well. Standard and Poor's has recognised our success in managing finances, but there are spends. As I said, there are EBA outcomes, increases in the cost of infrastructure and having to deal with cyclone, amongst others. There are some smaller ones as well that were not budgeted for that we need to take account of. For instance, one that springs to mind is our contribution to Telethon Kids Institute. That is what this bill is about and I thank members for their support.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

[Leave denied to proceed forthwith to third reading.]

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 and 2 put and passed.

Clause 3: Authorisation of expenditure to make certain payments or to make advances for certain purposes —

Mr R.S. LOVE: I just want to start with the high-level Treasurer's Advance Authorisation Bill summary sheet that was provided to the opposition that shows that the midyear review expected that a total of \$1.8485 billion would be required and that we are now forecast to draw down \$3.775 billion after this bill passes through Parliament, which I expect it will be. Could the Treasurer explain a couple of allocations to me, please? Can the Treasurer

explain the reason for the line “Main Roads repayable—advance for changed timing of commonwealth funding, \$107.2 million”? Can the Treasurer explain when that change was known to him, and when is that money expected to eventually flow into the state’s coffers?

Mr M. McGOWAN: Approval for \$107 million has been given in the event that funding is required by Main Roads to cover a temporary commonwealth funding shortfall for works to be undertaken as part of the 2022–23 regional road safety program—the one that Minister Saffioti came up with that the commonwealth adopted around Australia. The commonwealth has recently committed to providing this funding. The state may not receive this contribution before 30 June 2023. As such, the state-funded advance was approved in December 2022. The advance, which has not yet been drawn down by Main Roads but will likely be required in coming months, has provided Main Roads with short-term funding cash flow certainty for the regional road safety program and allowed works and associated payments to progress. Main Roads will repay the advance on receipt of the commonwealth payment.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Thank you. To be clear, Treasurer, is the expectation that the money will be forthcoming? Is there no risk that the money will not be forthcoming in the future?

Mr M. McGowan: The advice I have is yes.

Mr R.S. LOVE: If we could turn to the allocation of the buffer for unforeseen and emerging issues of \$542.1 million, I asked the Treasurer a question in Parliament about this and he indicated that most of that was for the recovery of the Kimberley cyclone. Can the Treasurer give me any detail about how that might be expended, given that it is only three months and a bit until the end of the period covered by this advance? How does the Treasurer expect to see that magnitude of funding or expense actually incurred in that short time? What planning is there for the expenditure of that money?

Mr M. McGOWAN: The member is correct. He asked me about that in question time. This is for unforeseen expenditure that was not included in the midyear review. Most of it was included in the midyear review back in December, as the member knows, but ex-tropical cyclone Ellie happened in early January. The costs include the Kimberley freight scheme. As the member knows, we are doing a subsidy arrangement for Kimberley businesses. That is around \$42 million. The emergency works on roads and barges and the stuff around Willare and Fitzroy Crossing is around \$80 million. The recovery task force operations are around \$13.4 million. At this point in time, the payments to households that had damaged items are \$1 000 each. The further flood recovery package is \$6 million. The contribution to the Lord Mayor’s Distress Relief Fund is \$3 million. It also provides financial relief for water and power, and we expect that there will be further costs for that. The cost of cyclone Ellie is hard to know at this point in time, but it is going to be very, very expensive, as the member would understand. The remainder is there in particular if there are any further pressures in the health budget. We have put a lot of money into health, and that continues to happen in order to meet demand.

Mr R.S. LOVE: In regard to the Kimberley flood recovery situation, how much of that money, if any, is actually being supplied through commonwealth arrangements? Is there any expectation that some of that money will be returned if it is not being covered at the moment by commonwealth allocations under the disaster recovery funding arrangements?

Mr M. McGOWAN: I am advised that we fund it up-front and then the commonwealth reimburses us, in due course. That may be a while away. It is subject to lots of negotiation under the DRFA. That reimbursement happens subsequently, so some of this money may well be paid back—up to either 50 per cent, depending on the program, or up to 75 per cent, depending upon the negotiations.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I thank the Treasurer. Can the Treasurer confirm that those figures have not yet been arrived at? Has an allocation not been agreed on at the moment?

Mr M. McGOWAN: It is still under negotiation. I think this is standard practice for disasters here and in Queensland, and for the fires in New South Wales and Victoria. It is under negotiation and will be resolved in due course. It depends on the actual costs. We allocate money, but the actual costs are yet to be determined because a lot of it—the road and bridge repairs and the costs to households and house rebuilds and the payments to families and so forth—is indeterminate at this point in time.

Mr R.S. LOVE: The midyear review contains an explanation of the debt position that is expected with changes in the midyear review. Can the Treasurer advise the house what this extra Treasurer’s advance authorisation will mean for the final debt figure come 30 June?

Mr M. McGOWAN: In terms of the midyear review, everything contained in the Treasurer’s advance is already accounted for, except for the \$542 million added for unexpected contingencies and expenses. As the member can see, a lot of that \$542 million will be spent on matters relating to cyclone Ellie and whatever else that was not taken into account in the debt figures contained in the midyear review.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 1123.]

LIVE EXPORT — FEDERAL GOVERNMENT POLICY*Statement by Member for Central Wheatbelt*

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt) [12.50 pm]: I rise to support the thousands of people and hundreds of businesses and livelihoods that are linked to the live sheep export industry, and to express my deep anger and concern about, and opposition to, the federal Labor government's decision to shut it down. I stand by those farmers, truck drivers, shipping companies, livestock agents, veterinarians, port workers, shearers, feedlot businesses and all involved in the sector. No legitimate industry should ever be closed for political reasons or to suit activist agendas. Although the industry has faced challenges, it has undertaken significant reforms that have seen best practice animal welfare outcomes achieved on an international scale. The trade employs about 3 500 people along the supply chain, with 80 per cent of those based here in Western Australia, many in my electorate of Central Wheatbelt.

Labor's decision is devastating. It is driven by the desire to appease animal activists and capture inner-city votes. The Albanese Labor government is no friend of Western Australia, nor is the McGowan state government. I have never seen a less enthusiastic, muted and defeatist attitude than that shown by Minister Jackie Jarvis and Premier McGowan when it comes to standing up for Western Australians on this issue. If they truly supported the industry, they would be on the front foot every day railing against this decision. Instead, they shrug their shoulders and relinquish this important industry to a political hatchet job by their own party and Prime Minister. The industry and its leaders should demand more of the state's Minister for Agriculture and Food and Western Australia should punish the Albanese government at the next election. Labor is no friend of regional Western Australia.

ROSTRATA FAMILY CENTRE AND HERALD AVENUE SENIOR CITIZENS CENTRE*Statement by Member for Riverton*

DR J. KRISHNAN (Riverton — Parliamentary Secretary) [12.52 pm]: I rise to speak today about two successful and very useful community organisations in my electorate. The first one is the Rostrata Family Centre, which is effectively run by the leadership of Michelle Laffrey, chairperson; Dianne Graves, manager; and Megan Grant, admin officer. The community centre is run by volunteers. Close to 1 000 community members use the facility, including many seniors and those accessing the child health centre. At this juncture, I take the opportunity to thank the former Minister for Community Services Minister McGurk who approved funding of \$200 000 to complete an extension of the centre to accommodate more people using the facility.

The second community centre in my electorate that is very successful is the Herald Avenue Senior Citizens Centre. Its leadership comprises Monika Wong, president; Barbara Hislop, vice-president; Harry Lee, treasurer; and Sue Hubbard, secretary. This is another successful centre at which seniors gain benefit by keeping themselves active, healthy and engaged in the community.

AUSTRALIA DAY–INDIAN REPUBLIC DAY JOINT CELEBRATION*Statement by Member for Cottesloe*

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe) [12.54 pm]: Earlier this year, I had the great pleasure of gathering with members and families from the Federation of Indian Associations of Western Australia in celebration of not one but two national holidays of great significance, being a joint Australia Day and Indian Republic Day celebration held at the Serbian Community Centre in Maddington on Australia Day. With both Australia and India growing closer by the day, I feel it is very fitting that these two national celebrations fall on exactly the same date. This coincidence also provides us with a valuable opportunity to explore and recognise the deep ties that unite Australia and India. These ties are not confined to high-minded international politics; they also exist at a deeper and more meaningful community level—a level exemplified by the Federation of Indian Associations of Western Australia and this very event. There is often a focus on international trade, but it is the connection of people that is most important. I also take this opportunity to specifically mention the great work that the chair, Mr Eipe Chundamannil, and all members of the Federation of Indian Associations of Western Australia do to bridge our two cultures. It was an absolute pleasure to attend this important dual celebration and spend time with people from not only the Indian community, but also the wider Perth community.

CHIN NATIONAL DAY*Statement by Member for Mirrabooka*

MS M.J. HAMMAT (Mirrabooka — Parliamentary Secretary) [12.55 pm]: In February, I attended the celebration of the seventy-fifth Chin National Day. The Chin people originate from Chin State in Myanmar, and many people from this community live in my electorate of Mirrabooka. Chin National Day is one of the most important dates on their calendar. It is celebrated all around the world with speeches, performances and food. This year, the Perth celebrations also included the first ever Chin Idol singing competition.

Although Chin National Day is a day of celebration, for the past two years it has been marred by the terrible circumstances facing the people of Myanmar. As a result of the military coup in February 2021, more than a million people have been displaced and tens of thousands of people have fled the country. Many have also died

from the resulting conflict. Our local Chin, Karen and Kachin people have been deeply distressed as they have seen family and friends who still live in Myanmar experience great hardship and suffering. At Chin National Day, community members were extremely pleased by the news from Premier McGowan that the Labor government will provide \$500 000 towards the humanitarian aid effort in Myanmar to support the Chin people, and also the Karen and Kachin people, who have been so brutally affected. Chin, Karen and Kachin community members have asked that I pass on their great thanks to the Premier and all members of the Labor government. I would also like to thank community leaders, especially Jimmy Langle, Renny Mang and Ram Tin Thei, for all their work and advocacy on this important issue.

MT BURDETT FOUNDATION

Statement by Member for Roe

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [12.57 pm]: On Thursday, 2 March, I was invited to, and had the pleasure of attending, Mt Burdett Foundation's celebration event at Esperance Bay Yacht Club. Mt Burdett Foundation was founded in 2019 by Esperance farmer Chris Reichstein, ahead of his subsequent passing in 2021. Chris's insatiable passion for agriculture and thirst for knowledge to improve and sustain outputs, along with his philanthropic goals, brought Mt Burdett Foundation to reality. Mt Burdett Foundation operates courtesy of a long list of volunteers, originating with founding board directors David Falconer and William Ryan. Mt Burdett Farm continues to operate under the guidance of an advisory committee comprising eminent local agriculture specialists Andrew Fowler, Greg Curnow, Ben Curtis, Chris Henderson, Luke Marquis and Chris's brother Ashley. Out of respect and appreciation for the Esperance community, the foundation established the Esperance Community Advisory Committee, the members of which include Megan McDowall, Peter Bednall, Shaun Meares, Kyron Smithson, Rebecca Seiner, Katie White and Lois Saunders. This eclectic group brings a vast range of expertise. A third volunteer committee, the Rural and Regional Advancement Committee, brings to the table high-calibre members Erin Gorter, Julianne Hill, Peter Roberts, Hon Terry Redman and Rob Cossart to support projects beyond the Esperance region. The foundation has provided over \$350 000 to community groups over the last three years. Mt Burdett Foundation is Chris's legacy to agriculture, a community he cherished and regional WA, in a state he thrived in.

FIFA WOMEN'S WORLD CUP UNITY PITCH

Statement by Member for Scarborough

MRS N. AUBREY (Scarborough) [12.58 pm]: Scarborough was recently the home of the FIFA Women's World Cup Unity Pitch. Hosted in our iconic amphitheatre overlooking the Indian Ocean, it was a unique opportunity for the state to see why Scarborough is Perth's premier beachside destination and for Scarborough to show the country and the world why Western Australia is the dream state. Last Thursday, I watched proudly as my community turned out in force to celebrate and participate in the Unity Pitch—participation I hope to see at the Aussies later this month, another significant event Tourism WA is bringing to Scarborough. In the words of Perth Glory player Tash Rigby, "You can't be what you can't see." The Unity Pitch and FIFA Women's World Cup was an amazing opportunity to inspire our young girls and women to play sports. This was especially true with the Unity Pitch being in place on International Women's Day. Scarborough is a community that understands the importance of this. Many of my local clubs are committed to ensuring that they support greater diversity and inclusion. I am committed to working with them as part of the McGowan Labor government to establish Scarborough as a stronghold for diverse participation in sport and recreation so that everyone in our community can benefit from the proven social, mental and physical wellbeing benefits that sport and recreation brings to us, our community and our state. I thank Minister for Tourism Roger Cook, Kirsten Drower, Tessa Marshall and their teams at Tourism WA. I also thank Minister for Sport and Recreation David Templeman, Matt Hayes, Erin Veerhuis, Clint Klymovich and their teams at the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries. Thank you for bringing the Unity Pitch to Scarborough and the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023 to WA, the dream state.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 to 2.00 pm

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY CHAMBER — LIGHTING

Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [2.00 pm]: I have a couple of statements, one of which may or may not be necessary. The first is that there may be a problem with the lighting in the chamber. Building Services has apparently been working on our lighting. It looks okay to me for the time being.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS — HON MARK MONAGHAN AND PENNY HART

Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [2.00 pm]: Members, I would like to welcome today to the Speaker's gallery visitors from the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory, Hon Mark Monaghan, Speaker; and Mrs Penny Hart, Clerk Assistant Chamber and Serjeant at Arms. Welcome.

[Applause.]

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

SOUTH COAST MARINE PARK — CONSULTATION

134. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Minister for Environment:

I refer to the proposed south coast marine park and the McGowan government's refusal to release critical information, such as the socio-economic impact assessment, during the public consultation process. Does the community not deserve complete transparency on the details underpinning this proposal, given that two years ago the government claimed that this project hinged on genuine engagement?

Mr R.R. WHITBY replied:

Thank you for the question, member. I want to remark that this is the first question from the opposition to the environment minister in well over a year, so thank you for finally recognising the environment. It is yet to be revealed how long before members opposite discover climate change and ask me a question on that issue as well!

We conduct a thorough and very inclusive process whenever we look at expanding or introducing national parks or marine parks. There is a process underway. It is a process that has occurred before in Western Australia. There is consultation with all community groups through the community reference committee. There is consultation with industry bodies. In fact, I know that Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions officials have been reaching out to commercial fishers and recreational fishers. Commercial fishers obviously have an interest in terms of their livelihood. We appreciate the significance of that and we want to work with those companies. We have sought one-on-one meetings. As a government, we have gone out of our way through the DBCA to have one-on-one meetings. In fact, having that information from the fishing companies and professional fishers helps inform the shape of the sanctuary areas and the areas that we need to keep open for the extraction of fishing. It is a very consultative process. It is a very open process. I think, Minister for Fisheries, there is a meeting coming up very soon. In terms of the next step, indicative maps have been provided. That is a process that is now happening.

To suggest that somehow there is a secretiveness or a lack of inclusivity in the process is just a ridiculous assumption. This government goes out of its way to consult and include all sectors of the community, including environmental interests and members of the public. It is an established process that has been very successful. We believe we are achieving a wonderful thing. The creation of this new marine park will see well over a million hectares of the marine environment protected for future Western Australians. It will also mean that areas will be available for recreational fishing and commercial fishing. Importantly, there will be areas that traditional owners will be able to practise cultural activities on. This is crucial. It is all about including the community together and getting the right result. Member, this is significant. This is going to be around for the future. It is transformational. It is a good thing to do. I would like to see the opposition support our efforts in what is an inclusive process.

SOUTH COAST MARINE PARK — CONSULTATION

135. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Minister for Environment:

I have a supplementary question. That is what I am suggesting. What does the government have to hide, because surely it is in everyone's best interests to access all relevant information when making their public submissions?

Mr R.R. WHITBY replied:

There is a process that has been around for a long, long time. It has resulted in other marine parks being formed. There will be an open process. There is an open process. The parties to the process are engaged; they are part of it. The fishers are part of it. The recfishers are part of it. It is open and transparent. It is a process that will deliver a great outcome.

Visitors — Barry and Helen Rowe

The SPEAKER: On behalf of the member for Belmont, I would also like to acknowledge Mr Barry Rowe and Mrs Helen Rowe in my Speaker's gallery.

STATE ECONOMY — INDUSTRY SENTIMENT

136. Ms E.J. KELSBIE to the Premier:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to responsible financial management and its cautious approach to the risks of a global recession.

- (1) Can the Premier outline to the house how Western Australia's strong economic and budgetary position has been received by industry groups?
- (2) Can the Premier advise the house on the importance of sustained fiscal responsibility?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I thank the member for the question.

- (1)–(2) I was pleased to see that the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia released its biannual report on the Western Australian economy the other day. It was compelling reading because once again it showed how well Western Australia is doing and it vindicated the efforts of this government to diversify, strengthen and attract investment into Western Australia.

The chief economist, Aaron Morey, said —

... Western Australia's economic fundamentals remain as solid as ever.

“Our domestic economy is now 12 per cent bigger than it was pre-COVID ...

...

“Business investment growth of 4 per cent this financial year will underwrite the economy ...

“It comes in the form of large projects ...

And so on. It indicated a very glowing assessment of the Western Australian economy from our good friends at the CCIWA. That also follows on from ratings agencies S&P Global and Moody's glowingly appraising the state's economic management. CommSec said that Western Australia continues to lead on relative economic growth. The Deloitte Access Economics assessment shows that housing in Perth is more affordable and wages are better than anywhere else in Australia. They are all glowing endorsements of the government's economic management and the fact that we got the state back on track, certainly in a financial sense.

The CCI put out various statements about the last government in 2016. Back then, its statement about the last Liberal–National government was that the then government's spending was unsustainable in creating historically high levels of debt. We went from that assessment by the CCI to the assessment that we have received. Obviously, Western Australia now is the strongest state in Australia, both economically and fiscally.

I was also pleased to see that when federal Treasurer Jim Chalmers was asked about the GST arrangements when he was in WA the other day, he said —

“This is a deal that we are committed to ...

He also said —

“What's not under consideration, what's not up for review, is the GST floor here in Western Australia,” ... “We've said that on countless occasions.

That is what the federal Treasurer said. The outlook is rosy. We just need to stay the course and make sure that Western Australia continues to lead the nation, both economically and fiscally. Under this government, that is what will happen.

CYCLONE SEROJA — RECOVERY

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

I refer to the lagging recovery from tropical cyclone Seroja after two years of failure under this McGowan Labor government. Is it acceptable that after two years, midwest families still have homes without roofs and that the site of a promised workers' accommodation complex in Kalbarri remains a scrubby vacant lot?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

Cyclone Seroja was a devastating event. I cannot remember the exact date of the cyclone, but it was more than a year ago. It was a difficult event for the community of Kalbarri. Obviously, a lot of damage was done. I visited the community; I saw it all in person. A lot of damage was done that was debilitating for many households and businesses. Much public infrastructure was damaged as well. In the period since then, an enormous recovery effort has been put in place by all government agencies, with lots of volunteers and by the coordination of the private sector. Both Ministers for Emergency Services—the member for Baldvis and current Minister Dawson—put enormous efforts into the Seroja recovery and the recovery efforts in the Kimberley more recently.

It is difficult to just build a new house overnight. It takes time to do these things. From memory, the government spent around \$50 million on the recovery effort in Kalbarri. I have seen some reports that we spent \$4 million. They are wrong. About \$50 million of infrastructure, grants and so forth have been rolled out to support the community of Kalbarri in the recovery effort. It does take time. I urge people to be understanding about it. I urge members not to politicise it. A lot of people have worked on this, and they have done a terrific job in a very difficult situation. Also, with so much construction and building activity underway with existing contracts, it is difficult to do all the work that is required because so much work is going on. That is the reality we face in Western Australia. We are doing our best. Our population is growing. We have the strongest population growth in Australia. We are doing everything we can to secure workers from interstate and overseas. We are supporting our building industry. We are running a strong economy. We are doing everything we can to get all these things done as quickly as we can. We constantly want to see the community of Kalbarri and the Kimberley recover as quickly as possible.

CYCLONE SEROJA — RECOVERY

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

I have a supplementary question. Will the Premier promise that the workers' accommodation in Kalbarri will be delivered; and, if so, when will that occur?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

The member probably should have given me some notice of this question on something as specific as that. I may then have been able to give him a better answer. I can assure him that an enormous amount of work has been done and is being done in Kalbarri. Government agencies pulled everything out to help and assist with the recovery from the cyclone in Kalbarri.

LIQUOR RESTRICTIONS — CARNARVON

139. Mrs R.M.J. CLARKE to the Minister for Racing and Gaming:

I refer to the inquiry launched into the potential liquor restrictions for Carnarvon by the director of Liquor Licensing.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house what the inquiry has identified?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house how the community has responded to the proposal?

Mr R.R. WHITBY replied:

I thank the member for Murray–Wellington for the question and her concern about the impact of alcohol on communities across Western Australia.

- (1)–(2) I can confirm to the house that we are very much aware of the issues around Carnarvon. It has been discussed in this place previously. We know about the impact of alcohol abuse on that community. We know that Carnarvon is a unique regional town in that it has not had any serious alcohol restrictions. Unlike towns in the Kimberley, the Pilbara and the goldfields, it is not subject to section 64 restrictions in relation to takeaway alcohol or the banned drinkers register. It officially got its liquor accord only earlier this year. The member for North West Central appears to doubt that.

The application to be formally registered was processed only on 31 January this year after receiving the application 20 days before. When the department got an application for a liquor accord in Carnarvon to be formally recognised, it happened within 20 days. If we want to count working days, it is probably closer to two weeks. It was a very efficient turnaround. Even with that liquor accord, it did nothing. It was very frustrating for the members of that liquor accord, who included the police; community members; members of the Aboriginal community; and the chair, Eddie Smith, the shire president, who literally tore his hair out in frustration trying to get something done for that community but for the division amongst licensees.

Last night, I was made aware that the director of Liquor Licensing had initiated an inquiry into the extent of alcohol-related harm in Carnarvon. In my view, she had no choice, without local action. I commend and congratulate her for finally taking action. Just as locals have been telling us, the director of Liquor Licensing inquiry concluded that alcohol is a major contributor to crime, social and health issues in Carnarvon. As such, the director is proposing section 64 restrictions on the supply and sale of packaged liquor. Her proposals include prohibited alcohol sales on Sunday and Monday. No takeaway alcohol sales on Sunday and Monday is the proposal coming from the director of Liquor Licensing. There is also a proposal to limit opening hours for alcohol sales to between 12 noon and 7.00 pm on the other days of the week. Tough new restrictions on the amount of liquor purchased per customer per day are proposed.

Something had to be done. We know that the liquor accord was in a position to take local action and get local advice, but no action came. Nothing was proposed. Nothing was agreed. The DLL had to step in.

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: People's lives were being ruined, member. People's lives are being ruined in Carnarvon. Kids are missing out on school. Parents are not there to look after those children. The statistics in Carnarvon are staggering.

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: If the member wants to listen for a moment, I will tell her what is happening in Carnarvon. If the local member is not concerned, we are as a government and we want this action.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please, members!

Mr R.R. WHITBY: We heard nothing—nada! Nothing from the liquor accord in Carnarvon—not a thing. Not one proposal came forward for accreditation or registration with the DLL.

Alcohol consumption per adult in Carnarvon is 2.4 times the overall WA rate based on population. Ambulance call-outs for alcohol-related trauma in Carnarvon are nine times higher on weekends when unrestricted liquor trade occurs. In 2022, alcohol-related crimes in Carnarvon were 16.2 times higher than the metropolitan average. The member of deaths attributed to alcohol —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please, members!

Mr R.R. WHITBY: We are taking action. The director of Liquor Licensing had to take action. The number of deaths attributed to alcohol in Carnarvon —

Point of Order

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Madam Speaker —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: This point of order will be heard in silence.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The minister is giving a very important report on arrangements around liquor in Carnarvon, and there have been constant interjections, including what I think was an inappropriate interjection from the member for Central Wheatbelt.

The SPEAKER: Just on that point of order, I note that those opposite did not ask the question. Normally, I would not entertain their interjections; it is only because some of the minister's comments have been directed at those opposite that I have allowed some leeway for interjection. This question has taken too long to answer so far, so I ask those opposite not to continue to interject, and I will ask the minister to draw his answer to a close.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr R.R. WHITBY: Thank you, Speaker. I think these numbers and statistics are important to hear. Let us hear them in silence.

The number of deaths attributed to alcohol in Carnarvon was 151 per cent higher than for the rest of WA between 2010 and 2019. With regard to takeaway alcohol purchases in Carnarvon, it represents a massive 85 per cent of all liquor sold in Carnarvon compared with the state average of 60 per cent. The director of Liquor Licensing has listened. The government has also listened. We are implementing the BDR in Carnarvon and Gascoyne Junction as soon as possible.

I am advised that the director has written to the 10 relevant licensees who sell takeaway liquor in Carnarvon to advise them about these changes. Licensees have until 5 April to respond to the director of Liquor Licensing about her proposal. I add that there is nothing to stop licensees from acting before then; they can take these restrictions and implement them today if they wish, and I hope they do. The director will make a final decision on restrictions once the licensee feedback period has closed. However, we are already hearing strong support for tougher alcohol restrictions in Carnarvon from the shire president, Eddie Smith, to the police, the health workers and the agencies that have to deal with the fallout of young kids wandering the streets because it is not safe to go home. Once again, I commend the director of Liquor Licensing for initiating this inquiry into alcohol consumption in Carnarvon and the impact it is having on that community.

WOMEN'S AND BABIES' HOSPITAL

140. Ms L. METTAM to the Premier:

I refer to the Premier's 2020 announcement that the new women's and babies' hospital will be fully funded and situated adjacent to Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital G block within the QEII Medical Centre. How is it that the government has managed to allocate only \$10.2 million for the new women's and babies' hospital over the past two years, with the project team tasked with business case development still discussing lighting, waste management and recycling options?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

The estimated cost for the women's and babies' hospital is around \$1.8 billion. We announced that plan in 2020, as the Leader of the Opposition said. Obviously in the time since then, we have had to do a lot of work. We have to do a business case, planning, and all sorts of analysis and assessment. The ordinary time frame between announcement of a new hospital and opening the hospital is 10 to 15 years. That is normally what happens with a major tertiary hospital. I remember that with Fiona Stanley Hospital, the time period was something in that range. I remember also that Perth Children's Hospital was proposed in the Reid review in the early 2000s, and it was opened—we opened it, actually—in 2018–19, so it took around 15 years. That is because building a hospital is hard; it is a big job. It can go awry if you do not do all the planning and all the work properly. Members will recall what happened at Perth Children's Hospital. I think that was proposed by Bob Kucera. He put in place the report that came up with the Reid review in the early 2000s that proposed a new children's hospital. That hospital was constructed over eight years or so. There was then the issue of lead in the water pipes, which the former government could not resolve, so the hospital sat there completed, but unopened. When we came to office, we took some pretty dramatic steps to get to the bottom of it, and we were able to open it by 2018–19. That is why you have to plan these things properly, because you can have things go awry like that. That is why money has been allocated for all those purposes. We are very keen to ensure that we can open a new women's and babies' hospital as soon as we can for the women and babies of Western Australia.

WOMEN'S AND BABIES' HOSPITAL

141. Ms L. METTAM to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. Will the Premier confirm for Western Australian families that construction of this much-needed facility will start this year as promised?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

We will get construction underway on a new women's and babies' hospital as soon as we can. All I would say is that we have to plan it properly, and there are a lot of issues in doing so. I think King Edward Memorial Hospital has been there since 1916, and no government since that time has come up with a plan or announced a new women's and babies' hospital. Our government has done that, and because of our financial management the state will be able to afford it. We will make sure that we build that new women's and babies' hospital, but that will take some time. While that is ongoing, continuous work will be done, as is required, to ensure that King Edward Memorial Hospital will continue to provide a wonderful service for women and babies across the state.

HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE — RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

142. Ms C.M. COLLINS to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's significant investment in the expansion of Western Australia's public health system capacity. Can the minister update the house on how this investment, including new workforce initiatives, will help attract and retain medical professionals throughout the state?

Ms A. SANDERSON replied:

I thank the member for Hillarys for her question. I also want to acknowledge that today is Thank Your Pharmacist Day, so thank you to all our pharmacists—community pharmacists, those who work in aged care and also those who work in primary care.

On Saturday night I was very fortunate to be able to attend the Rural Health West Excellence Awards, which honour our practitioners who work across this enormous state of ours in varying and sometimes very challenging conditions and communities. They often deal with patient cohorts that have the most complex healthcare needs and often work in very remote locations.

I want to highlight one particular practitioner, Dr Jared Watts. He is director of obstetrics and gynaecology at the WA Country Health Service and was the winner of the Specialist of the Year Award. He was born at Broome Hospital and operates out of what is now Broome Health Campus. He is an outstanding practitioner. The Kimberley women whom he treats during his remote and outreach clinics affectionately call him "the ladies' doctor" and welcome him into their sacred space of secret women's business. In addition to his work in country Western Australia, he also volunteers his skills internationally, teaching in Cambodia and Laos, and also as an obstetrics/gynaecology specialist for Médecins Sans Frontières Australia in Nigeria and Syria. I want to congratulate all the nominees and winners at the Rural Health West Excellence Awards last weekend.

I want to provide an update to the house on what we are doing to supercharge the mental health workforce, particularly in regional areas, with the rural psychiatry training pathway. This is the first of its kind in this country. Credit to the clinicians and practitioners who came up with this idea and put it together, and to the Mental Health Commission, which has fully backed it in, with the support of the state government. We know that there is a critical shortage of psychiatrists across the state that is particularly acute in remote and regional areas. Doctors who train in the regions are more likely to stay in the regions. Late last year, when I was in Bunbury with I think the member for Hillarys and the member for Collie–Preston, we launched the rural psychiatry training pathway. It was heavily subscribed, with over 40 applications, and 23 trainees were accepted, of whom eight will be based in the south west, six in the great southern, four in the Kimberley and one in both the midwest and the wheatbelt, with a further three to start training later this year. This is an increase of 280 per cent from the six trainees allocated to the rural pathway, all of whom were based in Perth. They are now training in the regions, and we know that people who train in the regions are much more likely to stay in those communities. Trainee numbers are limited only by the availability of supervising psychiatrists. By creating this program, we will be expanding the availability of supervising psychiatrists. We are delighted with the interest from doctors in training who want to do rural psychiatry and very hopeful that we will continue to recruit significant numbers of psychiatrists into regional areas.

The other area in which we are supporting our clinicians who have left the profession is by retraining and re-registering nurses and midwives. Through the Office of the Chief Nurse, the government is paying the fees of nurses and midwives to complete a retraining course as part of their return to work. We are supporting newly qualified nurses and midwives with their education to transition to the healthcare workforce with transition-to-practice programs, because we know that those first six weeks back in practice are often the most daunting and most challenging, so that they will feel supported and empowered and want to stay in that position.

We are also investing in our models of care so that practitioners can actually work in them. We know and I know that there is a lot of untapped skill and goodwill among our healthcare workforce that is not being put to use now, for various reasons, whether it is cultural, policy or regulatory. We have very highly competent nurses and midwives

who are not able to work to their full competencies. We are certainly looking in the emergency medicine space and mental health space at where we can use those practitioners, focusing particularly on the report of the infants, children and adolescents mental health task force so that we can upskill and uplift their available support for those communities.

TARGET 120 — CARNARVON

143. Ms M. BEARD to the Minister for Community Services:

I refer to Target 120, this government's attempt to address mounting youth justice challenges, which was promised in 2017. After six years, it remains not fully realised, with the rollout across seven promised locations, including Carnarvon, not yet operational.

- (1) When will the minister announce a service provider for Carnarvon?
- (2) When operational, how many families will the program cater for?

Ms S.E. WINTON replied:

I thank the member for the question because it provides me with the opportunity again to address the house on this important program, Target 120.

- (1)–(2) Of course, at its heart, Target 120 is about intervention, especially early intervention. Since coming to government in 2017, this government has invested over \$136 million in intervention strategies because we know that the social issues faced by many communities throughout the state and, in fact, throughout Australia are complex. They are complex and have their basis in issues of alcohol abuse, issues that the Minister for Racing and Gaming talked about earlier.

I find it a bit frustrating sometimes because since I have been in the portfolio, I have learnt of the incredible work and incredible programs that are being run by the Department of Communities all over the state. We have intervention strategies to the tune of \$136 million. I talk to child protection workers and the people who are running the Target 120 program, and one of the biggest challenges they face is the abuse of alcohol in local communities, which has an impact on the important work they need to do.

I find it is a bit rich for the opposition to say that we are not doing anything. If those members knew anything about human services and how to actually work with vulnerable children and families, they would know that we also need a community that has an environment in which those children and families can thrive.

To a certain extent, no amount of intervention—the best teacher in the world, the best nurse in the world or the best social worker in the world —

Point of Order

The SPEAKER: I will hear the point of order in silence.

Mr R.S. LOVE: The member asked quite a specific question about the rollout of a program in Carnarvon. What we are hearing is irrelevant as an answer. I would ask that the answer be asked to be relevant.

The SPEAKER: The minister on her feet will have heard your comment. I will just use this opportunity to say that I have had incessant interjections from members of the Liberal Party who did not ask the question, which makes things a little difficult. I ask members of the Liberal Party to stop interjecting. I will ask the minister to continue answering the question.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Ms S.E. WINTON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. What I am trying to explain is that any single program is only as good as the local community environment that supports those intervention programs. I travelled to the Pilbara and Kalgoorlie in the last few weeks, and that is the story I hear day in and day out. Broader issues in the community are having an impact on the fantastic intervention programs that this government is implementing.

More specifically, to the member's question about Target 120—we have invested \$31 million in rolling out this fantastic program in over 20 locations in the state. In fact, only recently I was with the member for Pilbara to announce that Robe River Kuruma Aboriginal Corporation will be the Aboriginal corporation to deliver Target 120 in Karratha. Solutions in communities are best when they are led by the local communities. That is at the heart of Target 120. When we talk about working with vulnerable youth, the best people to be supporting those people—to help them with their various traumas, whether it is alcohol abuse, domestic violence based on alcohol abuse in the community, or other issues such as attendance—are the people they trust, and the people they trust are the people in the community. I think all members would agree with that.

It then follows that when we want to procure people to run Target 120 programs all around the state, we want to get the right people in those positions to maximise success for those young people. To find the right people in those regional towns requires a complex amount of work. I do not apologise for the time it takes to get the right people in place in each town in which Target 120 is being rolled out.

Target 120 will be rolled out in Carnarvon, and it will be rolled out in various communities in the Kimberley. It will follow on from the success that we have had with Target 120 in the places where it is already operational. We know that nearly 50 per cent of young people who are actively participating in the program are not coming into future contact with the youth justice system, so that is a good thing. I look forward to updating the house as we continue to roll out Target 120.

TARGET 120 — CARNARVON

144. Ms M. BEARD to the Minister for Community Services:

I have a supplementary question. When will the service provider for Carnarvon start, and how many families will the service cater for?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please, members!

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

The SPEAKER: Minister for Transport! I am giving the call to the Minister for Community Services.

Ms S.E. WINTON replied:

I can reassure the house that the processes are already in place in the towns where we have announced Target 120 will be rolled out. Members should know that in Carnarvon a community youth officer is already in place, working with agencies and identifying applicants who will be part of the program. Work is already progressing in Carnarvon, as it is in the other towns where Target 120 is being rolled out. When we have the service provider that is right and we transition to that service provider, which will be best placed locally to work with those kids and have their trust, the initial work has already been done through the community youth officer.

HOUSING — PLANNING REFORM

145. Mr M.J. FOLKARD to the Minister for Planning:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's efforts to cut red tape and allow for the construction of more homes.

- (1) Can the minister advise the house of how this government's sensible reforms will create jobs and deliver more housing choices for our community?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house whether she is aware of anyone who opposes the government's attempts to create more affordable housing?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for Burns Beach for that question. My questions always seem to have that last part: can you inform us of anyone who opposes what we are doing? I am always glad when I get that part of a question. I thank the member for the question because, of course, we have rolled out our new range of planning reforms and initiatives to support more housing in Western Australia because we know we need more housing in WA to make sure we can have diversity in housing supply and continue to house our community.

We are rolling out a number of key initiatives. The continued planning reform is, of course, making sure we have more certainty and less risk in the planning system. We have rolled out the new medium-density code, which is a new initiative and is the first in Australia. It is all about trying to make sure we get better medium density so when we do infill projects, we get better quality medium density that has a wider variety of house sizes, a retention of trees and, in particular, a requirement for vegetation as part of the development. Our new infrastructure development fund helps deliver more housing in regional WA by precinct planning, but it also supports new medium-density housing in the metropolitan area.

The initiatives have had broad support from across the community. Shelter WA said that it warmly welcomes the release of WA's first-ever medium-density housing code and stated that the code promotes the diversity and choice in housing that is so desperately needed in our residential developments. The Urban Development Institute of Australia stated that the medium-density code strikes the right balance between affordability, amenity and accessibility in the future design of medium density. The Civil Contractors Federation applauded the infrastructure development fund, in particular, and noted that the high cost of civil works is often a major obstacle for developments. The Western Australian Local Government Association supported the infrastructure development fund. The City of Canning supported our initiatives. There is support from across the community because we know that we need more housing, better quality housing and a diversity of housing.

Who still opposes what we are doing in the community, members? The Liberal Party. The party that was born from capitalism hates capitalism nowadays. It hates the free market and it hates capitalism. It does not believe that we should let people build anything on their properties and someone else should be controlling that. It does not believe that property owners have the right to construct new housing on their land.

We are very proud of what we are doing in the planning space creating new opportunities and new homes for Western Australians and making sure that we have diversity of supply. I do not know who the opposition is appealing to; it is not the public who want more quality homes. It opposes everything.

I must say, noting the opposition, on that question from the member for North West Central, talk about dancing down the wicket leaving your wickets exposed! Asking a question on that issue —

Point of Order

Dr D.J. HONEY: Madam Speaker —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please! I can guess what your point of order is about. Minister, you have been given quite a lot of leeway in your answer, please do not divert to answering a previously asked question. Go back to the question you were asked.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Fair enough—I accept that call. That was a bit of a stretch! Even I will accept that was a bit of a stretch. That pivot really did not work. Talk about dancing down the wicket!

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Back on point, please.

Mr D.R. Michael interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Balcatta!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It is Thursday. Of course we will continue to drive reform and new initiatives to create more housing. The Liberal Party opposes everything we do to create more housing supply in WA.

HYDROGEN HUB — OAKAJEE

146. Dr D.J. HONEY to the Premier:

I refer to the series of press releases from the government about the development of an energy hub at Oakajee, including the 18 September 2020 release about seeking expressions of interest internationally for renewable hydrogen projects and the release dated December 2022 regarding a trilateral study for the Oakajee strategic industrial area.

- (1) Can the Premier explain the lack of any tangible progress at Oakajee after six years of government and despite the allocation of land for six proponents?
- (2) What have interested parties told the government about what is needed to move Oakajee from a conversation piece to a real industrial hub for renewable energy-based industry at Oakajee?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

- (1)–(2) Oakajee has a long history. I do not know whether members know where it is; it is about 25 kilometres north of Geraldton. It has access for a deepwater port.

Mr R.S. Love: It's just out of Geraldton.

Mr M. McGOWAN: The Leader of the Opposition probably does not understand the history of it. I just think he should understand —

Mr R.S. Love: I do understand.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I actually do not think you do.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please! One person asked this question; one person is answering it, please.

Mr M. McGOWAN: It goes back some years. It was identified decades ago as a potential deepwater port north of Geraldton, principally in relation to what are called BIFs, banded ironstone formations, in the midwest and particularly inland for some of the iron ore projects. A lot of the iron ore that is mined there now goes out through the port of Geraldton, principally because the Labor government of Geoff Gallop deepened the harbour, allowing for the export of iron ore in greater quantities through Geraldton. It removed the rail line from the waterfront and put in the southern transport corridor. That Labor government did all those things for Geraldton. It was the greatest government for Geraldton—maybe the second greatest for Geraldton! It did a great job for Geraldton. We are spending \$350 million or thereabouts on improving the port again and a range of other projects in Geraldton to allow for greater capacity for exports.

Oakajee was identified as a port. There is a project called Kingstream. We passed legislation in this house back in the late 1990s, maybe 1997. Its progenitor, if you like, was a man by the name of Ken Court. He was the driving

force behind the Kingstream An Feng development, as I think it was called. That obviously did not really amount to anything. Then there was a whole range of other proposals for Oakajee and a competitive process for the site, actually, between a Chinese company and a Japanese company. A company called Oakajee Port and Rail was successful in that in 2007–08, perhaps in 2008. Again, under the last Liberal–National government that did not go anywhere either.

Now, the idea behind it is as one of the hydrogen hubs, as we so term them. One is in the Pilbara, one is in Kwinana and one is at Oakajee. We have allocated, from memory, around \$150 million or \$170 million towards these hubs. Oakajee, as I recall, has around \$70 million or so allocated towards the project. That is something that we are working on with various proponents and so forth. The Minister for Mines and Petroleum is currently in Japan promoting it. I was in Japan and Korea recently promoting it. There is a lot of interest in it. But renewable hydrogen and ammonia are difficult industries. They do not happen overnight. There are a lot of transport issues. As far as I am aware, we are about to become biggest exporter of renewable hydrogen in the world, through the Pilbara with the Yuri project, which is being worked up with a 10-megawatt electrolyser as we speak.

The Oakajee project is one on which we are working with proponents and we are looking at what infrastructure needs to be put in place. We have an allocation of state money towards it, and we will continue to do so. The idea that somehow these things just magic out of the air overnight is unrealistic. That somehow they just happen overnight when transport solutions and technology and overseas markets have not yet been resolved is fanciful. It is just fanciful and shows a level of misunderstanding of how industry works that is really quite breathtaking.

HYDROGEN HUB — OAKAJEE

147. **Dr D.J. HONEY to the Premier:**

I have a supplementary question. Given what the Premier has said, when can we expect to see a single hydrogen project begin construction at the Oakajee industrial estate?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I just explained to the member that there is one underway in the Pilbara as we speak.

Dr D.J. Honey interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I will give the member another because he does not know. We are working on one with Woodside in Kwinana. We are working on one with BP in Kwinana. That is all underway, but Oakajee actually does not have a port currently. I do not know whether the member has ever been there; he probably has not. It does not actually have a port, but we are working with proponents, in particular Japanese and Korean investors on these projects because there is a lot of interest in those countries in relation to it, so we will continue to work on it.

I am aware of another project that is happening. This afternoon I am going to participate in the opening of the One Subiaco project; the one that the member opposed. The member opposed that project that is creating life and vitality and places for people to live, because he opposes everything. We are doing that. We are opening a new project in Subiaco to provide opportunities for housing for hundreds of local people, and the member opposed it. No doubt, as Oakajee comes to fruition, the member will oppose that as well, because that is his nature. The Liberal Party just goes out and opposes everything. It just opposes everything. The Minister for Planning is out getting things done and getting projects underway.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr M. McGOWAN: With every sod turning, every project announcement and every press release, the member is out as Dr No—no, no, no! He is like that bloke playing whack-a-mole. Every one that comes up, he hits and says, “No, we don’t want you!” That is the nature of the Liberal Party these days; its members do not want anything to happen. It is the party of the nimbys. It is a party of nimbys; no wonder everyone is fleeing. No wonder its state director is fleeing. He is not a nimby; he has taken off to Victoria. He knows things happen over there. He does not want to be part of you!

We will continue to work through the opportunities of renewable hydrogen. It is very exciting and the ministers and I are very committed to it. We have over \$170 million allocated and we have projects that are literally underway now.

MALE-DOMINATED OCCUPATIONS — FEMALE PARTICIPATION

148. **Ms C.M. ROWE to the Minister for Training:**

I refer to the McGowan government’s commitment to create safer and more inclusive workplaces for women. Can the minister advise the house what actions this government is taking to attract more women into occupations that are traditionally male dominated, such as technical and trade occupations, and how these initiatives will provide a boost to WA’s building and construction workforce?

Ms S.F. McGURK replied:

I am very pleased to answer this question and I appreciate the member for Belmont's interest in this matter, because this is a government focused on jobs for Western Australians. We are focused on developing the skills for the jobs for Western Australians to make sure that people in this state have the skills to fill the jobs that we know are out there. We are particularly interested in those members of the community whose ability to participate in the workforce or think about a job change is under-utilised. That is certainly the case for women. We have an ability for women in this state to participate more in the Western Australian workforce if we give them the opportunity.

As the Minister for Training, I know that there is a real chance to target women moving into secure jobs, into well-paid jobs and into jobs that traditionally they have not been large participants in—the non-traditional areas. Many members would know that I worked for the manufacturing and metalworkers union for many years. In fact, that union took some of the best years of my life. I joked that I got out before I grew facial hair and took on a Scottish accent! I am very familiar with those non-traditional metals, manufacturing and construction areas. As the Minister for Training, I know that we have opportunities to train women in some of these areas of work, where they can have good jobs and well-paid jobs. We need to crack into those areas if we want to address the gender pay gap and if we want to increase the number of jobs for women in our state. I was pleased when the Premier was able to announce on International Women's Day our initiative for scholarships for women working in non-traditional trades and technical occupations. This is a key area if we want to focus on improving the gender pay gap in this state. We know we have a significant problem and getting women into those non-traditional occupations is key to making serious inroads into the gender pay gap.

As I said before, we know we have a skills shortage in this state. We have the jobs. We need to be able to train people to get them into those jobs. We are sending the very clear message to women in this state that if they want to retrain or train in these non-traditional areas, a \$5 000 scholarship will be available for up to 400 training places. This is a very practical program that will not only make a real difference for women who are thinking about moving into those areas, but also send the message around the state that we want to support women in these areas. The criteria will be when women comprise less than 25 per cent of the workforce. This will be in state priority occupations, STEM fields and building and construction. Of course, this builds on our Free in '23 program—a huge opportunity for people to get not only qualifications, but also just a taster. The skill sets are opportunities for people to perhaps go in there and see whether it is an area in which they might want to work. I am particularly pleased that the reports are that the number of female apprentices operating in building and construction has grown by 228 per cent, more than threefold, under our government. I am very pleased with the figures for the three years preceding 2022.

I would also like to give a shout-out to the AUKUS agreement, because this agreement has been identified as a significant defence announcement, but of course it is an announcement about the jobs of the future, as well. I was pleased when the Minister for Defence Industry, Minister Papalia, who sits alongside me, was at South Metropolitan TAFE as part of that announcement. In September last year, our own South Metro TAFE was named at the Defence Connect Australian Defence Industry Awards 2022 in Canberra as the academic institution of the year. That is something we should be very proud of. In fact, in making that announcement about the opportunities in AUKUS, Minister Papalia was joined by a couple of young women who talked about why they are interested in joining the defence industry. Already this government has The Other Force—Start Something campaign and is proactively going out to people who might think about those defence industry jobs. There is lots going on—women in non-traditional trades scholarships, very practical supports and Start Something. There is a clear message from our government that we want women working in those non-traditional industries and we are prepared to support them.

MERREDIN TRAIN STATION — ACCESSIBILITY**149. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Minister for Transport:**

I refer to the minister's announcement made back in November 2021 that funding would be provided to deliver a raised safe access platform at Merredin railway station to be completed by April 2022.

- (1) Why has work not commenced on a project that should have been completed nearly 12 months ago?
- (2) Given that the tender is due to expire in May 2023, is there any risk that the work will need to be re-tendered and blow out the completion time any further?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

I thank the member for the question.

- (1)–(2) One of the key issues has been the negotiations between the tenderer and Arc Infrastructure, because you know what? The Nationals WA sold the rail lines throughout regional WA. One of the issues has been the inability of the two parties to reach agreement on access to the works. I will tell the member this: around Western Australia, sometimes it is a bit tricky to negotiate with a third party to upgrade works to benefit the community because you privatised the rail lines, and then you shut them down! That is one of the key reasons those works were not delivered at the time we expected. We will continue to

drive to deliver improvements in this area—again, improvements that even under eight and a half years of royalties for regions, while you were doing bumper stickers, you could not deliver basic infrastructure upgrades at rail lines.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I will wait for silence. I note that this is the last question, and I give the call to the member for Central Wheatbelt for a supplementary question.

MERREDIN TRAIN STATION — ACCESSIBILITY

150. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Minister for Transport:

Given the minister announced the project to the community with very much fanfare, is it acceptable that there has been no update from government provided to the shire on this project since last September, excluding the call yesterday prompted by Hon Colin de Grussa’s question in the Legislative Council?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

Much fanfare? What did I do? I am trying to remember. Did I have a royalties for regions marquee set up? Did I do that? Did I waste public money promoting stupid projects? Did I do that? No. I issued a media release and I went out there.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Honestly! You stand up and make stupid —

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! Just a moment, please, minister. Leader of the Opposition, you cannot continue to interject like that. It is impossible for me to hear the minister, let alone Hansard to be able to report her, and she is speaking quite loudly.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The member stands up and says “with very much fanfare”. Why does she say that sort of stuff? It is not factual. What did I do?

Ms M.J. Davies: When you made the announcement. If you can’t remember —

Several members interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Fanfare? What did I do? Did I bring a marching band? I cannot remember. I do not think I brought a marching band to that announcement. I do not think I brought a green royalties for regions marquee. I do not think I did that. I announced what we were planning to do, but because the former government sold the rail lines and we always have to negotiate with another party, sometimes it gets in the way of delivering essential infrastructure.

The SPEAKER: Members, that concludes question time.

WOMEN’S AND BABIES’ HOSPITAL

Question without Notice 140 — Supplementary Information

MR M. McGOWAN (Rockingham — Premier) [2.58 pm]: Pursuant to standing order 82A, I have some additional information to a question I received from the Leader of the Liberal Party on the new women’s and babies’ hospital account. There is a special purpose account—I thought there was, but I did not answer fully—that was established in 2021–22 with \$1.8 billion in it from the better than expected surplus of that year. An allocation of \$10.2 million has been drawn from the account for the continued development of the business case and project definition plan. The hospital has \$1.8 billion allocated to it from the government’s financial management.

GOVERNMENT TRADING ENTERPRISES BILL 2022

Personal Explanation

MR M. McGOWAN (Rockingham — Treasurer) [2.58 pm]: Madam Speaker, I rise under standing order 148 to make a personal explanation. On 14 March 2023 during consideration in detail on the Government Trading Enterprises Bill 2022, I stated that the scope of the bill could be applied to other entities included in future tranches of government trading enterprise reforms by way of regulations. This information was incomplete. To apply the full scope of governance reforms to any additional government trading enterprises, including entities in the second tranche of reforms, it would require a combination of regulations and legislative amendments.

DIRECTORS’ LIABILITY REFORM BILL 2022

Returned

Bill returned from the Council with amendments.

TREASURER'S ADVANCE AUTHORISATION BILL 2023*Consideration in Detail*

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

Clause 3: Authorisation of expenditure to make certain payments or to make advances for certain purposes —

Debate was interrupted after the clause had been partly considered.

Mr R.S. LOVE: On page 144 of the *Government mid-year financial projections statement*, under the heading “Revenue” and subheading “Government enterprises”, there is a substantial difference in the figures between the budget and the midyear revision of roughly \$1.3 billion. Can the Premier explain the basis of that and why that is not repeated in subsequent years?

Mr M. McGOWAN: The answer to the member’s question is this. Lower revenue from public corporations—it is down \$2 billion—is primarily due to a decision for government trading enterprises to retain their 2022–23 dividends totalling \$1.3 billion to help fund future infrastructure such as the next desalination plant and the decarbonisation of the south west interconnected system. Downward revisions to public corporation revenue are also forecast across the out years, mainly due to a lower profit outlook for Water Corporation and Western Power as a result of higher interest rates.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Some of that difference in the figures is due to the retention of dividends or revenue by the organisations—the GTEs. As I understand it—I was not in the chamber, but I heard some of the discussion over the broadcast—when the Treasurer was discussing the Government Trading Enterprises Bill 2022 in this house during the week, discussion was had about changing the way that finances would be reflected and brought on budget from the GTEs. Can the Treasurer explain to me: is that happening now? I understood that it was a practice that was already happening. How does the non-payment of dividends show as a reduction in revenue?

Mr M. McGOWAN: I think that the member might be referring to something that the member for Central Wheatbelt said. She congratulated the government on making government trading enterprises more accountable. She said that the full financial statements for the last couple of years have been reported as part of the budget, which is a significant improvement on what was there before.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Even though the fact that they have earned the revenue has been reported in the budget, it will not reflect as revenue for the government until such time as a dividend is paid. Is that correct?

Mr M. McGOWAN: We did a specific arrangement so that they would keep their dividends for future capital works purposes. We are building a new desalination plant in the northern suburbs—at Alkimos, I think—so we have kept the cash with the Water Corporation, and we have done the same with Western Power for decarbonisation issues. As the member knows, that will be very expensive. The cash is staying with both organisations in order to meet those capital works requirements in the future. We still expect to recognise dividends in the future once the Government Trading Enterprises Bill 2022 is passed.

Mr R.S. LOVE: What effect does the reduction in revenue as demonstrated in this document on the midyear review have on the net position of the state? Does it have any effect?

Mr M. McGowan: None whatsoever.

Mr R.S. LOVE: No effect whatsoever; okay. I will ask another question, then. I turn to a couple of items that are reflected in the midyear review; there are item numbers attached to them. It is page 146, “Delivery of Services” for the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. I note that the government made a \$5 million contribution to Telethon. As I recall, I think in the last Treasurer’s advance —

Mr M. McGowan: It was \$11 million. The government’s contribution to Telethon, from memory, was \$11 million.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Yes, that is what I was going to say; it was \$11 million. On what basis are those contributions determined? Is there a process or is an application made? How does that happen? I am not criticising; I did not criticise it last time. I am just curious as to how that came about.

Mr M. McGOWAN: It is a decision of the cabinet and myself. Telethon is a wonderful Western Australian institution. Obviously, it provides support for all sorts of organisations around the state that provide support for children with special needs, whether they are organisations for kids with disabilities or Telethon speech and hearing or research institutions. I think around 80 organisations are beneficiaries of the Telethon grants each year. Telethon itself is a major event over the weekend to which the public contributes. I think the member will find that major organisations such as Rio Tinto, BHP, Crown casino, Mineral Resources Ltd, Fortescue Metals Group, Channel Seven and numerous other companies around the state contribute millions and millions of dollars. Back in the member’s day in office, I think that the contribution was around \$500 000 a year. We have now lifted that to \$11 million, which reflects the state’s success. It is one of the best things that I do as Premier and Treasurer, because we actually see a real outcome from what we do. We go to all these great organisations that are beneficiaries. Telethon may well write to us—I am not quite sure—about what our contribution should be, and we do not set

up a process with a group of public servants advising us, from my memory. We look at what we did last year and we look at whether we can afford to increase it, and that is the decision we made. It climbed \$1 million on last year. At a time when we have had significant surpluses, and this being such a worthy cause, I thought it was a good contribution.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I am not disputing that it is a wonderful organisation or that the money is well spent. I wonder about the method of allocation. Would it not be better to have a budget allocation on an annual basis instead of some sort of consideration through cabinet and maybe working out an agreed program and making a funding allocation that way?

Mr M. McGOWAN: Just so the member knows, the budget goes through cabinet so when he says maybe we could do it by some other technique, the budget goes through cabinet. The budget is a cabinet decision. This is no different. This is a cabinet decision. When individual agencies' budget allocations are made, each and every one is a cabinet decision. The Expenditure Review Committee looks at every submission from every agency, makes a decision on whether it is acceptable or how much can be afforded of what the agencies want based upon Treasury advice, and that goes to cabinet. The cabinet can change that if it so desires. For every single dollar that is spent by a government agency, that is how it happens. For the Telethon Kids Institute, there is a base amount, but, obviously, it was increased the year before last and the government increased it this year by \$1 million on top of that. It was a decision of cabinet. I think it was a good decision.

On the commonwealth government, I remember sitting there with Scott Morrison as he made some decisions very rapidly one night, as I recall, in relation to some increases in the commonwealth government contribution in light of the state's contribution. Contributing to Telethon is one of the best things I do, to be honest with you. Although the overall budget of the state is \$38 billion, I can see a real benefit from that \$11 million for a whole group of people out there who are very needy.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Thank you. I cannot find an item that refers to it, but there was an announcement about a resources community development initiative with some mining companies throughout the year. Is that reflected in the budget in some way? Does that come onto the state's books or is it completely off the books and simply done by the companies involved and is not reflected in the state's accounts? If that is the case, what happens in the situation in which it builds a public asset? It must be reflected somehow in the budget. I wonder whether that is part of this final midyear review and Treasurer's advance?

Mr M. McGOWAN: It is not currently reflected. Once we get a formal agreement in writing for the individual projects, it will be reflected. At this point, it is a bit over \$750 million. We are hoping for significantly more, to be honest. We are working with individual companies to make further contributions, but it is not reflected at this point.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I am still talking about item 5, "Delivery of Services", under Premier and Cabinet. There is an amount of money there for Aboriginal engagement, including funding for the Aboriginal community-controlled organisation sector and it refers to native title settlements. Is this also involved in the development of the necessary groups for the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act to take effect or is this a different area of activity?

Mr M. McGOWAN: This is money to improve the performance of Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, particularly in areas of housing, health, disability and early childhood care. It is basically an improvement in work and capacity building. It is not to do with the Aboriginal Heritage Act.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Looking at item 40 in the midyear review, "All Other Grants, Subsidies and Transfer Payments", there is \$356.7 million. It refers to the small business hardship program, which generated a significant increase in the number of applications lodged by 30 June 2022 and processed and dated 2023, resulting in an increase of \$274 million. Is that program now at an end and is that the final amount for that program or will there be allocations in the next budget as well?

Mr M. McGOWAN: The Small Business Development Corporation has projected the costs of the hardship grants program to be \$237 million. Almost all the 26 000 applications have now been processed. Only 44 applications are still under assessment. The reason behind the delay was missing information on those applications. It is nearly completely finished.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Around the same paragraph that describes that line item, it refers to a \$16.7 million top-up for the Western Australian future health research and innovation fund. Can the Premier expand on what that allocation may have been for?

Mr M. McGOWAN: I think there was a grants process and an application process. Additional revenue came in through royalties and the interest rate going up. That is now reflected. It is disbursed, I think, through an independent process. Applications are made by research institutions for various projects. It is one of the innovations we brought in to encourage diversity in scientific research in Western Australia.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Under item 106, "Department of Justice", there is \$400 000 for the planning and design of the air conditioning in Roebourne Regional Prison, which has been something of a topic of debate for a little while

now. Is the intention for this coming summer that the air conditioning will be complete? It is not mentioned in this, obviously; this is just the planning. Could the Premier give me an indication whether he expects that will be completed next summer?

Mr M. McGOWAN: It is \$14.8 million on the design and installation of the air conditioning at Roebourne prison. It is expected to be spent, which I expect will mean the work undertaken, over the 2022–23 and 2023–24 financial years, so it will take some time.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I am talking about delivery of services under item 48, “Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety”. It refers to \$3.5 million mainly to meet payment obligations relating to the home buyers assistance grant scheme—\$5 million. Is that money part of the additional grants scheme? Is there not a standard grants scheme and the additional \$20 000 grant? Does it relate to that money? What does that assistance grant refer to?

Mr M. McGOWAN: It is a different program from the HomeBuilder grant program from 2020. This will reimburse eligible grant applicants with up to \$2 000 for incidental expenses incurred in purchasing a first home in Western Australia. Incidental expenses can include mortgage registration fees, conveyancing and valuation fees. It is a completely different program. There are first home owner grants for various thresholds and so forth that are eligible under this program. I can probably get the member some more information if he wants it, but it is different from the HomeBuilder program. The HomeBuilder program was \$20 000 grants, which were matched in most cases by \$25 000 commonwealth government grants to ensure the housing industry survived at the heart of the pandemic. There was grave fear that massive numbers of building companies would collapse, businesses would go broke, no houses would be built and apprentices and trainees would lose their positions. The program we put in place back then was successful in saving the industry.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Moving to “Item 54: Delivery of Services (\$213 million)” under “WA Health” in the midyear review, a number of items are outlined there. I am wondering if there were to be an ex gratia payment after Aishwarya Aswath’s death, would that be part of those considerations or would that come directly from a Treasury source? Would that be envisaged to come through health services?

Mr M. McGOWAN: It is not included in that allocation.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I turn then to “Item 55: Delivery of Services” under “Mental Health Commission”, an amount of \$13.5 million is allocated for a range of services. I am asking whether the final amount of \$1.1 million for increased mental health in-reach services at Banksia Hill Detention Centre has hit the ground or whether there is consideration of further money for that situation at Banksia Hill.

Mr M. McGOWAN: The \$1.1 million, which is a total investment of \$7.4 million from this financial year to 2026–27, is for a multidisciplinary team of 8.4 full-time employees to provide mental health, psychiatry, psychology, occupational therapy, speech pathology and lived experience peer mentoring support for detainees, including the cohort held at Banksia Hill Detention Centre and Casuarina Prison’s unit 18. I do not have details on the exact status of that and whether they have acquired or employed the relevant people.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I turn to “Item 63: Delivery of Services” under “Western Australia Police Force”, there is a fair bit of money that is not accounted for. I think it is roughly \$1 million, so I am just wondering whether the Treasurer could perhaps explain whether some of that money is required for training. There was some talk about further training for officers involved in pursuits, given the situation that has been occurring with a practice called boxing in. I wonder whether that is happening or not as part of that funding.

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I am talking about police funding.

Mr P. Papalia: Ask the minister in question time.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I could ask the Minister for Police. I just wondered whether there was an explanation.

Mr M. McGOWAN: It was about meeting the cost of the Government Regional Officers’ Housing rent freeze for a further 12-month period. The member might recall we froze rents. We did not increase them. That was to provide funding for that. It was not about training.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I turn then to “Item 64: Delivery of Services” under “Justice”, there is \$6.3 million for Banksia Hill Detention Centre and a further \$5.1 million for an increase in non-cash depreciation; whatever that means in terms of services, I do not know. But with the \$6.3 million for Banksia Hill Detention Centre, when are those upgrades expected to be complete? Have they started? What is the situation with that?

Mr M. McGOWAN: It is \$6.3 million for the Banksia Hill Detention Centre to support infrastructure upgrades and other site improvements; to improve safety and security; to provide mental health services and support programs; and to provide funding for recruitment initiatives to improve staffing levels. It is \$5.1 million for an increase in non-cash depreciation. The total funding approved to date for Banksia Hill Detention Centre initiatives is \$88 million and there is a breakdown of those amounts in the midyear review. As to the status and the progress of those initiatives, I could not give the member an exact answer of where they are at, but they are funded.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I turn to the next point that I want to talk about, which is item 73 under “Communities”, there is quite an allocation, \$190.4 million, for higher than expected payments under the National Disability Insurance Scheme. I wonder what that payment means. I imagine that will be a recurrent payment every year. I want to get an idea of the expectation for further increases in that scheme going forward.

Mr M. McGOWAN: The increase in cost is due to a higher than forecast growth in the number of Western Australians joining the NDIS. In August 2022, there were 44 673 NDIS participants in WA. In January 2023, there were 46 753 NDIS participants in Western Australia. Therefore, we are having to inject very significant amounts of money into that scheme.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I move on to “Item 89: “Delivery of Services” under “Western Australian Land Administration Authority”, that \$2.9 million is to meet additional accommodation lease expenses following lease negotiations for the 1 Midland Square facility. I take it that that is the old Landgate building that was sold by the state. Why is there the need for additional moneys to be allocated for the rent or was the rent not included in the budget originally?

Mr M. McGOWAN: There was an increase in the lease cost. We assume it is because of increased interest rates. I am advised that there has been an increase in the lease cost to make the sale worthwhile because of an increase in interest rates.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I thought the sale and the lease were quite recent. I am just wondering why there would be the need for a renegotiation in such a short period. Is there an explanation for that?

Mr M. McGOWAN: We went out to market. We had a response. It was deemed to be a good option, but the costs have increased because of, we expect, the interest rate pressures and rents going up more generally.

Clause put and passed.

Title put and passed.

[Leave granted to proceed forthwith to third reading.]

Third Reading

MR M. McGOWAN (Rockingham — Treasurer) [3.29 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a third time.

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Leader of the Opposition) [3.29 pm]: I rise very briefly to contribute to the third reading of the Treasurer’s Advance Authorisation Bill 2023. I would like to thank the advisers who came in today and offered their time and advice to the Treasurer in consideration in detail. I thank them for their service to the state.

We have just seen the conclusion of a discussion that will have the Treasurer’s Advance Authorisation Bill pass through this chamber with the support of the opposition. It does not mean that we support and endorse every item of expenditure, but it does mean that we understand the need for the state to have liquidity over the next number of months so that our state can maintain its programs and pay for its expenditures.

I will not say anything further than that I wish the bill a speedy passage through the other house so that it can be put in place in plenty of time for the Treasurer to have access to the finances involved.

MR M. McGOWAN (Rockingham — Treasurer) [3.31 pm] — in reply: I thank members for their support. I look forward to the Treasurer’s Advance Authorisation Bill 2023 passing both this house and the upper house.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

NICKEL (AGNEW) AGREEMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2023

Receipt

Bill received from the Council.

House adjourned at 3.32 pm

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Questions and answers are as supplied to Hansard.

SERVICEWA APP**673. Mr R.S. Love to the Minister for Mines and Petroleum:**

I refer to the Mid Year Review 2022–23 and the funding of \$2.9 million for the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DMIRS) to invest, expand and improve the ServiceWA app and ask for your portfolios:

- (a) What services will DMIRS be adding to the application (the module/s);
- (b) What internal processes have determined these services should be added to the application;
- (c) How many staff are working on the ServiceWA app module/s for DMIRS? Please detail by Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) and headcount;
- (d) What is the timeline to implement the module/s, and will the Minister please provide detail for each additional module;
- (e) Has the Minister asked any of the government trading entities or agencies under their remit (for example, Consumer Protection, Western Power, Synergy), to investigate how they can incorporate their services into ServiceWA; and
- (f) If yes to (e), please detail?

Mr W.J. Johnston replied:

Please refer to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice 672.

SERVICEWA APP**674. Mr R.S. Love to the Minister for Energy:**

I refer to the Mid Year Review 2022–23 and the funding of \$2.9 million for the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DMIRS) to invest, expand and improve the ServiceWA app and ask for your portfolios:

- (a) What services will DMIRS be adding to the application (the module/s);
- (b) What internal processes have determined these services should be added to the application;
- (c) How many staff are working on the ServiceWA app module/s for DMIRS? Please detail by Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) and headcount;
- (d) What is the timeline to implement the module/s, and will the Minister please provide detail for each additional module;
- (e) Has the Minister asked any of the government trading entities or agencies under their remit (for example, Consumer Protection, Western Power, Synergy), to investigate how they can incorporate their services into ServiceWA; and
- (f) If yes to (e), please detail?

Mr W.J. Johnston replied:

Please refer to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice 672.

SERVICEWA APP**675. Mr R.S. Love to the Minister for Industrial Relations:**

I refer to the Mid Year Review 2022–23 and the funding of \$2.9 million for the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DMIRS) to invest, expand and improve the ServiceWA app and ask for your portfolios:

- (a) What services will DMIRS be adding to the application (the module/s);
- (b) What internal processes have determined these services should be added to the application;
- (c) How many staff are working on the ServiceWA app module/s for DMIRS? Please detail by Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) and headcount;
- (d) What is the timeline to implement the module/s, and will the Minister please provide detail for each additional module;
- (e) Has the Minister asked any of the government trading entities or agencies under their remit (for example, Consumer Protection, Western Power, Synergy), to investigate how they can incorporate their services into ServiceWA; and
- (f) If yes to (e), please detail?

Mr W.J. Johnston replied:

Please refer to Legislative Assembly Question on Notice 672.

